

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**THURSDAY, 8 OCTOBER 1925**

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THURSDAY, 8 OCTOBER, 1925.

The Speaker (Hon. W. Bertram, *Maree*) took the chair at 10.30 a.m.

QUESTION.

DIFFERENCE IN COST OF ROLLING-STOCK BUILT AT IPSWICH RAILWAY WORKSHOPS AND BY CONTRACTORS.

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*), for Mr. F. A. COOPER (*Bremers*), asked the Secretary for Railways—

“What is the difference in the cost to the department between—(a) locomotives, (b) carriages, (c) wagons, built by the department at the Ipswich Railway Workshops; and (a) locomotives, (b) carriages, (c) wagons, built for the Railway Department by contractors.”

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

“The information is in course of preparation.”

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES.

1924-1925 AND 1925-1926.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt from His Excellency the Deputy-Governor of a message transmitting the Supplementary Estimates—Revenue, Trust and Special, and Loan—for the years 1924-1925 and 1925-1926.

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

VOTE OF CREDIT.

ON ACCOUNT 1926-1927.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt from His Excellency the Deputy-Governor of a message recommending that provision be made, on account, for the services of the several departments of the public service for the year ending 30th June, 1927, of the following sums:—

From the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland, exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account, the sum of £2,000,000.

From the Trust and Special Funds the sum of £1,000,000.

From the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account the sum of £600,000.

The message was ordered to be referred to the Committee of Supply.

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt from the Auditor-General of his report on the public accounts for the financial year 1924-1925.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Ordered to be printed.

[Hon. M. J. Kirwan.]

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—THIRTEENTH AND FOURTEENTH ALLOTTED DAYS.

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

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS.

INSPECTION OF MACHINERY, SCAFFOLDING, AND WEIGHTS AND MEASURES.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. M. J. Kirwan, *Brisbane*): I beg to move—

“That £29,545 be granted for ‘Inspection of Machinery, Scaffolding, and Weights and Measures.’”

There is a general increase in this vote of £3,611, made up by additional payments for grade increases in connection with salaries of £3,061. Under the heading “Contingencies,” there is an increase in wages, travelling expenses, etc., of £250, due to the expansion of the department, and in railway fares of £300, making a total increase in “Contingencies” of £550.

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*): I want to congratulate the Minister and the department upon the effective work they have done in Queensland during the past year. It is an important department, and an exceedingly difficult one to conduct.

Several hon. members conversing in loud tones,

The CHAIRMAN: Order! If hon. members desire to interview Ministers, there are other rooms set apart for that purpose; and, if any hon. members desire to carry on long and noisy conversations, there are other places where that can be done.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. GLEDSON: I was saying that this is a most important department, and the Government are certainly to be congratulated on the work which has been done. There are often complaints that the department is interfering unnecessarily with machinery, but on any works where I have been engaged or with which I have come in contact it has very often been found that the men thought the machinery was all right till an inspector came along and was able to point out that it was not all right, and he has thus been the means of preventing accidents to those who are working in connection with that machinery.

Another direction in which the department has done good work during the year is in connection with the reports which it is often asked to make on machinery, particularly on boilers. Considering the time taken up by the departmental officers in making these reports, a charge should be made for them, and the department is quite right in its attitude in that respect. We know that these reports are regarded as of value, and people who want to buy or sell machinery or a boiler appreciate the fact that the stamp of the department is upon it.

Another good work the department has done during the year has been the inspection of machinery for public or semi-public bodies. There are many semi-public bodies in Queensland which have to use machinery, and many of them have not been in a position to say whether the machinery they propose to buy is up to the standard, and the department has been able to do very good work by inspecting such machinery and, where justified, stamping it, thus preventing people

who contract with these bodies from selling what might prove to be a means of loss to them. The stamp of the department is proof that it is a good article, and, when people who are selling it know that it has to stand the inspection of a skilled inspector from the Inspection of Machinery Department, they do not supply a shoddy article. We have had experience in our own district of articles which have been inspected by and stood the test of the department, and we have had splendid results from them. I can therefore vouch for the efficiency of the inspections of the department in that respect.

I congratulate the Minister on the good work this department has done, and I think that it puts Queensland foremost, so far as the proper inspection not only of machinery but also of scaffolding is concerned, and I hope he will see that it is kept right up to the mark.

Item (Inspection of Machinery, Scaffolding, and Weights and Measures) agreed to.

#### LABOUR, FACTORIES, AND WORKERS' ACCOMMODATION.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. M. J. Kirwan, *Brisbane*): I beg to move—

“That £37,595 be granted for ‘Labour, Factories, and Workers’ Accommodation.’”

There is a total increase in the vote of £8,187, rendered necessary by the appointment of additional inspectors, clerks, etc., and for paying grade increases. There is also an increase for additional travelling expenses and increased railway fares for the conveyance of labour, necessitated by the expansion of the department. There is an increase in fees to members of the Apprenticeship Committee because of additional meetings held in connection with the apprenticeship scheme. There is an increase in contingencies of £4,190.

Mr. PETERSON (*Normanby*): I desire to point out to the Minister that the railway lengthsmen in the various parts of the State are living under conditions which cannot be called congenial. They do not come under the Workers’ Accommodation Act. If private employers are compelled—and rightly—to provide decent housing accommodation when they are called upon to house their employees, then a good example should be set by the Government with their employees.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I do not build the lengthsmen’s cottages.

Mr. PETERSON: I know that; still they are workers. If these lengthsmen working out in the hot summer sun in big cuttings and gorges in various parts of Queensland are not workers in the true sense of the term, then I would like to know who are. I am asking that the Department of Public Works should get into consultation with the Railway Department and see if something cannot be done to provide these workers with proper accommodation. Mr. Pollock, you represent an electorate where there is a considerable number of railway workers, and you know as well as I do that many of these men live in houses built of kerosene tins and bags, and the reason they are built of this material is because a lengthsmen has no security of tenure of his job.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member can deal with this matter on the proper vote.

Mr. PETERSON: Very well, Mr. Pollock. I merely rose to ask the Railway Department to see that these workers receive some consideration in the direction I have indicated.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): I notice that there are items “Chairman, Apprenticeship Committees” and “Secretary, Apprenticeship Committees.” Apprenticeship is a matter which vitally concerns the people of this State. Frequently I am asked what method is to be adopted in order that children may become indentured. I understand that, if a boy desires to be apprenticed to a trade, he has to apply to the Apprenticeship Committee, the office of which I assume is at the Labour Bureau in his centre. If those engaged in industry desires apprentices, I presume they must apply to the Labour Bureau for such apprentices. It appears to me that this is a matter which requires to be made widely known. One of the methods by which we can make it known is through our various State schools. The headmasters must have a number of boys, and likewise girls, who they know will be leaving school at a certain period, and they could indicate the conditions under which they can obtain employment. The child, in turn, will make those conditions known to its parents. I find it most difficult for the great body of the people to get a knowledge of whether their children can follow a trade at all. Time and again there is a dearth of competent tradesmen. In Brisbane and Toowoomba there are opportunities for the employment of numbers of skilled workmen in connection with the sewerage systems. We have lost a great opportunity in the past, and numbers of young fellows now find themselves unskilled through not having an opportunity of acquiring knowledge which would fit them to fill many of the skilled positions which are open to-day. I have stressed the point before that in indenturing apprentices we must make provision for the future tradesmen who will be required, and that it is no use waiting for the job. The boys of to-day and the men of to-morrow have lost a golden opportunity. If the boys are not acquiring the knowledge as they are growing up, the opportunity is lost and they become members of the unskilled ranks. I have contended time and again that there is no hindrance to an artisan becoming a labourer, but there is no possibility of a labourer doing the work of an artisan.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: We have tried to overcome that by the Apprenticeship Act.

Mr. ROBERTS: I realise that, but I do not agree with the methods adopted by the Government. We have not offered sufficient opportunity for skilled workers. Queensland and Australia are not going to stand still, and the world is wide. Why should we not anticipate the requirements of the future by teaching our own lads and not be dependent upon bringing skilled men from overseas?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Tell me what we have not done that we should have done?

Mr. ROBERTS: There should be a greater number of boys employed.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Are you in favour of putting into operation the compulsory clauses of the Apprenticeship Act to compel employers to take their full number of apprentices?

*Mr. Roberts.]*

Mr. ROBERTS: I am quite prepared to do that if the hon. gentleman can get suitable lads.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I can get suitable lads all right.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. ROBERTS: The Minister has lots of opportunities in the matter of compulsion. He has the power to compel men to take certain employment, but he does not exercise that power. Why then should he exercise the power of compulsion in one case and not in another? It appears to me that we are not giving the boys of our State a fair deal. I want the Minister to imagine that five years from now there is going to be expansion in our trade. We are not making sufficient provision to train apprentices to fill the places of the men who will be removed from the skilled trades by reason of old age, injury, and death, and we shall have to depend on skilled labour from overseas to fill those vacancies, which our own lads ought to take. I ask the Government to give some consideration to giving information to parents on apprenticeship matters so that they will know what opportunities of employment are offering for their boys.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. M. J. Kirwan, *Brisbane*): I desire to assure the hon. member for East Toowoomba that the Government are doing all that is possible to make the apprenticeship scheme a success. I take this opportunity of paying a tribute alike to those employers and employees who are working on the various apprenticeship committees. Hon. members will recollect that my predecessor introduced the Apprenticeship Act, and, when he commenced to put it into operation, he met with some difficulty. Quite a number of unions, and likewise employers, looked upon it with disfavour. Eventually representatives of the unions and employers were induced to come together and consider the matter, with the result that they now realise that it is one of the best Apprenticeship Acts in existence in Australia to-day. As a matter of fact, we have received communications from several of the labour bureaux in other States asking for an explanation as to the manner in which the Act is being worked. I would be failing in my duty as head of the department if I did not express my personal gratitude and that of the Government to the representatives of the employers and employees, who spend a great deal of time in dealing with apprentices, and who come into personal contact with them and endeavour to place them in the trades for which they appear to be best adapted.

Hon. members must realise that it is a very difficult matter, when a lad of fifteen or sixteen comes along, to ascertain what trade he is peculiarly adapted for. A lad may be put to the electrical engineering trade and may learn nothing whatever, whereas, if he were put to cabinet-making, he would be an unqualified success.

Mr. ROBERTS: He has the right to choose.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That is done by sending the lad to the Technical College and placing him in touch with the various classes conducted there. If the hon. member for East Toowoomba will get in touch with some of the employers or union representatives on the apprenticeship

[*Mr. Roberts.*

committees, he will learn a good deal as to what has been done.

Mr. ROBERTS: I have already done that.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The scheme has been in operation only a short time, and quite a number of lads have been placed in employment through it. Unfortunately some employers will not take apprentices at all. I know of one particular firm that takes that attitude; they will not give lads an opportunity to learn their trade.

Mr. CORSE: Yet you say they try to sweat labour in that way.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The hon. member is in the habit of saying more than his prayers. Every attempt has been made by the department and by the apprenticeship committees to get this scheme into operation, and nearly every month the operations of the Act are extended and outside areas are brought within its ambit, thus allowing lads in the distant parts of the State to learn trades. The main idea is to give not only a theoretical training in our workshops but also a practical training, so that in four or five years we shall be able to produce those first-class tradesmen who, the hon. member said, are so necessary for the progress of the State.

Mr. PETERSON (*Normanby*): I draw the attention of the Minister to the operations of the Labour Bureau in Rockhampton. Men living in other parts of the Central district have to register at the Rockhampton bureau, and, if those men should go home and work turn up for them during their absence, they lose the right to a job. In the case of men living in outlying places, would it not be possible to allow them to remain at their homes until a job cropped up when, say, twenty-four hours' notice could be given them that they are now near the top of the list. That would be better than remaining about the city and losing what little money they have while waiting for a job. Whatever may have been the experiences of other hon. members, that is my experience in my own district. If the Minister can see his way to arrange such a scheme, considerable relief will be afforded to men desirous of taking advantage of the Labour Bureau. Those men are decent, reputable citizens, and because they may not care to hang round Rockhampton, North Rockhampton, or Queen's Park they are precluded from getting a job. I trust that the Minister will see his way to recommend the adoption of some such scheme as I have suggested.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowoong*): The hon. member for East Toowoomba is to be congratulated on drawing the Minister's attention to the seriousness of the position that exists to-day.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It would have been much more serious if no Apprenticeship Act had been passed.

Mr. MAXWELL: That may be so, but the position of affairs is not altogether satisfactory. It is well known that in the past there was always a difficulty in securing an opportunity for boys to learn trades, but that difficulty will be overcome [11 a.m.] by the creation of apprenticeship committees. I want to stress the necessity for the Minister giving every encouragement to the young people of this State to learn some trade or profession.

The parents are very anxious—in my own electorate, at any rate—as to what they are going to do with their boys and girls. There have been instances where they have tried to place their boys and girls and have found it absolutely impossible to do so. If the apprenticeship committee is going to find opportunities for placing every boy and girl in a desirable calling, it will have accomplished something. The Minister is very optimistic, and I wish I were as optimistic. I am in regard to a good many things, but I am not quite so optimistic in connection with the apprenticeship committee. I give the hon. gentleman credit for all sincerity in connection with the matter. I believe that he means well; but there may be certain stumbling blocks in the way that may have to be removed. On page 15 of the report reference is made to the certificates issued to young persons. I do not know whether that means that the certificates are issued to young persons who are qualified to enter a certain trade or calling, or whether it means that they have entered a trade or calling. I find that for the year ended 31st March, 1924, there were 246 males and 425 females, making a total of 671, who have received certificates, while for the following year 274 males and 537 females received certificates, making a total of 811. I should like to know from the Minister if these young people have been placed in positions, or is it only a qualification certificate, and then, when any employer wants them, they are to be picked off the ranks and allocated to a certain trade or calling. If that is so, the figures shown in the report do not indicate very much progress in placing young people in positions. When you take into consideration the population of Queensland and find that only 274 young males have received certificates of competency, it seems to me that we are going to have a State of unskilled tradesmen. That speaks for itself. The position the hon. member for East Toowoomba pointed out is a serious one, and some special attraction should be given to young people to encourage them to make themselves self-supporting. There is no greater asset to the State than self-supporting people. A skilled tradesman is the most independent man in the community. With his skill he can command a position, and can command—not the minimum wage, but the highest wage it is possible to get. It is a serious position when we find from the report that, for the year ended 31st March last certificates were issued to only 274 males. We know that there are more than that number leaving the schools at the termination of their scholastic career. Where are those boys drifting? The best asset we can get is the tradesman.

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: What about the farmer?

Mr. MAXWELL: I am dealing with Brisbane now, but farmers are really tradesmen. I would like some explanation from the Minister as to what the certificates given to young persons really mean. Are the certificates only issued to those who have qualified to take up a certain trade or calling?

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. M. J. Kirwan, *Brisbane*): The certificates to which the hon. member for Toowoomba has drawn attention are those which are issued with the consent of the Minister, after having the matter investigated and

reported upon, to children under sixteen years of age to allow them to work in factories. It very often occurs that the father is an invalid, or the mother a widow, who is compelled to send out the eldest member of the family to augment his or her rather small income. The certificate is only given after inquiries are made and the case is fully investigated, and the person concerned must prove that there is ample justification for the certificate being given.

In order to show that the Government are doing something in regard to apprenticeship, I would point out that, at the Government workshops and construction branch connected with the department, we have seventy-nine apprentices. There are twenty carpenters, five joiners, sixteen plumbers, four painters, eight bricklayers, six plasterers, two masons, five electricians, two motor mechanics, one polisher, and one blacksmith. These apprentices are employed in connection with the Government workshops and construction branch, and there are a number of apprentices employed on the Treasury buildings.

Mr. PETERSON: That is a very small number.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I am only speaking of the work under my control. The hon. member will realise that we can only take cognisance of apprentices where we have permanent workshops or permanent work going on. I think we are doing fairly well with seventy-nine. If the hon. member goes to the Ipswich Road Workshops he will find apprentices to the different trades which are being carried on. A lot of the work which is being done in the preparation of the stone for the Treasury block is being carried out by the apprentices. The work in connection with the stone forming the base of the statue of the late Hon. T. J. Ryan was done there by apprentices. I would like to take hon. members, when they have the time available, to see the work being done at the Ipswich Road Workshop by apprentices. They take a pride in their calling and are doing splendid work, and by the time they have finished their apprenticeship they will be splendid artisans and able to undertake any work on which they may be employed.

I understood the hon. member for Normanby to suggest that some method should be adopted to get into communication with men living outside Rockhampton—for instance, at some place on the Central Railway line—and registered at the Labour Bureau in Rockhampton, when work could be found for them—that is, when they were at the head of the list.

Mr. PETERSON: If they are not on the spot they miss their chance, and it means that, if they want a job, they have to hang around in Rockhampton.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I think the hon. member will admit that the labour agents do what they can in such matters and that they are very sympathetic in their administration, particularly if they know that a man is married and has a family and is really anxious to get work. In such cases particularly they give him every assistance to get to the place where he can obtain work. I think something might be done. For instance, if the job was not to start for three days, it would be possible to notify the man who was at the head of the list if he was out of Rockhampton, but sometimes the Railway

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Department ring up the bureau here or at Maryborough, Bundaberg, or Rockhampton, and say that five men are required to start at a given hour perhaps that day or the next day.

Mr. PETERSON: If a man is fifth on the list, could they not send him a letter intimating that he was near the top?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That system could be carried out, so that, when a man was near the top of the list, he could come into town and make a point of being at the bureau.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowoong*): I should like to know from the Minister whether it is possible to get information as to the number of apprentices the apprenticeship committee have placed in various trades and callings.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: We are trying to get the information now.

Mr. MAXWELL: I think it is necessary we should have that information. I do not ask for it immediately, but we certainly should know how we are dealing with these boys. I believe that the committee is doing excellent work, and I am quite satisfied that the Director of Labour is doing excellent work. He is a man with a pin-pricking job, if I may use that term. Anybody who has to hold the scales of justice fairly between employer and employee has a somewhat difficult task, and I have a great amount of sympathy for Mr. Walsh. He is a most honourable, conscientious man.

Mr. GLEDSON: Do you give him any trouble?

Mr. MAXWELL: I am always amenable to reason, and I try to cause as little trouble as I can, because I appreciate the difficulties of the position. I should like to take the opportunity of giving an assurance to parents that excellent work is being done, and the only way in which I can make that assurance effective is by getting a return such as I have indicated. If it is not possible to get this morning, then we can have it subsequently.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: If the hon. member will frame a question for tomorrow, I will endeavour to get the information.

Mr. HANSON (*Buranda*): I am glad to see from the Estimates that some recognition has been accorded to the chairman and secretary of the apprenticeship committees in the way of salary. I have gone to the trouble of getting some definite figures indicating what has been done by the apprenticeship committee and the growth of the system during the last year. I have dealt with this question previously in this Chamber. Last year the number of apprentices who had been dealt with was approximately 1,200. This year I find that the total was 2,141, or an increase of 894 for the past twelve months.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That is under the Act.

Mr. HANSON: We were working under the apprenticeship regulations prior to the passing of the Act, and practically carrying out the same functions as at present. Of the total of 2,141 apprentices dealt with some 1,700 are attending classes at the technical colleges at Brisbane, Ipswich, Toowoomba, Maryborough, Rockhampton, and Townsville. I think those figures indicate very fair progress. I agree with the hon. member for

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Toowoong that a good tradesman is one of the best assets the State can have. Perhaps the good conditions existing in the trades during the past year have been responsible to some extent for the progress of the scheme. The figures I have quoted do not take into consideration Charters Towers, Gympie, Mackay, and Cairns. No figures are available with respect to those places, but one must make some allowance for them.

I agree with the hon. member for East Toowoomba that some publicity should be given to the apprenticeship scheme. Anyone who goes outside of the city—in fact there is no need to go outside of the city—will find that parents of children about to leave school know very little indeed about the subject of apprenticeship. The secretaries of unions of skilled workers have had considerable trouble in policing the apprenticeship regulations, inasmuch as they have found a large number of boys engaged in the different trades who have not been registered through the Apprenticeship Committee at all. Some publicity in the schools might obviate a lot of trouble in that direction, and it might be possible to advertise occasionally in the newspapers that a number of boys are required for certain trades and inviting the parents to see that their boys make application for the positions.

There is a more serious aspect of the matter which has often been stressed. I refer to the proportion of apprentices in any one trade. Every industrial award lays down the proportion of apprentices to journeymen. Some hon. members have contended that the proportion is not high enough, and that it should be unlimited. I do not agree with that, but I do say that many unions have agreed to a greater proportion being permitted because they realise the seriousness of the position and the necessity for more skilled tradesmen. I have had a good number of years' experience in connection with the apprenticeship scheme, and neither I nor any other union official has ever disagreed with the proposal to exceed the proportion of apprentices in the case of any decent employer who was in a position to teach a boy his trade. I think the thing can be overdone, and every application should be dealt with on its merits. It is time the Minister gave serious consideration to putting into operation the compulsory clauses of the Apprenticeship Act. Take the branch of the building industry in which I was interested. There are several employers engaged in that industry who to-day are not employing their full proportion of apprentices. Many employers in the building industry have refused point-blank to take any apprentices, while some have taken a few. I venture to say that outside the plumbing trade there is not one employer employing the full proportion of apprentices permitted under industrial awards. That must be taken into consideration as soon as possible by the Minister with a view to putting into operation in some trades the compulsory clauses of the Act.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): I was pleased to hear the hon. member for Buranda say that the unions were viewing more favourably an increase in the number of apprentices. I realise that there are opportunities for the boys if they are given a chance. The hon. member referred to the building industry, but I want to point out that the difficulty in taking on apprentices

in that industry is the question of the continuity of employment. When an employer takes an apprentice he has to recognise his liability, and, if his work finishes, say, in about eighteen months and he is left with a couple of apprentices, he has to find some method of transferring those boys to another employer so as to carry out the conditions of the indenture. I know that in the city of Brisbane the builders have come to an understanding to carry a certain number of apprentices; but, in addition to that, there is the responsibility if an employer suddenly finds that the job is finished and no further contract has been obtained. Those facts have to be taken into consideration.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: In some cases we arrange to transfer.

Mr. ROBERTS: I raised a discussion on this vote in particular to try to induce the department to get into touch with the schools and make it very definitely known there that the parents will obtain a knowledge under what method and system they can indenture their boys.

Mr. HANSON: They could put up advertisements on the walls, too.

Mr. ROBERTS: I do not think that is necessary. The headmasters know how many boys are reaching an age when they leave school.

There is another point which I wish to raise on this vote. Some time ago I was in Rockhampton, and on my return I brought under the notice of the House the difficulty in which some men find themselves in obtaining employment. A particular case came under my notice to which I then referred. A man's name was called at the labour bureau. On that morning his name happened to be first on the list, and the job offering was his. The difficulty which then confronted him was that he did not have a union ticket as he had been out of work for a period. He consequently had to stand down. Mr. Theodore, who was then Premier, intimated that the Government would make arrangements to ensure that men in those circumstances would not be refused work, that they would be given employment, and that the amount of the union ticket would be deducted from their wages. We had an instance of a similar character at Toowoomba last week. The assurance that the ex-Premier then gave is seemingly not now being adhered to. It was brought under my notice where a man who had been out of employment for some considerable time—to some extent through ill-health—found himself able to get a job. Immediately the job was offered the question of his union ticket was raised. He had not previously been engaged in that particular calling. It was only through the kindness of another person in Toowoomba, who made the money for the union ticket available, that this man was able to get the job. If that person had not come to his assistance he would have been walking the streets of Toowoomba, and he had seven children under the age of fourteen years. There is something wrong in the conditions of the State when such cases occur. I cannot imagine that the men who constitute the unions stand for that. There should be some method by which a man entitled to a job could pay a quota of the union fees from his first wages, and work should be given to him under those conditions. The question of whether that man should work or not should not depend on the

charity and good grace of some individual to enable him to buy his ticket. I am raising this question because I have been told by the labour agent at Toowoomba and officials in other places, that they did not know of the statement made by the then Premier that men in the position this man found himself in should be given employment. I got into touch with the Chief Inspector, and he told me that he knew nothing of any such instruction. He informed me that, if a man possessed a union ticket which expired at the end of September, he was always allowed a few weeks in which to make himself good after a job was secured by him. I am now dealing with the man who has not been in a union, and who for certain reasons has not been able to secure employment, and, after registering at the labour bureau, passes through the usual routine, comes first on the list, and then in order to get the job offering has first to purchase a ticket in the Australian Workers' Union. He should be allowed to take the employment offered him so long as he is willing subsequently to join the organisation.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. M. J. Kirwan, Brisbane): In reply to the hon. member for Toowoomba, I may state that the total number of apprentices now working under the scheme is 1,350. Of that number seventy-nine are employed by the Works Department. There are 376 journeymen employed by this department.

The hon. member for East Toowoomba made reference to allowing an employer who already has his full number under the award to take additional apprentices. No objection is raised to that provided the lads are taught their trade.

The important question of publicity was raised by the hon. members for East Toowoomba and Buranda. I inform those two hon. members that the question is receiving some consideration. A suggestion was made by Mr. Hall, who is very enthusiastic in this matter—

Mr. ROBERTS: He is a very good man.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I am very glad to hear the hon. member say that. We could not get a better man if we raked Queensland. Mr. Hall has made the suggestion that we should have a moving picture taken of the operations of the apprenticeship scheme. Although it might cost £400 or £500 to distribute it over Queensland, it would be of the greatest value, because people throughout the State would then have an opportunity of viewing the whole of the operations of the scheme. Pictures could be taken of the operations at the Central Technical College, showing the lads going through their trades, and pictures could also be taken of their operations working for private employers. A very fine picture could be made showing the actual conditions under which these apprentices work. If such a picture were shown throughout Queensland, parents and even children would interest themselves in the scheme, and those who would be likely to take advantage of the scheme in a couple of years would know all about it as well as those at present taking advantage of it.

We are doing all we can to extend the operations of the Act in distant portions of the State, and in country districts we have attached rural schools to State schools. Those rural schools are doing splendid work in

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enabling country lads to obtain sufficient knowledge to effect the necessary repairs about a country homestead or farm.

In connection with the remarks regarding a union ticket, that matter is largely governed by awards. Where unionists have preference the director has no choice in the matter, but I know that the Government have on more than one occasion, when unemployment was acute, arranged that a certain number of men who did not possess union tickets should join the batches of union men who were given employment.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowoong*): I thank the Minister for his explanation. It proves conclusively the seriousness of the position in the matter of finding tradesmen for our State. When we consider that only 1,350 apprentices have been turned out since the beginning of the operations of this Act we realise that something is wrong. Something should be done, either by the publicity scheme suggested by the Minister or by some other method. Perhaps something could be done through our schools to make the children conversant with the fact that it is possible to make themselves self-supporting by learning a trade. I stress the point to the Minister and he will have our full support in the matter.

Item (Labour, Factories, and Workers' Accommodation) agreed to.

[11.30 a.m.]

#### THE GAS ACT OF 1916.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. M. J. Kirwan, *Brisbane*): I beg to move—

“That there be granted £2,235 for ‘The Gas Act of 1916.’”

This is a very appropriate vote with which to conclude my Estimates. (Laughter.) There is an increase in salaries amounting to £145 and an increase in contingencies of £100, making a total increase in the vote of £245.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): I notice that the first item reads—

“Gas referee, £500 (portion of year only), £350.”

Does that mean that the gas referee is only employed for a portion of the year?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Yes; he is a part-time officer.

Item agreed to.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Thank you, gentlemen. I hope I shall see you again next session. (Laughter.)

#### DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE.

##### CHIEF OFFICE.

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

“That there be granted £21,570 for ‘Department of Justice—Chief Office.’”

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I have a very serious charge to make against the Government in regard to the way in which “Liberty Fairs” have been conducted. I have a very definite statement which has been made in the Press, and I have also a very definite statement which has been handed to me and which appeared in the “Catholic Advocate.” I intend to quote the

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particulars from that paper of 6th August, 1925—

“Some time ago Cabinet, possibly to avoid ticklish questions during the present session of Parliament, summarily abolished the ‘Liberty Fairs.’ Nine weeks previously facilities had been granted to Rev. Bro. J. N. Moore, organiser, to run the ordinary ‘Liberty Fair’ for the purpose of the Christian Brothers’ Jubilee Appeal. We are not arguing about the ethics of gambling here; the question is too wide for a short article, but we are amazed at the inconsistency of the Government authorities in suddenly repudiating permission previously granted. If ‘Liberty Fairs’ were to be cancelled because the Government suddenly developed qualms of conscience the reasonable thing to expect is that existing permits would not have been affected.

“Unrestricted departmental permission was given, among others to the following bodies—

“Paddington A.L.P., Brisbane A.L.P., the Limless Soldiers, the Children’s Hospital, the Mater Hospital, the Trades Hall, and the Returned Soldiers’ Association.

“In the case of all these the permit was honoured. Why has the Brothers’ Appeal been singled out as the one exception? Less worthy causes have not been interfered with, and theirs was one of the last permits granted.

“The controversy that raged over A.L.P. Liberty Fairs was not sufficient to move the Government, but a fear of criticism in the House when all public hubbub has ceased is good enough to make them repudiate bona fide permits over the signature of a responsible Minister.

“The Christian Brothers’ Appeal will suffer considerably by the Government veto. Apart from the direct loss involved, there is the serious consideration of the many other fruitful activities which would have been otherwise called into use. The value of the Brothers to the State is fifty years of devoted service in the cause of education without one penny of Government subsidy. We have believed the Labour party to be a democratic body, out to give everyone a fair deal, but we can find no explanation for their action in this matter. Rev. Bro. Moore wrote asking Cabinet to reconsider its decision, but to no purpose. A game analogous to the crossword competition was started and promptly quashed by the police authorities, acting under instructions from the Home Secretary, because it was ‘like’ a gambling venture. Here is something undertaken in the cause of charity and education, in a work of State importance, and it is deliberately sacrificed to the trepidation of vote-hunting politicians.”

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Who wrote that letter?

Mr. MOORE: I presume the Reverend Brother J. N. Moore is the author. I want to state definitely and unequivocally that I am not in favour of “Liberty Fairs” at all, but, if permits are granted for them, it is absolutely essential that the law shall be impartially administered, and that everybody shall

have the same opportunity. The Reverend Brother Moore made a complaint to me that discrimination had been shown, and I went to the Premier and pointed out that, while I did not agree with "Liberty Fairs," I thought that if a permit for a "Liberty Fair" had been granted it was only right that the permit should be honoured and the same conditions allowed in connection with that particular permit as in other cases. The Premier formally replied to me on 23rd September last—

"On 16th July, 1925, the Reverend Brother Moore was advised by the Attorney-General as follows:—

The Government has decided to adhere to its decision of the 7th instant, namely, that all parties conducting art unions, raffles, and guessing competitions shall keep strictly within the terms of the permit granted by the Attorney-General.

"Reverend Brother Moore is entirely wrong when he stated that there has been any discrimination against him in the permit granted for the conduct of raffles, art unions, and guessing competitions in aid of the Christian Brothers' Jubilee Fund."

I have been definitely informed by the Reverend Brother Moore and other people that, when they started their "Liberty Fair," the police practically interfered—every time they commenced what they called a money-making game they were stopped. I would have nothing to say if the same treatment had been meted out to the other "Liberty Fairs" which have been going on, but we find that at Woolloongabba there is a "Liberty Fair" run by the Trades Hall to secure political funds, and every game which the Reverend Brother Moore was stopped from adopting is now going on there.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That is not true.

Mr. MOORE: It is true. Two men I sent over there purposely to find out what was going on asked the police whether it was legal, and were told they were supposed to wink at it because it was for political funds. The Mayor of Greater Brisbane stated that he was not going to have "Liberty Fairs" conducted in Brisbane; but the Government allow this "Liberty Fair" in the railway yards at Woolloongabba, which is outside the jurisdiction of the Mayor of Greater Brisbane. Is not that a scandalous state of affairs? If the law is going to be administered, it should be administered impartially. I do not believe in these things, and have always been dead against them; but when permits are given it is absolutely essential that everybody should be treated alike. I can quite understand that people who run them are endeavouring to secure funds. We know that, if the gambling element is encouraged, it is possible to procure a greater amount of funds than by any other method; but that does not say it is right, and it does not say that, when the Cabinet have come to a definite decision in the case of one party, that decision should not be applied in the case of all. I have a definite statement in a letter from the Reverend Brother Moore, in which he states that the privileges which were denied to him have been allowed to take place in the Australian Labour party's "Liberty Fairs" and other "Liberty Fairs," for which permits were

given at the same time. The permit for the one at Woolloongabba was given much later than those. Last Friday and Saturday night these things were going on all the time. It is no use for the Government attempting to shelter behind the police. I am not going to have that. I am not going to say that the police are not doing their duty. I did not bring this matter up on the police vote. This is a definite Cabinet decision, and, if the Government are not game to see that the law is administered, let them wipe it off the statute-book. All these permits were given with certain limitations. It was stated in the Press that the Cabinet had come to a decision in regard to the matter and that limitations were to be placed on the permits. These limitations were strictly enforced against one person who is securing funds for religious, charitable, and educational purposes, and to my mind there can be no better purpose than that. But, when it comes to a question of raising funds for political purposes, we find that the very thing which the Reverend Brother Moore was stopped from doing in his "Liberty Fair" is allowed to be carried out wholesale in other cases. This is a very serious business. The law should be administered impartially and justly. If permits are given and certain games are stopped in one place, they should be stopped in another, and I do not want the Government to say, "Our instructions to the police were to stop these games of chance or gambling." If they do give that order, they are there to see that the law is carried out. It is no use trying to shelter themselves behind somebody else. This decision has been come to by the Cabinet, and there has been an emphatic protest because it was recognised that other "Liberty Fairs" were infringing the law, which was enforced in the case of others. It is a serious state of affairs, showing gross laxity, favouritism, and interference with Government departments by people who are able to bring pressure to bear on them that special conditions should be granted to them which are not granted to others, that it is absolutely essential that a protest should be made.

The PREMIER: You know very well that no favouritism has been shown.

Mr. MOORE: I emphatically state that it has been shown.

The PREMIER: That is a deliberate misstatement.

Mr. MOORE: I emphatically and definitely state that games of chance and gambling which were disallowed in the Christian Brothers' Jubilee "Liberty Fair" are going on over at Woolloongabba—not at this moment, but day after day, and are winked at.

The PREMIER: Winked at by whom?

Mr. MOORE: Winked at by the police and by the Government, because they know that they are going on. Nobody can tell me that the Government do not know. A permit has been granted, and no definite instructions have been given by the Government to see that the law is adhered to. Why did the police interfere on every possible occasion when the Christian Brothers' Jubilee "Liberty Fair" was going on?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The hon. member knows why.

Mr. MOORE: I do not.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Yes, you do.

Mr. Moore.]

Mr. MOORE: Unfortunately I do not know. I would like to know why the same restrictions are not applied to all.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You know that the same restrictions do apply to all.

Mr. MOORE: I definitely state that the same restrictions have not been applied to all.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: They have been applied. So far as I am concerned I have issued the same instructions in every case.

Mr. MOORE: I do not doubt that so far as the Attorney-General is concerned the same permit has been given.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Then what are you talking about?

Mr. MOORE: I am talking about the administration afterwards. I see one set of persons prevented from having the advantages or supposed advantages of these gambling concerns and another set of persons allowed to go free.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That is not true.

Mr. MOORE: That is the evidence that can be supplied every day of the week.

The PREMIER: Let us have some of the evidence.

Mr. MOORE: I have given Brother Moore's own evidence. He went over to this particular "Liberty Fair," at Woolloongabba, and he says, "The very thing I was stopped from conducting is going on openly"; and I sent two men to Woolloongabba last Friday night and Saturday night, and each came back and said, "Get rich quick," and "Under and over seven" were going on.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He might have informed the Home Secretary.

Mr. MOORE: It is not the ordinary individual's job, when he finds gambling going on, to inform the Home Secretary. What I am complaining about is that a definite Cabinet decision was come to and that certain things were disallowed in one case and winked at in the other. I want to see the law administered impartially, and I intend to move a reduction in the vote by £1 as a protest against this state of things, and I ask hon. members who believe in justice and law being administered impartially to have courage enough to support the Opposition and assist them to make an effective protest, because in my opinion it is a distinct miscarriage of justice and fair play, and the Government have openly winked at a condition of affairs which they have no right to wink at. This subject was put before the Cabinet, and the Cabinet must stand up to their responsibility. They must see that the law is administered in an impartial and effective manner and not allow things to go on as they are to-day. I beg, by way of amendment, to move—

"That the vote be reduced by £1."

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I desire to support the amendment moved by the leader of the Opposition. There is every justification for everything the hon. gentleman has said in connection with the vote. Like the leader of the Opposition, I am opposed to "Liberty Fairs" in any shape or form. On the evidence we have had and from what we have been told, I certainly think that there has been unfair discrimination shown in connection with this matter. We have been taunted with obtaining funds to carry

on our campaign of work from certain individuals and certain sources. From whatever sources we get our money it is not tainted in the same way as the money received for quite a number of years for propaganda purposes from "Liberty Fairs" not only in Brisbane but in various parts of Queensland.

Mr. LLEWELYN: Do you want to deprive women and children of food and clothing?

Mr. TAYLOR: It is not a bit of use the hon. member talking about robbing children of food and clothing. The "Liberty Fairs" have robbed children of more food and clothing than has been taken by anything else in the community. The "Liberty Fairs" are a scandal and disgrace. The Act passed by this Parliament a session or two ago was not put through to check gambling in any shape or form, but was put through simply for the purpose of obtaining revenue. The Government have not endeavoured to enforce a single provision of that Act which has been on the statute-book, and the Attorney-General knows that what I am saying is quite true. When the Bill was going through the House I asked the hon. gentleman if it were intended to enforce its provisions, but he sat silent knowing that the provisions were not going to be enforced. The Bill was simply to delude, camouflage, and humbug the public. That is what it was put through for. We are protesting in this Chamber to-day about certain things being done.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: If the hon. member will read the newspapers, he will see that people are being prosecuted for gambling.

Mr. TAYLOR: We know all about those who are prosecuted for gambling under the Act I have referred to. The Act was not introduced for the purpose of stopping gambling at all. It was simply a revenue Act. In fact, the Minister said it was a revenue Act, and his own words in "Hansard" testify to that. Let us fight our political campaigns clean. Let us raise our money in connection with those campaigns in a fair and square method. If we are going to give permission to certain individuals to run these "Liberty Fairs" in certain ways, then we have a right to allow other people, such as Brother Moore, to exercise the same right.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: You want the Attorney-General to give more permits instead of less?

Mr. TAYLOR: No. I do not want any permits to be given at all. It is no good the hon. member trying to humbug and camouflage what is being done. If he is in favour of gambling, then let him vote with the Government. I ask him, Is he or is he not in favour of gambling?

Mr. WINSTANLEY: I am not in favour of giving any more permits.

Mr. TAYLOR: We know exactly what you are in favour of. We know how you are going to vote.

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

Mr. TAYLOR: I am sorry that I was drawn off the track. I certainly think that the Government have acted in a very unfair way in giving certain individuals the right to conduct "Liberty Fairs" on Government property in order that they may not come within the jurisdiction of the Greater Brisbane Council. The Minister knows, and the

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Government know, that the Greater Brisbane Council has definitely stated that it intends to prohibit the running of these "Liberty Fairs" in the area under its control. In order that the Greater Brisbane Council might not be able to use the power, which it undoubtedly has under the Greater Brisbane Act, to prevent "Liberty Fairs," the Government gave a permit for this "Fair" to be run on Government property. The thing is certainly a shame and disgrace to the Government. They had no right to grant that permit when shortly before they refused a permit for a "Fair" the proceeds of which were to be used for educational and religious purposes.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: We did nothing of the kind. We granted a permit, but it was not availed of.

Mr. TAYLOR: The Attorney-General certainly gave a permit, but the Cabinet imposed certain limitations. The regulations that were issued were only humbug and hypocrisy. When the Cabinet issued the regulations prohibiting certain games from being played it was never intended that they should be carried out, and they are not being carried out at the present time.

Mr. KELSO (*Nundah*): The action taken by the leader of the Opposition is fully warranted by the statement he made. Like the leader of the Opposition, I have no time for "Liberty Fairs"; but, if the majority of this Chamber say they are in favour of them, being subject to majority rule, all we ask is that the law should be impartially administered. It is a scandalous state of affairs that the Government should give preference to somebody who is a political friend in order that he may raise funds for political purposes, and at the same time, if there is any virtue in these "Fairs," refuse to permit Brother Moore carrying on a "Fair" on similar lines to raise money for a better object. By allowing Mr. Sharpe to conduct this "Liberty Fair" on Government property the Government are only side-tracking the position. It is a disgrace for the Government and the Secretary for Railways to allow Government property to be used for such a purpose. Even if the "Liberty Fair" was run on Government property, it ought to be under the control of the Greater Brisbane Council. The Mayor of Greater Brisbane has already announced that he is going to put these "Fairs" down. By allowing Mr. Sharpe or the men working for him to have this "Liberty Fair" on Government property, the Government are attempting to circumvent the authority of the mayor. If the "Liberty Fair" was held in a public place, the mayor could take action. It is cowardly for the Government to give the permission they did for the holding of this "Fair" after the mayor had made his public statement.

Some time ago I brought under the notice of the Attorney-General certain things that were going on for political purposes at such "Fairs" at Petrie Bight and in the Domain.

Mr. HARTLEY: How long ago was that?

Mr. KELSO: It was some time last year. I have nothing to say against the hon. gentleman in the matter, because he received me very courteously.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: For what purpose did you see me?

Mr. KELSO: The hon. gentleman knows perfectly well that I interviewed him in con-

nection with "Liberty Fairs" that were being carried on at Petrie Bight and in the Domain. The "Fair" is still being held at Petrie Bight.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Was that last year?

Mr. KELSO: It was, and the hon. gentleman knows that. He received me very courteously, and said that he would get a report from the inspector.

Mr. W. COOPER: How do you know those "Fairs" were there?

Mr. KELSO: What tripe! Does the hon. member shut his eyes when he goes down to the Domain? It is time he woke up.

Mr. W. COOPER: What were you doing there if gambling was going on?

Mr. KELSO: The thing is sticking right in front of your nose, and you cannot help seeing it if you walk past Petrie Bight. The Attorney-General received a report from an inspector, and when I again saw him he told me the report stated that no gambling was going on. I said the hon. gentleman must have known gambling was going on, but I was again referred to what was contained in the report. The leader of the Opposition told us the police over at Woolloongabba were actually asked to take action but they did not see anything! If the attention of the police was drawn to the matter and they took no notice, it is a safe assumption that they must have had some instructions to that effect. I go so far as to say they had instructions and I ask the Attorney-General to disprove my statement. In the other case quoted by Brother Moore, why was the hon. gentleman so pertinacious about the matter, saying this must be done, and that must be done? Surely it is a fair assumption that the police received instructions in the matter. Why the discrimination?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: There was no discrimination.

Mr. KELSO: It is all very well for the hon. gentleman to say that.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I will prove it.

Mr. KELSO: The hon. gentleman may not be to blame personally, but at the same time this is a vote of censure on the Government. It is the duty of the Minister in charge of the department to find out these things. It is a matter of great public moment. Great discrimination has been used, and the leader of the Opposition is perfectly entitled to bring the matter up and to claim the support of hon. members opposite who do not approve of this sort of thing. If we are to allow the principle of discrimination in matters of justice to permeate through the community we shall set up a very bad precedent, which will result in chaos to the community.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*): I wish to say a word or two in reply to the very unfair criticism hurled at the Government by the leader of the Opposition, the hon. member for Windsor, and the hon. member for Nundah. If ever there was inconsistency, it was exhibited this morning by the leader of the Opposition in first condemning "Liberty Fairs" and then protesting because the Government did not grant more of them. The hon. member would not have objected if "Liberty Fairs" were granted indiscriminately and were rampant throughout Queensland. That is all the hon. member wants.

Mr. CORSER: He does not want discrimination.

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The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: No; he wanted a maximum amount of abuse to be indulged in, and then everything would be all right.

Mr. CORSER: All he wants is fairness.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: There never has been any unfairness. If we had granted an unlimited number of "Liberty Fairs" there would not have been any comment or criticism from the leader of the Opposition. After I have given the facts I will leave it to fair-minded members of the Opposition to say whether there was any unfairness or discrimination. In the early part of this year the Government received complaints that the permits which were being issued by my department for art unions and guessing competitions were being abused, and on inquiry we found there was some foundation for the allegations. The Cabinet, therefore, considered the question and came to the decision that in future the police should insist on the parties running such shows keeping strictly within the permit granted by the Attorney-General.

Mr. WEIR: Are they doing that?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That decision was arrived at on 7th July, 1925. Immediately that determination was arrived at an instruction was issued by the Home Secretary to the Commissioner of Police to see that it was carried out. Neither before nor after that decision was arrived at has my department ever granted any other than a permit to run raffles, art unions, and guessing competitions; and Brother Moore, to whom the leader of the Opposition refers to-day, received a permit from me in precisely the same terms as everybody else.

Mr. MOORE: I admitted that.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Brother Moore, subsequent to receiving his permit, was subjected to no different treatment than that meted out to everybody else.

Mr. MOORE: He was.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I absolutely deny that statement. From the date of that determination similar treatment has been meted out to everyone. It is absurd for the leader of the Opposition to say that has not been so, and I am sure Brother Moore would not be unfair enough to suggest that we have treated him differently to anybody else.

Mr. MOORE: He definitely makes the statement.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The permits are to conduct raffles, art unions, and guessing competitions, and the police have had definite instructions from [12 noon] the Home Secretary to see that the terms of the permit are adhered to. I hope they are adhered to. I should be very sorry to think that the police have departed from the instructions received. I have no love for "Liberty Fairs" or that sort of thing, but there should be no objection to these things if they are run within reason.

Mr. MOORE: Neither there is; but, when you compel one man—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The hon. gentleman opened his remarks by condemning the thing altogether.

Mr. MOORE: I do condemn gambling.

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The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: What is gambling? Is not an art union a gamble? Is not a raffle a gamble? Is not a guessing competition a gamble?

Mr. PETERSON: So is an election. (Laughter.)

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: If these be gambles, I ask the Opposition why they come to me constantly and make application for these permits.

Mr. KELSO: Is this a suppression of gambling?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I have in my possession a list of the names of members of the Opposition, occupying a couple of pages of foolscap, who have come to me on scores of occasions and made applications for the very same permits that I have granted to those people of whom they are now complaining.

Mr. PETERSON: We have to do that for our constituents.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Of course, they have to do it, and I am not blaming hon. gentlemen for doing it. When they come along and keep within the law they will get permits, but what I do object to is the leader of the Opposition getting up this morning with his tongue in his cheek and condemning the Government for granting permits when he himself has come along and got a permit.

Mr. MOORE: I have not.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I have got the hon. gentleman down for one at the Goombungee Public Hall. (Laughter.)

Mr. MOORE: I never applied for a permit.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It is here all right.

Mr. MOORE: I got a permit for a "chocolate walk" the other day.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: As a matter of fact the hon. gentleman was in for one the other day, but I am not referring to that. Where is the consistency of these hon. gentlemen? The permits that they have received from me are precisely the same permits as were issued to those people at Petrie's Bight, Woolloongabba, and elsewhere.

Mr. MOORE: I never denied that.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: What is your complaint about? What is your trouble?

Mr. MOORE: I was definite enough in my charge.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You have failed miserably to substantiate it.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I would ask the hon. gentleman to address the Chair, and I would ask the leader of the Opposition to refrain from interjecting.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The leader of the Opposition has failed miserably to substantiate his charge of discrimination. Brother Moore received precisely the same fair treatment in the matter of permits for raffles, art unions, and guessing competitions that we have extended to everybody else. I should be very sorry to think that either myself, as Minister, or the Government, or this party would discriminate between the treatment meted out to Brother Moore and that meted out to anyone else. We have no intention of doing anything of the kind, and I think the leader of the Opposition should be fair enough to admit it. The hon. member for Windsor said we were adopting means of

raising funds that were not clean. I hope that members of the Opposition will follow the excellent advice which they have given this morning, and that they will not go to the National Union and other bodies to secure funds for defeating the Labour party.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. KELSO: The National Union does not exist.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I shall probably have something further to say on this matter later, if there is anything to reply to, but I think I have said enough at this stage in reply to the leader of the Opposition.

Mr. F. A. COOPER (*Bremer*): I have listened with the greatest interest to the charges made by the leader of the Opposition and the refutation of those charges by the Attorney-General.

Mr. MOORE: Refutation?

Mr. F. A. COOPER: Yes, I consider that the Attorney-General has completely refuted the charge, and now the onus rests upon the leader of the Opposition. The hon. member for Nundah, having an idea that something was amiss, went to the Attorney-General and inquiries were made. The leader of the Opposition, on the other hand, sent a couple of private detectives—

Mr. MOORE: Not private detectives—ordinary individuals.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: They went to Woolloongabba and made certain inquiries, and came back to the leader of the Opposition with certain statements. Now it is up to the leader of the Opposition to substantiate those statements.

Mr. MOORE: Certainly I will.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: If the leader of the Opposition will do that, we may get a little further in this matter. The charges made by the leader of the Opposition are outside the ambit of the Attorney-General's duties. He issues the permit and gives instructions to the police, and that is the end of it, and anyone with half an eye can see that is right. If the leader of the Opposition knew his duty, he would have made this charge definitely against the department. It is an absolute charge against the conduct of the police. The duty of the leader of the Opposition is to sheet that charge home to the Police Department. If he does that this party will stand solidly behind him in seeing that the Police Force is cleaned up. The Attorney-General and the Cabinet will stand with him. We are just as keen as the leader of the Opposition in seeing that this sort of thing, if it is going on, is put down, and we ask him now to come right out into the open with his charges and bring forward his witnesses. He can go to the "Gabba" and commandeer the books of the organisation which is running this thing and find out where the money is going. We can sheet it right home to the people who are evading the law—if it is being evaded—and we ought to do it. The charge of the leader of the Opposition against the Attorney-General is gone, and there is nothing in it. The Attorney-General has issued the permits under the law, as he ought to do. I intend to vote against the amendment of the leader of the Opposition for that reason. I beseech him, if he is in earnest in what he has said

this morning, to pursue the thing to the bitter end. I can assure him that the whole of this party will stand with him in his exposure of methods that are wrong and entirely against the instructions of the Attorney-General.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): I am glad to see that one hon. member on the Government side has come to the conclusion that the Government have done something wrong—(Government laughter)—but I suppose he will be quite satisfied if the Government do not take any action in the matter. Apparently he thinks that the leader of the Opposition ought to make all the charges and that the Minister in charge of the department ought to do nothing. That is the view the hon. member takes, but it is not a right view. It is not right for the Minister to give a permit in one case and refuse it in another case. That is certainly not the duty of the Minister. There are some games which are perfectly respectable, and there are other things that people should not be allowed to do, and the Attorney-General has no business to do things like that. The same principle should be applied to everybody.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I have granted as many permits to hon. members on the opposite side as to members on the Government side.

Mr. DEACON: And why not? I have no prejudice myself against these things, but I say that, if they are going to be allowed to one they should be allowed to all. If they are going to be refused to any, they should be refused to all. If the Government think they are wrong, they should refuse them to everybody; but the Attorney-General's Department is at fault in allowing them in some cases and not allowing them in others.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That is not true.

Mr. DEACON: Now we have a member of the Government party saying that we ought to go on with the charges. I say that the Attorney-General should go on with them. We should have had a denial of the charges, but there has not been a word of denial from the Attorney-General. It is quite wrong that anybody should hold that the Government should not take action, and I hope there will be a fair go all round. If this method of raising money is not to be used for one purpose, it should not be used for political purposes; and there is no doubt that money is being raised in this way for political purposes. Witnesses have said so. I do hope that a more serious view will be taken by the Government of their duty in this respect.

Mr. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): I do not intend to beat about the bush on this matter. I was very pleased last July when the Cabinet decided that in future permits granted for "Liberty Fairs" the law should be strictly adhered to—that no money or liquor prizes should be given, and no games of chance should be played. I think the instructions given by the Cabinet to the police have been very definite, and I know that the instructions issued by the Commissioner of Police have also been very definite. If those instructions have been evaded, it is the duty of the Government to find out whether it is so, and to take action. I make no secret of my position in regard to the matter. I have applied for permits, and whenever I have obtained them it has been on condition that

*Mr. Hartley.]*

the instructions were strictly adhered to, and I have also taken action to see that they were observed. On more than one occasion I have been criticised by members of unions in my electorate for doing so. I say that this phase of the business to which reference has been made is bad for the community, and worse for the younger members of the community, and it should be stopped. I hope the Minister will make such representations to the Commissioner of Police that he will investigate these charges and determine whether the conditions of the permit have been evaded, and, if so, that action will be taken to prosecute those abusing the terms of the permit. For my part, if we are going to be continually worried and bothered by the evasion of the conditions attached to these permits I hope that the provision in the gambling law giving authority to the Attorney-General to issue these permits, will be cut out. (Hear, hear!) That is the simplest way of getting over this business. If we are going to have men like Hugh Black and others running professional gambling concerns under the guise of helping charitable institutions or anyone else, the sooner we make it impossible for them to obtain any sort of permit under which they can shelter, or by which they can evade the police, the better. I do not intend to vote for the amendment because it would mean a vote of no confidence in the Government, and as the Attorney-General has amply demonstrated that there has been no discrimination shown by his department in the matter, I would not be justified in supporting the amendment.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I did not say that the Attorney-General had done anything wrong on his part. I did not say that he had given permission to certain persons and not to others, or that he had given different permits to different people. I say that the permits have all been the same. I read the article from the "Catholic Advocate" showing that after a certain decision discrimination had been shown, and I definitely and emphatically stated that at the Christian Brothers' Jubilee Appeal "Liberty Fair" on every occasion the police prevented those in charge from obtaining money by "get-rich-quick" or similar devices.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: They have stopped other people, too.

Mr. MOORE: I am not talking about that. I am stating definitely that on every occasion they endeavoured to make use of the "Under and Over Seven" or any "get-rich-quick" device they were stopped.

Mr. HARTLEY: Why did you not call the attention of the Commissioner of Police to it?

Mr. MOORE: It is not my place to call the attention of the Commissioner of Police to it. My place is here, where I am making a definite statement. The hon. member for Bremer says it is my job to bring forward my witnesses. If necessary, I will bring forward the witnesses. I am prepared to stand up to what I have to say in this Chamber. I am told to bring them forward publicly. Am I not acting publicly now? I state publicly and definitely in this Chamber that discrimination has been shown. I do not say that the Attorney-General has made any discrimination in issuing permits, but I do say that the Cabinet has shown discrimination. It is the Government's job

to administer the law after the Cabinet have arrived at a decision. It is the Government's job to see that the decision is carried out, and not allow it to be carried out in one instance and not in another. We know that the Trades Hall to-day is conducting a "Liberty Fair" for the purpose of obtaining campaign funds to defray the election expenses of Mr. Sharpe. Whilst the Christian Brothers' "Liberty Fair" was not allowed to carry on in a certain way, this particular "Liberty Fair" that I refer to is carrying on gambling openly, and doing the very thing that the Christian Brothers' "Liberty Fair" was prevented from doing. The same gambling games are being conducted. When the Cabinet arrive at a decision, the Government should carry out that decision, and that is not being done. That is my definite charge. I am not sheltering behind the police. I do not want the Government to shelter behind the police. I do not want them to sacrifice one policeman to absolve themselves. I want them to see that the instructions given to the police are carried out. It is the Government's duty to see that the law is administered efficiently and properly, and not administered in one case and not in another. I say there has been definite partiality shown. I say definitely that there has been discrimination shown, and that word has been passed to the police to shut their eyes. I say that every member in this Chamber who believes in the Government carrying out the law impartially should vote against the Government, whether it means a vote of no confidence or not. It is all very well for hon. members to get up and make excuses and raise side issues.

Mr. HARTLEY: I am not making any excuse.

Mr. MOORE: It is all very well for hon. members to make excuses for the way they are going to vote. I did not imagine for an instant that hon. members opposite would have the courage to vote against the Government even if they knew that the Government were in the wrong; but I am giving them an opportunity to do so.

Mr. WEIR: You have not produced any evidence yet. We have only your statement.

Mr. MOORE: Does the hon. member expect me to bring witnesses into this Chamber?

Mr. WEIR: You do not expect me to swallow your statement.

Mr. MOORE: I do not expect the hon. member to swallow it when it does not suit him. He does not want to accept my statement. I am making a definite statement, and I am quite prepared to bring witnesses to prove my assertions.

Mr. WEIR: I do not believe you.

Mr. MOORE: It is immaterial to me whether the hon. member believes me or not. If he likes to soothe his conscience in regard to the vote he will give by saying that he does not believe me, he can do so. I have moved a reduction in the vote because I believe it is essential that, when the Cabinet come to a definite decision, they should stand up to their decision and see that the law is administered impartially. The Attorney-General said that his intentions were good. Possibly they were, but the road to hell is paved with good intentions. (Laughter.) The Attorney-General requires

[*Mr. Hartley.*]

to see that the law is administered impartially. I make the definite statement that he is not doing so. Any hon. member of this Committee can secure the same evidence as I have received. It is no use hon. members saying that I should have gone to the police and given them information. I make this further definite statement, that one of the men who went to this "Liberty Fair" to see whether the games which had been prohibited were being carried on or not saw these games being played and spoke to a policeman who was there. He asked him if the playing of those games was not against the law, but no action was taken. That is a pretty definite statement to make, and I am prepared to stand up to it. The whole position is wrong. If permits are given, let every person be treated alike. I never suggested that the Attorney-General has shown any favouritism in the issuing of these permits.

The PREMIER: Whom do you accuse?

Mr. MOORE: I say that the Government should see that every person is treated alike.

The PREMIER: Who do you say is responsible?

Mr. MOORE: I say that the Government have not administered the law impartially.

The PREMIER: There must be some particular individual responsible.

Mr. MOORE: The Premier is the head of the Government, but I do not know whether the hon. gentleman is going to take upon his shoulders the administration of all the departments. Boiled down, I suppose it is the Home Department which is responsible.

The PREMIER: You are making these charges, but you are not certain who is responsible.

Mr. MOORE: I do not accuse any particular individual. I take up this stand: The Government have come to a Cabinet decision as to what games are to be played at these "Liberty Fairs," and, after coming to that decision, it is their responsibility to see that every person is treated alike. I make the definite statement that every person has not been treated alike.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: They have.

Mr. MOORE: I make the definite statement that Brother Moore was prohibited from using certain games of chance. Brother Moore went over to Woollongabba to see whether these other people were being allowed to conduct the games that he was prohibited from playing, and he definitely and unequivocally informs me that the games of chance which he was prohibited from conducting are being carried on over there.

Mr. KELSO: And the police are winking at them.

Mr. MOORE: I have also other evidence to say the same thing.

Mr. WEIR: Why don't you bring it?

Mr. MOORE: I cannot bring witnesses into this Chamber, but I make the definite statement, and, if the hon. member for Maryborough does not believe me, he can go and see for himself. I have moved a reduction in this vote because I consider it a scandal and a gross injustice that this state of affairs should be allowed to continue.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): I have listened with some attention to the debate on this question since its introduction by the leader of the Opposition. I listened very attentively to the reply of the Attorney-General. I have also heard the statements

of two hon. members on the Government benches, and, summed up, what are they? The hon. member for Bremer said that he is quite satisfied that the Attorney-General has substantiated his case. What is that? That permits are issued equally to all. That is not the charge made by the leader of the Opposition in moving a reduction of the vote. The charge is that the conditions attached to the permit issued are not being observed. Then the hon. member for Fitzroy satisfied his conscience by saying that, if he voted against the Government, he would be voting in support of a motion of want of confidence.

At 12.25 p.m.,

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

Mr. ROBERTS: There is no need for a member of Parliament to get up in this Chamber and say that he will not vote against the Government because it would then be a vote of want of confidence. What is the amendment moved for?

Mr. HARTLEY: For political purposes.

Mr. ROBERTS: Whatever is said does not alter the charge in any way.

Mr. DASH: Are you one of the persons who went over to Woollongabba?

Mr. ROBERTS: No, but I know a little about this matter.

Mr. W. COOPER: Do you know anything about gambling?

Mr. ROBERTS: I do. There is no man in this Chamber who can teach me anything in the matter of gambling, outside paying up the losses. I have made it my business to watch gambling games to acquire that knowledge. I learnt this morning that "Under and over seven" and games such as that are contrary to the permit. That is a revelation to me, because, having seen them played in this very city, I assumed they were covered by the permit.

Mr. HARTLEY: You knew very well they were not covered by the permit.

Mr. ROBERTS: I know there are such things as not taking action. I have not been in politics since 1907 without knowing that certain men are not taking action and why they are not taking action. I know that instructions are issued, but I could not prove that. I have a brain power which I can exercise, and I recognise that the police are not fools. They are not blind. If these things are going on and the police have not taken any action, I know that the word has been passed on to them. I say that definitely, and I am not afraid to say it. I do not want any person from outside brought into this Chamber to satisfy the hon. member for Maryborough before he will vote against the Government. I am in this Chamber, and I say I have seen the game of "Under and over seven" carried on in this city, and I am astonished to know it is not covered by the permit. If I drop across it again, I shall certainly look into the matter.

Mr. HARTLEY: What a big innocent you are to say you did not know that "Under and over seven" was a contravention of the Gambling Act.

Mr. ROBERTS: I have not seen the permit.

Mr. BRUCE: You have not used the brain power you were speaking about.

*Mr. Roberts.]*

Mr. ROBERTS: There is sufficient justification for the leader of the Opposition to raise his protest and ask why discrimination has been exercised. He is quite justified in asking for a permit in certain directions, and the Government have the right to say, "Yes" or "No" to that request. I rose chiefly to say that the game of "Under and over seven" has been played in this city in connection with gambling fairs considerably later than July last.

Mr. W. COOPER (*Rosewood*): I have listened to the complaints of hon. members opposite in regard to the Attorney-General issuing permits and discriminating between one class and another. I can honestly say that I have had requests from various public bodies in my electorate to ask the Attorney-General to grant permits for [12.30 p.m.] holding guessing competitions and raffles; but, seeing that Rosewood is a very well conducted electorate, I have not had any requests to secure permits to run the game of "Under and over seven," whatever sort of gambling that is.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Don't you know what it is?

Mr. W. COOPER: I understand that "Under and over" has been played ever since the world began, and it is a question whether it is gambling or not. Hon. members on the other side, judging by their remarks, appear to me to be more conversant with the methods of gambling than hon. members on this side. I would like to ask the leader of the Opposition whether the Brother Moore he referred to so often this morning is any relation of Brother Moore, the leader of the Opposition. It seems to be a family affair, and that the hon. gentleman is taking up the family cudgels when he is condemning the Attorney-General for discrimination which he said has been meted out to certain people. I do not know whether that is a fact or not, but I do know that, if I was aware that a game that was against the law of the State was being played, particularly if I happened to be the leader of the Opposition and did not want to get some kudos out of it, I would draw the attention of some policeman to the breach of the law.

Mr. MOORE: I drew the Premier's attention to it.

Mr. W. COOPER: It is the business of every hon. member to see that the law is carried out. From the statements that have been made to-day, it appears that the hon. gentleman endeavoured to get somebody to draw somebody else's attention to what was going on, and then, in order to get a little bit of kudos for his own party, he brings it up on this vote to-day and charges the Attorney-General with discrimination in regard to the permits issued to public bodies.

Mr. MOORE: I rise to a point of order. I did not say that the Attorney-General had shown discrimination in the permits at all. I quite admit they are all the same.

Mr. W. COOPER: I must accept the hon. gentleman's statement; but, if that is so, I see no reason for this debate. If there has been no discrimination in regard to the issuing of permits, there is really nothing to complain of. On the word of the Attorney-General, the police have received definite instructions to prohibit any gambling of that kind, and the Attorney-General cannot be held responsible for the neglect of one or two

[*Mr. Roberts.*

policemen who, being innocent like many hon. members on this side, do not know gambling when they see it. We know members of the Government party never see things of that kind while hon. members opposite seem to be so conversant with gambling principles that they can detect the minutest form of gambling. We should exonerate the Attorney-General of any blame in this matter. The attitude he has taken up has been absolutely fair, and he has not discriminated as to the permits granted to the different bodies. If there is any fault, it really lies with hon. members opposite. We all gamble. Standing as a candidate at an election is a gamble. Buying and selling produce is a gamble. Almost everything is a gamble, but it appears to me that hon. members opposite, from the statements they have made, know more about gambling than any member on this side of the Chamber.

Mr. BRUCE (*Kennedy*): According to the interjection of the leader of the Opposition when the hon. member for Rosewood was addressing the Committee, the question of discrimination has been done away with. I am not very keen on these "Liberty Fairs" and the things that go on in connection with "Liberty Fairs," but, if this amendment is moved to bring about reform, it is a "dud," because there are much broader reforms and very different action required if the Opposition are going to start a reform movement in regard to gambling. The thing in itself is of little or no importance. It appears to me that in their haste the members of the Opposition have used the first blunderbuss that came to their hands. I do not feel inclined to sacrifice a policeman on the altar of party politics.

Mr. KELSO: No; even if he does wrong?

Mr. BRUCE: The thing is ridiculous. The question of discrimination has now been done away with.

Mr. MOORE: It has not been done away with.

Mr. BRUCE: The leader of the Opposition got up and said that he did not make any charge as to the exercise of discrimination. The reduction of the vote was not moved on the ground that the police had not done their duty. The hon. member for Nundah has a different view to the leader of the Opposition who moved the amendment—evidently hon. members of the Opposition do not know what the position is and differ on the matter.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: Do you believe in public gambling?

Mr. BRUCE: You would have to give me a definition as to what is public gambling.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: Let us have your views on that.

Mr. BRUCE: When we have defined public gambling, we shall be able to attack the evil. Personally, I believe that gambling of all kinds is detrimental to the community as a whole. I saw a statement in the paper this morning that a man who bought potatoes at £11 a ton the other day refused to sell them, and that he held the potatoes and ultimately sold them at £17 a ton. He was gambling on a pretty sure thing. A section of the Opposition are receiving support from "sure thing" gamblers—legalised gamblers—who are putting money into the National Union to be used for election purposes.

Mr. COSTELLO: Where do the breweries put their funds?

Mr. BRUCE: The breweries put their funds into the pockets of their shareholders. (Opposition laughter.)

Hon. J. G. APPEL: Are you a shareholder?

Mr. BRUCE: I am not. Hon. members opposite know that it is a futile and foolish amendment. The specious arguments which they have put forward with a view to inducing any hon. member on this side to support will not have any weight. I am satisfied that the amendment will be treated with the contempt which it deserves. It will merely mean the ringing of the bells and the crossing of the floor to take part in the division.

Hon. J. G. APPEL (*Albert*): It seems to me that there is a great amount of hypocrisy expressed in connection with gambling. I was taught when I was a youngster that, if you won anything at gambling, you got something that you had not worked for, and there is a considerable amount of truth in that. The Government carry on the "Golden Casket" scheme to raise money, and, when we go on a racecourse or play at cards for money, gambling takes place. The question which has become acute is this: Is it good for the youths of this State to be educated as what we may term "gamesters" or not? That is the point. Personally I believe that it is not good. I believe that the effect upon our youth is not beneficial, either to themselves or to the community or the State. The question of discrimination has come up. If we are to have permits given for gambling, why should there be any discrimination? That is what I want to know. If the Minister is going to give permits for one class of games, or for this particular form of gaming which is used for the purpose of obtaining funds for election campaigns, why is there any discrimination? Why are they not given where the object is for philanthropic, religious, educational, or other purposes?

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: What are other purposes?

Hon. J. G. APPEL: Those are the things referred to by the leader of the Opposition and which we see taking place. Why should there be any discrimination between them? Cases from my own electorate have come before me where permits have been refused for objects which were certainly worthy and beneficial. I do not say that I approve of gambling; but, after all, we cannot have any sport to-day in which the gambling instinct is not introduced.

Mr. BRUCE: In your definition of gambling marbles could be included.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: I suppose it could, although in games when I was a schoolboy a considerable amount of skill was required; but we are not referring to those games. That was a question of a prize for an exhibition of skill and the one with the most skill obtained the prize; but I think that the Minister will admit that a lot of gaming is going on where there is no question of skill but only of chance. I think the hon. member will admit that the gaming which is going on does not make for the improvement of the younger section of the community. How many race meetings have we in Brisbane every week? Do hon. members for one moment assert that that racing which attracts so many members of the community—who are prepared to sacrifice even the

whole of their wages, and frequently do—is for the benefit of the community and should be encouraged by the State? But whatever their answer, we are up against this other fact. The State—and yesterday I spoke of the State as being the mother of the people—the State encourages this gambling by conducting "Golden Caskets," which are essentially one of the most insidious forms of gambling that can exist. Was it not described by one gentleman whom I will not name as "the crooked art of black hazardry"? And so it is. We have to do one thing or the other. Here we are, seventy-two men elected by the seventy-two electorates of the State, and we are encouraging gambling, because by the body who administer the affairs of the State it has been converted into a State institution. Here we have this hypocrisy. Here we have established a most insidious form of gambling and we are cavilling at little bits of piffing concerns in many instances conducted for the purpose of some local beneficial purpose. Whether it is a good thing that gambling should be indulged in for the purpose of obtaining funds for political purposes is a matter that I am not going to debate to-day. Personally I do not think that any gambling is wise, still I am more or less imbued with the spirit affecting all Australians. All sport demands a certain amount of risk, and if you back your particular fancy you must be prepared to lose something. At the same time I am not going to stand here and be a hypocrite and say I condemn the whole thing. I do say that the State above all should set an example, but it has established the most insidious form of gambling to-day, and is acting in a hypocritical spirit, and discriminating with regard to certain applications that are made from time to time for the purpose I have mentioned.

At 12.48 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Question—That £21,569 only be granted (*Mr. Moore's amendment*)—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 21.	
Mr. Appel	Mr. Haswell
" Barnes, G. P.	" Moore
" Barnes, W. H.	" Nott
" Clayton	" Peterson
" Corser	" Petrie
" Costello	" Roberts
" Deacon	" Sizer
" Edwards	" Swayne
" Kelso	" Taylor
" King	" Warren
" Logan	

Tellers: Mr. Clayton and Mr. Kelso.

NOES, 28.	
Mr. Bedford	Mr. Hartley
" Bertram	" Hynes
" Bruce	" Jara
" Bulcock	" Kirwan
" Collins	" Lisle
" Conroy	" Lewiston
" Cooper, F. A.	" McLachlan
" Cooper, W.	" Mullan
" Dash	" Payne
" Dunstan	" Stopford
" Ferrieks	" Weir
" Foley	" Wellington
" Gladson	" Winstanley
" Han-on	" Wright

Tellers: Mr. Hanson and Mr. Wright.

AYES.		NOES.	
Mr. Bond	Mr. Pense		
" Morgan	" Parrell		
" Elphinstone	" Riordan		

Resolved in the negative.

Item (Chief Office) agreed to.

*Hon. J. G. Appel.]*

## COURTS OF PETTY SESSIONS.

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

“That £76,520 be granted for ‘Courts of Petty Sessions.’”

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I take this opportunity of bringing under the notice of the Minister the large number of people who have been deprived of the jurisdiction of the District Court, and we might consider the advisability of re-establishing that court. Its abolition has meant that litigants desirous of appealing from a decision given in a Magistrates Court have to appeal direct to the Supreme Court. This adds very considerably to the costs. The present system enables barristers and solicitors to secure high fees through the prolongation of cases by the introduction on many occasions of irrelevant evidence. I am aware that the functions of the Magistrates Court are being enlarged, and that some of the cases previously dealt with in the District Court are now dealt with in that court. At the same time the abolition of the District Court has added very considerably to the expenses of unfortunate people who have to resort to law, and it is high time that District Courts were re-established to save litigants the expense of going to the Supreme Court to seek justice.

Mr. KELSO (*Nundah*): I would ask the Attorney-General whether serious consideration has been given to the suggestions which have been made with regard to police magistrates from time to time. Their emoluments should be more in accordance with the responsibilities of the work they perform. We have abolished the District Court, and these gentlemen are now really occupying the positions formerly occupied by District Court judges, so far as responsibility is concerned. It is not a fair thing to ask these officials to arrive at decisions on matters similar to those adjudged by District Court judges when the salaries are so disproportionate. The Chief Police Magistrate receives £850—an increase from £700—while there are four other magistrates in the Brisbane area, three receiving £790 and one £750. Surely, if officials are to be paid according to the responsibility of the position they occupy, and if previously the salary of a District Court judge was £1,000, it is only fair to claim a like salary for our magistrates.

Mr. COLLINS: You are the best champion for the man on top that we have in this Chamber.

Mr. KELSO: I am quite prepared to hear such a statement from the hon. member. I contend that responsible officers should be adequately remunerated, and, while I am not bringing other public servants into the discussion, I submit that the Government have acted rightly in stipulating that officials should be remunerated according to the responsibility of their office.

Mr. COLLINS: I am not saying they receive too much, but I do think we get too little.

Mr. KELSO: The hon. member may be covetous, but I am not covetous in that direction. The system applies to Parliament. The hon. member must realise that, because Cabinet Ministers carry a greater responsibility than private members, they receive a greater remuneration. The hon. member missed his opportunity one morning

[*Mr. Corser.*]

at 4 o'clock, when he missed the opportunity of becoming Premier.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. KELSO: I would like the Attorney-General to inform the Committee whether this matter has been given consideration, because undoubtedly police magistrates are under-paid for the work they do.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*): There must be some misconception in the mind of the hon. member for Burnett. He asks that the District Court should be re-established in order to cheapen litigation. As a matter of fact, we abolished the District Court and established Magistrates Courts for just that purpose. The Magistrates Courts have jurisdiction up to £200, whereas previously a man had to go to the District Court in such a case. He is now relieved of that additional expense. I admit that in the case of an appeal he must go to the Supreme Court, but that was the position previously. I claim we have cheapened litigation by the establishment of the Magistrates Court.

The hon. member for Nundah was anxious to know whether, in view of the increased responsibilities and the increased jurisdiction of the police magistrates and their courts, we are allowing them

[2 p.m.] additional emoluments. In reply to that hon. member I am pleased to state that we have fully recognised their claims and have increased their payments in proportion to their increased responsibilities. They now have the jurisdiction of a District Court judge, and, recognising that, we have increased the maximum salary for a first-class police magistrate from £800 to £1,000, which was the remuneration of a District Court judge. We have also increased the classification of police magistrates in the other grades as well in accordance with their increased responsibilities. Therefore, I claim that we have recognised the increased importance of the work, and I hope we shall be able to do even better for them in the future as their responsibilities increase.

Mr. KING (*Logan*): I am very pleased, indeed, to hear the Attorney-General make that statement in regard to the increased emoluments to police magistrates. There is no doubt that, since the enlargement of their jurisdiction, they have had very much more onerous and more responsible duties to perform, and I think it will be generally admitted that they have fulfilled their duties very well indeed. Therefore, I am very pleased, indeed, that the police magistrates are getting increased emoluments.

I do not know that I shall be in order in referring to the vote that has just been agreed to. I was out of the Chamber at the time, but I should like to make some reference to the Crown Solicitor.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You can bring that up on the resolutions at the report stage.

Mr. KING: Very well; I will bring it up later.

Item (Courts of Petty Sessions) agreed to.

## ELECTORAL REGISTRATION.

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

“That £33,440 be granted for ‘Electoral Registration.’”

Mr. FERRICKS (*South Brisbane*): I wish to bring under the notice of the officer in charge of the electoral office a matter which has come under my notice recently. In the columns of the Press during the last few years repeated statements have appeared that the rolls were inflated, and that there were fictitious names on the rolls, and it was a common thing to refer to these alleged fictitious names as "ghosts." Repeatedly leading articles have appeared in the Press urging that the roll should be purified. I am just a little afraid that the electoral officer is becoming a little stampeded at these requests in the public Press, to the extent that I believe the cleansing process has reached the stage of what is known as "Bulcocking" the rolls. The matter came under my notice at the last municipal election. I was in South Brisbane at the corner of Melbourne and Stanley streets outside the polling-booth there for a period of certainly not exceeding two hours. Being in charge of a roll and not a candidate, many of the prospective voters came to me and asked for their numbers, and a great many of them were surprised to find that their names were not on the roll, although they had been on the 1923 roll and they had voted at the 1923 State elections. During the two hours I was there I suppose at least eight cases were brought under my notice where the father or the son had had his name wiped off the roll and the wife or mother had been left on the roll, notwithstanding that there had been no alteration in the place of residence since the previous State election. I became a bit impatient with some of them when it was repeatedly ascertained during that period of two hours that their names were not on the roll. One old chap in particular came to me, and said, "I am not able to vote," and I asked him why? He said, "My name is not on the roll." I said, "Why is it not on the roll? It is too late now to inquire about that." He assured me that his name had been on the roll at the State election in 1923. He informed me that he had voted then, and had not left his place of residence. The name of his wife was retained on the roll. This old gentleman rather impressed me, with the result that I said I would go over and see him in his home and make inquiries about it. I did so, and he then told me that he had voted in Kurilpa as an absent voter at the State election for South Brisbane in 1923. I am not contending that he did, because there is no record of it.

Mr. ROBERTS: There must be a record if he did vote.

Mr. FERRICKS: I assume that he did not. I have the word of the officers in another direction that he did not vote.

Mr. ROBERTS: Then that is the end of it.

Mr. FERRICKS: I went to the Electoral Department, and I saw a young man there to whom I said, "Can you tell me the reason why ——— (I gave him the name) is not on the roll?" He went away, and returned, presumably after making inquiries, and said that the information in the office was that this man had written in reply to a letter from the returning officer stating that he did not vote at the 1923 election because he was no longer a resident of the State of Queensland. I knew that could not be correct, as I had been over to see him, when he had told me that he had not shifted from his place of residence. I went to him to ascertain if he had sent a letter to that effect to the

Electoral Department, and he told me he had not. I say that he did not send a letter. This is where the discrepancy came in: When I went back to the Electoral Department again to convey the information that this man had not sent a letter, I was informed—I think the gentleman who attended to me must have been the Deputy Electoral Registrar, but I do not know him personally—that the reason why this man's name was not on the roll was because the man had stated that he was enrolled on the Kurilpa roll and that he lived in South Brisbane. I said, "Did you look up the Kurilpa roll to see if his name was on that roll?" The answer I received was, "No." He was not on the Kurilpa roll, but that was the statement made to me. It seems very unsatisfactory and very indefinite information to get from the Electoral Office. The man could not have been absent from the State because he had not left his place of residence. Of course, it is possible that another man of the same name might conceivably be in the same electorate—although there are not two similar names on the South Brisbane electoral roll, but, assuming that the statement had been made or a letter to that effect had been sent, the office should have waited two months before it removed the man's name from the roll because his name was on another roll, especially when, if they had seen him in person, they must have seen that he was not too definite about the facts himself. I went into the matter to get the strength of it, because I have the belief that this is not peculiar to South Brisbane, but has been carried on in the whole of the metropolitan area. If that be so, it behoves the organisations which hold similar views to mine to look into the matter. My impression is that the names of men have been removed from the rolls and the names of their wives have been left on. Whether it is believed that the women folk are more susceptible to dope at the hands of the organisers at election time or not, it does seem strange. That was a case where there is a family of a man and his wife. It is the only instance I looked into personally, but, in the course of two hours that afternoon, I came across about ten similar cases.

I came across another case—a case of a lady this time. I went to the Electoral Office again, and asked whether they could tell me why Mrs. So-and-so had had her name removed from the roll, and the answer of the same officer in the Electoral Office was, "That lady was too infirm to go to the poll." When I inquired about the postal-voting facilities for infirm and invalid people, the answer I received was that the lady was illiterate, almost blind, and not a fit subject to be entrusted with the exercise of a postal vote. I went out to have that statement verified or contradicted. The information I obtained was that the lady had been running a little business, that she is anything but illiterate, anything but infirm, and that, whilst she had not voted at the 1923 election, at the 1920 election she had walked to and exercised her vote in person at the Dutton Park polling-booth. I suspect that what has been going on in the office is this: In their misdirected efforts to purify the rolls in the way that has been urged by the Conservative papers during the past three or four years—they are not doing it now, presumably because the rolls have been cleaned to their satisfaction; and if South Brisbane is an illustration it is operating against our side—

*Mr. Ferricks.]*

the inquiries which are sent out after election time asking defaulters why they did not exercise their votes have very often not been treated with the same seriousness with which they were received after the first election after the introduction of compulsory voting.

If a person can give a valid excuse, no further action is taken, but, if a person cannot give a valid excuse or does not reply, then one out of a hundred is proceeded against and fined a nominal sum in the police court. The custom of sending out these letters of inquiry asking people why they did not exercise the franchise is not taken so seriously as when the practice was first introduced. Many people naturally say, "If I happen to be the unlucky one out of a hundred to be fined, I will put up with the consequences." Others, perhaps, say that they will answer the inquiry at a later date, and others, perhaps, will say that they have no excuse to offer. Various reasons are given, but the replies are not sent in. That is where the cleansing or the purifying of the rolls has been going on, in my opinion. The Electoral Office, not receiving a reply from one of these defaulters, comes to the conclusion that he is no longer resident within the electorate, and exercises its power—I am not going to call it a right—to remove the name from the roll. I have not given the names of the two persons mentioned, but I am prepared to supply the names to the Minister, and I ask him to make inquiries into the matter, because it is a matter that should be made public. I asked the officer in the Electoral Office, "Do you receive any intimation from any person outside your office, other than the police, that a person has left an electorate," and the reply I received was, "No." Naturally I am anxious to know who authorised the Electoral Office or officer to remove from the roll the lady whose name I have mentioned when she was neither infirm nor illiterate, nor was her eyesight bad.

Mr. McLACHLAN: Does the Act not provide that names cannot be removed from a roll until it is on another roll?

Mr. FERRICKS: That is the provision and was the practice until the successful howl in the metropolitan anti-Labour papers was such that it caused something in the nature of a stampede. The fact that that number of persons came to me within the space of two hours at South Brisbane during the municipal elections shows that there must be something going on somewhere. Whether it is due to the anti-Labour organisers or not, the fact remains that the names are being removed from the roll for no reason, notwithstanding the fact that the persons have not left their places of residence, and that their names appeared on the 1923 roll used in connection with the State elections. I ask the Minister to inquire further into the matter, because I was unable to obtain at the Electoral Office such satisfaction as to remove my fears or suspicions in this regard.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): I have listened very carefully to the remarks of the hon. member for South Brisbane, and I can say that has not been my experience. I am referring now to the rolls for the electorate of Toowoomba and the electorate of East Toowoomba, which I do my best to watch very closely. My difficulty is in having names removed. It is very easy to inquire into the qualifications of voters, but

[*Mr. Ferricks.*

I find a great deal of difficulty in having names removed from the roll when they should be removed. I simply await the reply of the Minister to the statements made by the hon. member for South Brisbane. There are all sorts of possibilities in this regard, particularly where there are two people of the same name—a father and son, or a mother and daughter. It may happen that the daughter gets married and leaves the electorate. She may intimate, when filling in her card in her new electorate, that her name is on, say, the South Brisbane roll, when it probably was not on the roll at all. I have found that all these things have arisen in practice, though I admit they are very few in number. I contend that even as late as the day when the hon. member for South Brisbane received the complaints, if he had been as energetic as myself he would have seen that the people, if they possessed the necessary qualifications, got a vote.

Mr. FERRICKS: The presiding officers at the municipal elections would not allow that privilege.

Mr. ROBERTS: I want to deal with another phase of this question. Since we discussed this vote last year we have had a by-election at Toowoomba, and certainly there has been no stampede there so far as taking the names off the roll is concerned. That is very evident. On that occasion, according to a question I asked the Attorney-General on 4th August last, 1,595 electors failed to vote, and that many "show cause" letters were sent out by the returning officer to the electors who failed to vote. The returning officer received 494 replies to his letters, and four electors were prosecuted, and it was the intention to prosecute in a fifth case, so that we may assume that the remaining 489 electors gave satisfactory explanations. I understand that no provision exists to enable electors within the State but absent from their electorate at a by-election to record their votes, though I understand that an amendment to the Electoral Act is to be made in that direction this session. There were 573 "show cause" letters returned to the returning officer through the dead letter office. That is, 573 electors had left the district without leaving their new address at the post office. Usually when persons leave a district they give some directions to the post office as to where their mail matter is to be sent; but the dead letter office did not have that information in those 573 cases and returned the letters to the returning officer. There is something else in connection with the Toowoomba by-election, and that is 523 electors did not trouble to answer the communications of the returning officer. Where are they?

Mr. FERRICKS: According to our experience in South Brisbane, they will be off the roll now.

Mr. ROBERTS: I have been watching the Toowoomba roll, and they have not been removed from it.

Mr. FERRICKS: How do you know the number of electors who did not answer?

Mr. ROBERTS: I got certain answers from the Attorney-General to the question I asked in this Chamber. I ascertained that 1,595 electors did not vote and were served with "show cause" letters; that 494 replies were received, and that 573 of the letters

were returned through the dead letter office. It is quite a simple matter, then, to find out how many failed to reply to the letters. Hon. members cannot say that the Toowoomba roll is a clean one. To me that roll is a long way out of date. I would not make that statement if I had not other means of ascertaining that fact. I have only to check my own roll—which is totally out of date—with the Federal roll—which is up to date—to ascertain that fact. When checking the roll, as I have checked it, one can find that a large number of people who were threatened with prosecution took the precaution of putting their names on the Federal roll but they did not make arrangements for enrolment elsewhere on the State roll. If there is any sincerity in the position, this matter should be cleared up once and for all. Repeatedly when this vote has been under discussion, I have said that, if I can produce evidence that a man, through fear of prosecution, has made application for enrolment on the Federal roll, I take that as sufficient qualification for his being on the State roll.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: It should not be.

Mr. ROBERTS: He cannot have two qualifications. It is anticipated, although it is not stated, that, when a man makes application for enrolment on the Federal roll, he states definitely that that is his qualification.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: Yes, after one month's residence.

Mr. ROBERTS: He has made application for enrolment.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: Because he is compelled to.

Mr. ROBERTS: And it is anticipated that he will be on the State roll also.

Mr. DASH: You do not know the Act.

Mr. ROBERTS: I know the Act well enough. I repeat, there should be some information from the Minister as regards those 573 names. They should either have been removed from the roll or they should have been prosecuted.

Mr. LLEWELYN: Why removed?

Mr. ROBERTS: We have a remarkable roll when we have on it the names of 573 people who cannot be located at all, and another 528 people who do not reply to official inquiries. We can only assume one of two things, and, if there is anything in the nature of compulsion in the Act, it should be the duty of the Attorney-General to see that those first inquiries are followed up and somebody should find out why those 528 people have not replied. What is the good of administering an Act and calling upon people to make a statement as to why they have not voted if further action is not taken when 528 people simply laugh at the letter they receive and put it into the fire? It is simply a farce. What is the use of asking an officer to send out 1,595 notices if no further action is to be taken when those notices are disregarded? I am assuming no action was taken, and I am speaking with reasonable assumption when I say that the only action taken was the first notification, that 528 people took no notice of that notification, and yet there were only four prosecutions.

Mr. LLEWELYN: You are only assuming that.

Mr. ROBERTS: I am justified in assuming it until the Attorney-General assures me to the contrary. Why I am anxious to see this matter cleared up is because I am not satisfied with the last Toowoomba election. I do not mean specifically as to the result, but with the people who voted. I am satisfied that certain people who voted at that election were not in the electorate.

Mr. COLLINS: Prove your case.

Mr. DASH: How do you know they voted Labour?

Mr. ROBERTS: I do not. We know that polling booths are erected for the convenience of the people in a neighbourhood, and there may be 300 people usually associated with that neighbourhood. If 600 people vote at that booth and there are no additional works in the neighbourhood to cause the additional influx, surely there is justification for a query in regard to the matter. If you see motor-cars taking seven or eight people there whom you do not know—and you have a knowledge of the people—quite apart from any other evidence, you

[2.30 p.m.] can reasonably assume that something is wrong; and, when you find the number of people voting is considerably in excess of the number that was anticipated both by the people who were running the election and by the people who were working in the interests of the candidates, you can reasonably assume that there is a possibility that some people voted who were not entitled to vote.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That is a libel on the people of Toowoomba.

Mr. ROBERTS: They were not people of Toowoomba. I would have known them if they were people of Toowoomba.

Mr. McLACHLAN: You do not know everybody.

Mr. ROBERTS: Of course I do not know everybody, but I know a considerable number of the people of Toowoomba, and the people who run the elections know several more people of Toowoomba, and we know enough people to know whether they were strangers or not. You can judge your people.

Mr. LLEWELYN: It is optional on the voter as to which booth he votes at.

Mr. ROBERTS: Of course it is optional. I am not finding fault with that; but, if a man lives at the waterworks in Toowoomba, he is not going to vote at the other end of the town.

Mr. LLEWELYN: He might.

Mr. ROBERTS: He might, but you are not going to get 400 or 500 of these people to do the same thing. There is every justification for a cleansing of that roll, and there is no evidence that the roll is being cleansed.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: It is automatically cleansed.

Mr. ROBERTS: It is not automatically cleansed. If the electors go to the trouble of reporting to the Electoral Office that they have changed their address and the correction is not made in the printing office, you cannot get a correct roll. When the people go to the trouble of intimating to the Electoral Office that their address has been changed, then their address should be changed on the cards in the Electoral Office, and that is not done. I can instance three claims that were put in—one a member of my own family—that were not corrected,

*Mr. Roberts.]*

and they had considerable difficulty in getting the correction made. Under these circumstances we are justified in saying that there is something that is not right in this connection.

Mr. CARTER: They may have posted the notices to the wrong place.

Mr. ROBERTS: They were delivered by myself, and I am not likely to deliver them to the wrong place.

Mr. CARTER: You may have forgotten them and kept them in your pocket.

Mr. ROBERTS: I do not forget like the hon. member does. I could remind the hon. member of something he promised the electors of Port Curtis that he has forgotten.

Mr. McLACHLAN (*Fortitude Valley*): If I understand the hon. member for East Toowoomba rightly he has the idea that, if an elector applies for enrolment on the Federal roll for an address other than that which appears on the State roll, he should be immediately enrolled on the State roll for the new address and be taken off the roll for the previous address. If that is the idea the hon. member has in regard to enrolment, it is an erroneous one. Under the Federal Elections Act a person who is resident one month in a district is compelled to become enrolled for that address. It is happening every day that people have to leave the place which is their domicile or residence to go and seek work of a temporary nature somewhere else, and, if they are one month at the new address, under the Federal law they have to enrol for the new address.

Mr. ROBERTS: That is not correct. That is not necessary if they make an explanation.

Mr. McLACHLAN: They have to make application one month after the change of address, but there is no need under the State law to take such action. Under the State law a person has a right to remain on the electoral roll until he applies for enrolment somewhere else. To say that simply because a person changes his address and is employed in some other town for a short period he should be removed from the State roll because he is compelled to get his name put on a fresh Federal roll is saying something which would not be fair to the electors at all. That is only what we can infer from the remarks of the hon. member. I want to remove the impression, which some people may labour under when they read the hon. member's statement that they are compelled immediately to apply for enrolment on another State roll in the same way as they are compelled to enrol on another Federal roll.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*): I will inquire into the matter raised by the hon. member for South Brisbane. If I had known of it before I would have been pleased to give the information required. I certainly will not tolerate any attempt on the part of any official wilfully to disfranchise any citizen. So far as I know, the officials of the department have been most efficient and attentive in the carrying out of their duties, and I should be very much surprised if there is anything in the statement made by the hon. member for South Brisbane that some members of the staff have been stampered in this matter. Some of the striking off took place at the instigation of the Government, and we take full responsibility for that. A good many

[*Mr. Roberts.*]

people were leaving Queensland for the other States and giving no notification of the fact. Under the law they are supposed to be kept on one electoral roll until they either leave the State or go to another electorate, and we found some difficulty in the matter. What we did in 1923 was this: When persons who had a vote did not vote at the liquor poll, and also failed to vote at the general election and neglected to reply to a letter asking why they did not vote, we thought we were taking a pretty safe course in taking them off in order to cleanse the rolls. We realised that there might be a case or two where there was a danger of a person being removed wrongly, but it was necessary to take some action to prevent the rolls becoming unduly inflated. There were 39,000 names taken off at that time, and very few, if any, people suffered any injustice.

The hon. member for East Toowoomba seems to be very much concerned about the Toowoomba election. I can understand members of the Opposition feeling a little irritated over that election.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Oh no!

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: In spite of what they say, I have no hesitation in stating that the Toowoomba roll was a clean roll and quite satisfactory. The hon. member for East Toowoomba could explain it, too, if he was fair enough to be prepared to make reasonable concessions. He knows as well as I do that, if there were 1,595 absent from the poll, it is reasonable to suppose that some of them were out of Toowoomba, and since it was a by-election those persons could not vote. Naturally we called upon them to show cause why they did not vote, but men who are in search of work—as some of them no doubt would be—would never get those letters. Does the hon. member say that, because they did not get our letters or did not reply to our letters, we should take them off the roll?

Mr. ROBERTS: No.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The only reason for which they can be taken off the roll is that their names are on the roll in another electorate, unless, of course, an elector has died or left the State. That fully explains why there were 523 people who did not reply to the summons.

Mr. ROBERTS: What about the 573 you could not find?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: There may be good reasons.

Mr. ROBERTS: No. They could not be found.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That is the number the hon. member is talking about.

Mr. ROBERTS: No. That is another number.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I think the hon. member is mixed up. I have given a satisfactory explanation to show that the large number of voters who failed to vote was mainly caused by the fact that it was a by-election, and there were no facilities for absent voting.

Mr. ROBERTS: You are quite wrong.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: For the same reason there was no opportunity to reply to our letters. I was rather surprised

to hear the hon. member state inferentially that the Federal roll is better than ours.

Mr. ROBERTS: I say it definitely.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I will give the hon. member something in refutation of that statement. I have received a report officially from our Electoral Office that on the 30th June last there were 425,000 names on the Federal roll. On the basis of a calculation that the population of Queensland is 855,214, and that 52 per cent. should be on the Federal roll, there should be 444,711 names on the Federal roll instead of 425,000, showing that on 30th June, 1925, there was a deficiency of 19,711.

Mr. ROBERTS: That is all guess work.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It is not. So convinced was I that the Federal roll was totally inadequate that I had to take steps during the last couple of months to get the State office to co-operate with the Federal Electoral Department here in getting names on the roll, and during the last week I have been instrumental in getting the whole of the police force placed at the disposal of the Federal Department to conduct a canvas just as for a State election. I do not wish to reflect on the Federal officers in Queensland; they are an efficient body of men, but they have out-of-date machinery. Yet the hon. member would compare our roll with the Federal roll! The Federal roll is not brought up to date from one end of the year to another unless there happens to be an election pending. It should be done every quarter, so that it would be right up to date, and it could be checked. Let the hon. member go to the Post Office, or any other place where the Federal electoral roll may be examined. What will he find? An out-of-date three-year-old roll. I regard it as a disgrace to the Federal Government; yet the hon. member is ungenerous enough and unfair enough to Queensland and Queensland officers to compare that out-of-date roll with the Queensland roll! If we had agreed to the amalgamation of the State and Federal rolls, we would have had the Federal Government providing a totally inadequate electoral machinery. Of course, the Federal authorities made a bit of an effort up to last Saturday to get names on the roll to bring their roll up to date after three years' delay. And even that roll could not be compiled without the co-operation by the State in placing the police force at their disposal.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): The Attorney-General referred to what he called the out-of-date method in operation for the compilation of the Federal rolls. This is the position so far as the State rolls are concerned: I may be on the electoral roll for Windsor, but I can remove to Townsville, Rockhampton, or Toowoomba and live there for eight years, ten years, or twenty years, and still be on the roll for Windsor. Is that a correct method to adopt in connection with our rolls?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You cannot legally do that.

Mr. TAYLOR: I do not know anything about not legally doing it, but I do know that when the names of persons who have been residing outside the electorate for years have been sent to the Electoral Office, that office will not place those names on the proper roll and remove them from the old roll. That is our complaint about the State

Electoral Office. Surely hon. members will not say that that is a fair method of compiling our rolls at the present time. There are hundreds of names—probably thousands for all I know—on the rolls to-day where persons have been living for three years, four years, five years, and even ten years outside the electorate for which they are enrolled. We should have some method of correcting that. When an individual takes up his permanent abode in some other electorate than the one for which he is enrolled, it should be mandatory on him to communicate his change of address to the electoral authorities.

Mr. MOORE: He is supposed to do that.

Mr. CARTER: That applies to the Federal roll, too.

Mr. TAYLOR: A number of cases have been pointed out where people have removed from certain electorates, but their names still remain on those rolls. There is no such difficulty in connection with the Federal rolls. There you have only to inform the Federal electoral authorities that a person has removed to some other electorate and his name is at once placed on the roll for the electorate in which he resides.

Mr. HARTLEY: Have the Federal electoral authorities secret informers?

Mr. TAYLOR: We can afford to treat an interjection like that with the contempt it deserves. We do not want any roll-stuffing. We do not ask that any person who is legally entitled to vote shall be deprived of that right. There is no need for anything of the kind. But we do want our rolls to be up-to-date, fair rolls, so that electors will be on the roll for the area in which they reside, and will not be allowed to go to remote parts of the State and live there for many years and have their names retained on the rolls of the electorates from which they have departed. I could give instances—not at the present time as I have not the particulars with me—where we have pointed out that these individuals are not in the electorate for which they are enrolled, but no attempt is made to bring the rolls up to date. During the recent elections we had returned to us hundreds of letters addressed to individuals in the electorates, and marked "Left." Although the letters were addressed according to the addresses on the electoral rolls we were not able to locate the individuals. All we ask is that the rolls shall be a clean and absolutely true record of persons in the electorate who are entitled to vote.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): I am sure the Minister recognises that there is no heat in this debate so far as the Toowoomba by-election is concerned. That is past. I want to arrive at the true position, but the Minister has certainly side-stepped it. The hon. gentleman stated that 494 had replied to the "show cause" letters, giving what was considered as a reasonable answer, and it can be reasonably assumed that 528 were away on that day following their occupations outside the electorate of Toowoomba. I would not dispute that, as it is quite a reasonable assumption, but under the conditions the number is far too great. It has to be recognised that the Government gave everyone of their employees in the Toowoomba electorate a holiday on full pay to enable them to record their votes at the by-election.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Look at the number of railway men who were away.

*Mr. Roberts.]*

Mr. ROBERTS: It is only natural to assume that, as the Government gave all their employees a holiday on full pay, every one who possibly could would get home that day to record their vote, and take advantage of the holiday. But what about the 528 people who did not vote and failed to reply to the "show cause" letters? The hon. gentleman cannot brush that fact aside.

The hon. member for Merthyr attempted to make out that I had quoted something which was incorrect so far as the electoral law is concerned. I would not make an incorrect statement willingly, as I have only one desire, and that is to see that every man and woman possessing the qualification should have the right to exercise the franchise. I have not taken advantage of the electoral machinery to attempt to remove the name of any man or woman not possessing the necessary qualifications from the electoral roll, but I do see to it that they do not vote. The leader of the Opposition has drawn my attention to the electoral card, for which I thank him. It has this on it—

"Any person who is entitled to have his name placed on the roll for any district, whether by way of enrolment or transfer, who fails, within a period of twenty-one days after having completed one month's residence within the district, to deliver or send to the electoral registrar for that district a claim in proper form, duly filled in and signed, shall be liable for the first offence to a penalty of ten shillings, and for any subsequent offence to a penalty not exceeding two pounds."

Mr. McLACHLAN: That is if he has permanently changed his address.

Mr. ROBERTS: It is no use side-stepping the question. I have never advocated that a man who in following his occupation removes, say to Warwick for two or three months, should be removed from the roll. I have not that man in mind at all. I know sufficient of the Federal Electoral Office to know that they do not take into account electors who are temporarily away from home. If a person is forced by his occupation to remain away from home for five or six months, an intimation of the fact is usually sent to the Federal Electoral Office, and the explanation is accepted. All sorts of methods which are not adopted by the State Government are adopted by the Federal Government to ensure a clean and efficient roll. Although the State Government have the power, they do not prosecute any person for failing to enrol. The Federal Government have gone to the trouble of making enrolment compulsory, and that is a justification for the name of an elector being on the roll.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Do you know that the Federal Government have prosecuted 80,000 persons in Australia in the last two years, and yet they do not possess a roll as clean as we have?

Mr. ROBERTS: I can only speak of the district I come from—that is, Toowoomba. I cannot speak for the metropolitan area. I have checked my roll, and can assure hon. members that it is reasonably up to date. Strictly speaking, no one troubles about the State roll. When a man goes into an electoral office and states that he wishes to enrol, it is usually because he has seen a notice in the paper to the effect that anyone will be prosecuted whose name is not on the Federal

roll. Even in this case the Federal authorities are generous. They do not drag everybody into the court. They do not obtain the information from officers but through the employees of the postal department, who are paid to make reports. A man is notified, if necessary, that he has changed his residence and is liable to prosecution because he has not notified that change of residence. That elector can elect whether he will be dealt with by the returning officer or whether he will go before a court and state his case.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: They did not give me that option.

Mr. ROBERTS: If the hon. gentleman, with his knowledge of the Act, failed to comply with it he did not deserve any consideration. I emphasise the fact that, if the Government would print an intimation and circulate it throughout the State that, if a person fails to enrol, he is liable to prosecution; that is all I require. I do not desire even what the Attorney-General has forecast—that the names of those 528 should be removed from the roll because they failed to answer inquiries. If they have simply treated the Electoral Office with contempt, they should be prosecuted; but, if they have left the district, certainly their names should be taken off the roll. If the Government took that action, they would be doing the job completely, and could come into this Chamber and meet all inquiries levelled at them in a satisfactory manner.

Mr. FERRICKS (*South Brisbane*): If the hon. member for East Toowoomba will allow me, I would like to quote from the card he has used. On that card it will be found, in addition to questions relating to his name, address, and so forth, the voter has to answer one relating to his jury district. The card reads—

1. Surname.
2. Christian Names (in full).
3. Place of living.
4. I am residing within the Jury District of \_\_\_\_\_ and am qualified to be enrolled as a Juror of that district."

I inquired from the Electoral Office how the prospective voter would know in which jury district he was situated, and the electoral officer said, "We do not expect him to know. We fill that in in the office." I asked why the question was placed on the card, and the reply was, "For office purposes." It is well known that many men have a great aversion to running the risk of being eligible to sit on juries because, apart from the remuneration aspect—it is not a paying proposition in these days—as jurors are paid only 8s. or 10s. a day, and the average man's wages are much more—there is the inconvenience and to some people the odium attached to jury duties. I think the question relating to the jury list is misplaced on an electoral card, because it will have a tendency to prevent some

[3 p.m.] people from enrolling as voters.

Can we visualise for a moment the convenience it will be to the Electoral Office or to the Department of Justice when compiling the jury list? Would it not be just as useful to have another sheet of paper and to take the names and addresses from the electoral cards when compiling the jury list? Such a question is quite out of place on an enrolment card. The fact that the Electoral Office informed me that the person

[*Mr. Roberts.*]

making application is not expected to answer that question but that it would be filled in in the office, causes me to think that on an electoral enrolment card it is entirely superfluous and out of place.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I would like to support the contention of the hon. member for East Toowoomba as to the necessity of the Electoral Office carrying out the Elections Act. We had the Secretary for Public Lands the other night saying that, if the law was bad, it was our place to amend it; but that his job was to carry out the Act on the statute book. In my opinion, the job of the Attorney-General is to carry out the Elections Act as it is on the statute book. If there is a definite provision that a person who either wants to enrol or wants to transfer must make application to the electoral officer for enrolment or transfer, I say that should be carried out. There is a penalty of 10s. for the first offence, yet we never hear of a person being prosecuted. A prosecution for not making application for enrolment is almost as rare as the dodo. As the hon. member for Windsor said, we know of persons who go away and live for years in another electorate, yet they still keep on the roll for the district on which they were originally enrolled. If we have an Act on the statute-book and regulations under the Act providing a penalty, then the Electoral Office should see that those provisions are carried out. If they are not going to be carried out, why not amend the Act so that it will be carried out? It is only making a farce of the thing if people are allowed to evade the Act. If there is anything wrong after an election, the people are written to; but, if they take no notice of the letters, no action is taken.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Do you want action taken in the way of prosecutions?

Mr. MOORE: We want people who neglect to reply to letters to be compelled to do so. We know that after the Toowoomba by-election over 1,500 letters were sent out to people who had not voted. We know that over 400 letters were returned through the dead letter office, and that 526 people did not reply at all. What action was taken to see whether these people had any justifiable excuse or not or to ascertain the reason why they ignored the Electoral Office? Surely it is right that people should comply with the provisions of the Act, and, if they do not, it is up to the department to find out the reason.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*): In reply to the inquiry of the hon. member for South Brisbane in regard to the additional question on the electoral cards, I might say that this question was included consequent on an amendment of the Jury Act, which provided that every person who was an elector and under sixty years of age was entitled to be enrolled as a jurymen. At the time this new question was added to the electoral card it was thought that it would save the department a considerable sum of money, and no doubt it has. If we had not placed the question on the card it would have necessitated an additional canvas in connection with securing jurymen, which would have cost a considerable sum of money. However, as the hon. member has raised the question, I am prepared—because I do not want to be dogmatic and say that we cannot do this or that—to reconsider the question and see

whether it is practicable to dispense with the necessity of putting this question on the electoral card and to make up the jury list without a special canvas. If we can do that, I think it will meet the point raised by the hon. member.

The hon. member for Windsor and the leader of the Opposition have again returned to the attack on the rolls. The question chiefly occupying the mind of the hon. member for Windsor was the fact that a man did not enrol in the electorate to which he had gone. But, whilst there are admittedly occasional instances of individuals remaining unduly long on a roll other than that which they are entitled to be on, the hon. member must recognise that in Queensland we have a large nomadic population. Mainly because of their following seasonal occupations men are constantly changing from place to place in search of work, and they cannot remain long enough in any particular place to be put on a roll except in their own electorate. If people were to be chased by the State Government in the way they are chased by the Federal Government—

Mr. PETERSON: Why not have a nomadic voters' roll? (Laughter.)

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I think the hon. gentleman is not serious in that remark.

Mr. PETERSON: There are some nomads who have been in my electorate three years.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: They are entitled to be on the roll if they have been there that time. At the same time, I would sooner have a few thousand names in excess on the rolls owing to these circumstances over which we have no control than half a dozen men disfranchised. I have no hesitation in reiterating my opinion that our roll to-day is one of the best and cleanest rolls in Australia.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: If hon. members want any proof that our roll is better than the Federal roll, I will call the Federal authorities in evidence. It is well known to my officers and myself that when the Federal authorities require any precise information regarding returned soldiers or their whereabouts, they come and examine the State rolls—not the Federal rolls—so that our rolls cannot be bad. On a population basis the Federal rolls showed a deficiency of 19,711 names on 30th June last. Of course, they are making up the leeway now because of the assistance we are giving them to make a special canvas through our police. I do not think that there is much to cavil at in regard to our Electoral Office if hon. members are fair. I claim that the office is carried out properly, and that, considering the difficulties, the roll is a very good roll. I am not going to say that it is a perfect roll. We could not possibly have a perfect roll in Queensland, where men are constantly changing about from place to place—perhaps 15 per cent. of them being constantly on the move. If hon. members went to the office, they would see the change which takes place in the roll even in one month, and if they are expecting a perfect roll they are expecting too much. On the whole, I think the roll is a good one, and the Electoral Office is efficiently managed.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): We are not reflecting on the officers of the Electoral Department. We are simply reflecting on

*Mr. Taylor.]*

the system which prevails, to which I referred a few moments ago. We are not referring to the men who follow seasonal occupations and who shift about from place to place. They must get on some roll, and they remain there. That is quite all right. It is when persons remove from an electorate that we think some action should be taken. Take the metropolitan area. A family may remove from Windsor to South Brisbane or Merthyr, and they can still remain on the roll for Windsor if they choose. That is the point I would like to bring before the Minister and the electoral authorities, and, when the matter is brought before the electoral authorities, they should take action to find out whether a person is on the wrong roll or not.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: We are prepared to take action in any case of that kind if it is brought under our notice.

Mr. TAYLOR: We certainly can bring some cases under the notice of the Minister. There is no wish to deprive anybody of his vote, whether the man is a man who follows a seasonal occupation and is two or three months away from his home or whether it is some other person. Those persons have the right to enrol for the electorate in which they are residing.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): If the Minister does want a clean roll, it is a great pity that he does not make some arrangement with the Federal Government for the purpose of providing one clean roll. The amounts which are spent in this direction at present would ensure an even better roll than the Federal roll is to-day, and it is far and away better than any roll we have had up to the present. The Federal authorities go to a lot of trouble to compile their roll. They are very persistent in seeing that the Act is carried out, and, in particular, they take action to cleanse the roll in accordance with the Act. The trouble with our State roll is the trouble that was pointed out when the Elections Bill was going through this Chamber. Members of the Opposition protested against the methods of exclusion, which would enable the Government not only to clean the roll generally, but also to prevent electors from knowing just where they stood. The Minister claims that his roll is a clean one and does not permit of double-banking. Yet did not the Government remove 41,000 names from the roll on one occasion? That shows that the elector does not take his own name off the roll, but that a rotten provision in the law enables a Labour Ministry to wipe it out. That is what I am complaining about. The Minister says that his method is a good one and provides for the automatic taking of a name off the roll by the elector himself when he gets on another roll. That is not a compulsory provision at all. The elector has to state what roll he claims to be enrolled upon, but it does not make it compulsory for him to state the electorate for which he is already enrolled.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He usually does it.

Mr. CORSER: He need not do it, and in that provision lies the loophole for double-banking, purposely left there by the Government in the interests of the shifting population who vote for them. I charge them deliberately with leaving that provision there for political purposes, so that they can use it for their own ends. When we attacked them here and proved that there were 54,000

more names on the State roll than on the Federal roll, the Minister thought it was time to do something. The election was over, and the hon. gentleman did not need those names on the roll any more—there were too many proofs of their actions during the election—and so he got busy. Accordingly at the instigation of the Minister, who decided to do a little bit of cleaning up—I am not blaming the department, but the Act and the Minister—41,000 names were removed from the roll. What other names might they have wiped off? Why should we entrust to one political party the right to score off 41,000 names when those people did not have an opportunity of appearing before a tribunal to say whether they were not entitled to have their names retained on the rolls? Talk about imprisoning men and deporting them without trial! People value the right to vote more than they value money; and there should not be a provision whereby any Government in their own interests can wipe off 41,000 names without giving those people the right to defend themselves.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You would complain if we did not take those names off.

Mr. CORSER: I complain of the provision which enables those names to be placed on the roll when they are not entitled to be there. We know that at the last elections quite a number of men were working at one time on a particular railway line and were then shifted across the boundary and were on the roll for two electorates. We know that there are shearers, cane-cutters, and other seasonal workers who for a portion of the year may be working on main roads work or railway construction, and whose names are probably on two rolls. Persons applying for enrolment should be compelled to say on which roll they were last enrolled. It is possible for an elector to be wiped off one roll and still to be on two other rolls. There should be a safer system than the one existing at the present time. There should be an inquiry much more in keeping with the inquiries made by the Federal electoral authorities. We on this side only want a fair and just roll. We do not want any roll-stuffing. We have been the victims of that sort of thing too long to desire to "put it over" the other fellow. We only ask for a fair go. We have pointed out repeatedly that the Government have deliberately placed on the statute-book a measure which will permit of a person being on two or three rolls at the one time. That is proved by the fact that, after our criticism following the last elections, the Minister took steps to wipe 41,000 names off the roll. The Secretary for Public Lands had his name on three rolls, and the Home Secretary also had his name on two or three rolls. They are people that we know. It is hard to trace an individual like a cane-cutter, shearer, or railway worker, who may have his name on more rolls than one. If an individual well known to this Chamber or a big business man had his name on two rolls, he would be recognised when he went to the polling-booth; but you cannot recognise people who are not known in the locality, and who claim the right to vote when they are on the roll. We only want a fair roll, and we again appeal to the Minister to give us that, so that it will not be necessary for him, after the next election, to remove from the rolls another 41,000 people who proved of the

[*Mr. Taylor.*

utmost use to him during the campaign, but whose votes are no longer required by the Government.

Mr. CARTER (*Port Curtis*): It is very interesting to hear hon. members opposite talking about desiring a clean electoral roll. I recollect the Electoral Act which hon. members opposite desired to keep in operation after the 1915 elections. Under that Act a worker was struck off the roll after he left his home. No nomadic worker was permitted to enrol if he lived in a tent, as it was claimed that he had no place of residence. That is the idea of making a roll as desired by hon. members opposite.

Mr. KING: That is not true.

Mr. CARTER: It is absolutely true. The men residing in tents carrying on the duplication of the railway line between Brisbane and Caboolture were prevented from enrolling because they were living in tents.

Mr. CORSER: Because they were enrolled elsewhere.

Mr. CARTER: Their names were not on the roll for another place. Their names had been struck off the roll in Brisbane because they were away from home, but they were not allowed to enrol at Caboolture. They made application for enrolment there, and all the evidence existed that they were there; but, because they lived in tents, under the Elections Act of the day they were not allowed to become electors. Hon. members opposite have talked about a desire on their part to see fair play, and to see that every person entitled to be enrolled is enrolled. I carefully go through the roll for the Port Curtis electorate every year and compare it with the Federal roll, and, as a result, three or four hundred names are generally added to the Federal roll. The State rolls are kept perfectly clean by the police. When a person on the Federal roll changes his residence within the electorate, his name is usually erased unless an application is made to change the address; but, if an elector moves from one division to another within a State electorate and still remains within the electorate, his name is kept on the roll. I will give an instance. If a person is on the Federal roll for Gin Gin in the Capricornia electorate and removes to the Gladstone division without making the necessary application to change the address, his name is taken off the roll, whereas, if such a change of address is made in the Port Curtis electorate, he still remains on the State roll. That is how the changes result, which the hon. member for East Toowoomba spoke about. The changes do not necessarily mean that the Federal roll is any cleaner. I am satisfied that electors are very punctilious about getting on the roll. I do not think in the next elections that there will be six people in the whole of Queensland or sixty people in the whole of Australia who will vote twice. It is a serious offence to do so, and the offender can be severely punished. The chief complaint is that many electors do not vote at all. At the recent by-election in Merthyr for the Greater Brisbane Council less than 75 per cent. of the electors voted. At the last State election 94 per cent. of the electors of Port Curtis voted. That was on account of the very strenuous canvas made in the electorate by the three candidates who contested the seat. In my opinion not one dishonest vote was cast for any of the candidates. I am sure that no person voted twice in that electorate.

Mr. MOORE: How are you sure?

Mr. CARTER: Because I very carefully went through the roll to see. There was a very capable returning officer for Port Curtis in Mr. Knyvett. He went through the roll very carefully, as it is his business to do so. If a person was suspected of voting twice, a notice of explanation would be served on him. The fact that 94 per cent. of the people on the roll voted is evidence that there is nothing wrong with the roll. If any hon. member tried last December to get a copy of the Federal roll he would have found that the latest roll was two years old. You could not go to the Federal authorities to get any information. Even now the roll is twelve months old. That is in direct contrast with the State roll. Supplementary lists are issued by the State every quarter, and in this manner the rolls are kept up to concert pitch. I am satisfied the police will not deliberately enrol people who should not be enrolled, and mostly the enrolments in Queensland are made through the police. I am quite satisfied the endeavour of the Government is to give every person a vote if he is entitled to that vote. There are some people living at Dunwich and who come from electorates represented by many different members. Why should those unfortunate people be taken off the roll because they are at Dunwich? They, every worker, and everybody else with the necessary qualifications should have a right to vote.

Mr. MAXWELL: And they have it.

Mr. CARTER: I know, but hon. members opposite would take it from them if they could. That is what they term "cleaning the roll."

Mr. MAXWELL: Rubbish.

Mr. CARTER: There is no rubbish about it. I recollect that, just after the Elections Act of 1915 came into operation, an influential person in my district, who had no love for this Government or for me, thought he would have the roll purified. There was one place where thirty or more people were employed, and this man sent up the names of those thirty men and lodged objection cards with the clerk of petty sessions of Gladstone; but, when he found he had to put up so much money with each lodgment and was liable to a fine if those people were illegally knocked off the roll, he withdrew. That is what hon. members mean by purifying the rolls. It is what we used to call "bulcocking." Hon. members opposite know that the nomadic population is represented chiefly by Labour supporters. Those men are entitled to their votes just as much as any hon. member in this Chamber. It is the endeavour of this Government to give every elector a vote, and whether he may have moved from one division to another or not he has a right to vote in whatever electorate he may be living. After examining most of the electoral rolls and systems in force in Australia and New Zealand I am satisfied we have one of the finest systems of enrolling people and giving people a chance to vote that exists in any country in the world.

The hon. member for Burnett made the statement that claimants for enrolment on the State roll were not compelled to state where they were enrolled at some prior time. They have to do so. Item 10 on the electoral enrolment card reads—

"I was last enrolled for the Electoral District of \_\_\_\_\_ Division of \_\_\_\_\_ as residing at \_\_\_\_\_"  
Nothing could be clearer than that.

Mr. ROBERTS: They do not answer it.

*Mr. Carter.]*

Mr. CARTER: A dishonest man would not, therefore I suppose the hon. member for East Toowoomba is speaking for his friends. Speaking for my friends, I know they do. Whenever I have filled in these forms I have made a point of seeing that that item is filled in, as I know its value to the Electoral Registrar. It enables him immediately to clean the roll at the previous place of enrolment, and it is an excellent system. I am satisfied that there is not 1 per cent. of the people enrolling who do not fill in that item, thus enabling the rolls for other electorates to be cleaned.

Mr. KING (*Logan*): The first time I came to this Chamber I heard statements made by hon. members opposite to the effect that they were always out to secure a pure roll and statements from this side of the Chamber that it is always impossible to secure a pure roll. The same thing exists to-day, and the complaints that were made this afternoon are well founded.

The hon. member for Port Curtis made some remarks about the fact that years ago, under what he called the old Tory Government, it was impossible for a man living in a tent to get on the roll. That remark is simply humbug and piffle. They could get on the roll.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I say they could not get on the roll.

Mr. KING: I say they could get on the roll. All they had to do was to say that the tent was their residence and they would be entitled to get on the roll; but, if they had a home somewhere else, [3.30 p.m.] they certainly could not get on the roll for that tent residence as well. They could only get on the roll for the place where they usually resided.

The hon. member also said something about members on this side strongly objecting to and would prevent the inmates of Dunwich from having a vote.

Mr. CARTER: I did not say that.

Mr. KING: The hon. member said that, if we had our way, we would not give them a vote.

Mr. CARTER: I said if they were on the roll where they did not reside.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. KING: The men at Dunwich have a vote in respect of the place whence they came. It would be unfair to allow them to have a vote for Dunwich. That would be a very wrong principle, consequently the practice is followed of allowing them to have a vote for the districts from which they came. That is a perfectly fair system. Hon. members on the other side say that they want a pure roll; but how far are they assisting to get a pure roll? How is it possible to trace cases of impersonation and cases of double-voting? What are they doing to prevent these things happening? They do happen, as everyone knows. I have had cases in my electorate. I have had a notification from the returning officer in my electorate that so many persons have voted twice.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You know the explanation of that.

Mr. KING: No.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I will explain to you.

[*Mr. Carter.*

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I am not going to permit any more speeches to be made by way of interjection. Every hon. member can take the opportunity of speaking if he so desires, but not by way of interjection.

Mr. KING: I have had notifications from the electoral officer in my electorate that persons have voted twice and in some cases three times. How is that going to be traced? If the Government are earnest in regard to getting clean rolls, the proper thing is to amend the Act so that cases of impersonation or double-voting will not be difficult to trace and punish. Under existing conditions it is very easy for a person to vote twice without being discovered. Unless the person is well-known and can be identified, it is impossible to prove double-voting. If the Act was tightened up a bit, we would be able to get far more satisfactory results, and it is the duty of the Government to do everything they possibly can to prevent double-voting and impersonation in order to secure the true verdict of the people at a general election.

Mr. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): It is amusing year after year to hear this cry about cleansing the roll, about getting a roll so that everybody shall have one vote, and so that nobody shall have an opportunity of voting in more than one electorate. Just prior to the 1915 elections, when this Government came into power, the Ministers of the then Tory party—there are very few left on the other side—did everything possible to remove workers from the roll, and they did remove a great number of workers from the roll. I remember the old application form had something like eighteen or twenty foolish questions on it to try to prevent men getting on the roll. It was not a form to get men on the roll but to prevent them getting on the roll. They asked whether the applicant was a British subject, and, if he was a British subject, where he was born. Very often they rejected the application because the man had forgotten to fill in the name of the place where he was born. Then they asked him his age, and lower down the year he was born. Perhaps the age that he gave did not correspond with the date of his birthday and the year he was born, and then they would make the application informal and not put him on the roll.

They were particularly severe with regard to the nomadic population. About two weeks before the closing of the roll the Electoral Office in Brisbane would send to Rockhampton a list of 300 or 400 names on the rolls for the electorates of Rockhampton, Fitzroy, and Normanby, respectively, with instructions to inquire into the cases of those people, and, if they had not a fixed residence, to strike them off the roll. I remember co-operating with the hon. member for Normanby, who was then a Labour candidate, and we got 200 names of people in his electorate and 300 names of people in my electorate which the Government had struck off put back on the roll. There was no attempt made to get people on the roll; the idea was to keep working men off and keep wealthy people on the roll so as to keep the then Government in. I am satisfied that we have a purer system of compiling the rolls and of voting in Queensland to-day than ever we had before, and the State roll far outclasses the Commonwealth roll as an authentic document showing who are living in an

electorate and what their occupations are. It is absurd for hon. members opposite to mislead the public—it is only an election dodge—by telling them that they desire to see men on the roll. A totally different system obtains in regard to the compilation of the Federal roll. It is no wonder there are mistakes in the compilation of that roll. A person has only to go away from his residence to stay at a boarding-house at the seaside or be a few weeks away from the town and forget to notify his change of address, and, when the postman comes to the door and finds him away, his name is simply marked as having left that electorate. If he tells someone to notify the electoral officer of his change of address, nine times out of ten they do not give the notification, and he is struck off the roll. That is why there is such a discrepancy between the State roll and the Federal roll.

The hon. member for Logan talked about the duplication of names on the roll. In my opinion there is very little double-voting. I think that the so-called cases of double-voting are due to mistakes made by the poll clerks. There are numbers of people on the roll with the same surname, and often with the same christian name. A mother and daughter may have the same name and there may be nothing to distinguish them, as their address and occupation may be the same. I am satisfied that the system we have in operation in Queensland is the best system of voting for people who are entitled to vote. There is an explanation in regard to the 528 names of people at Toowoomba who did not return an answer to the letters sent to them. There may have been some who disregarded the letters, but the probability is that they were seasonal workers in North, Central, or Western Queensland, either in the sugar or shearing industries, and the notification asking them to explain why they did not vote would not reach them in time to make it worth while answering.

Mr. PETERSON (*Normanby*): Whilst the hon. member for Port Curtis may be quite right in his statement that voters were disfranchised because they could not get on the roll at Caboolture in 1915—I am not in a position to refute the hon. member's explanation in that regard—I can say that in 1915 I put on the roll of the Normanby electorate about 114 people living in tents. In that case they had been removed from the Keppel electorate and had been in the Normanby electorate for about two months; consequently no objection was raised by Mr. Archdall, who was the police magistrate adjudicating on the claims. I think the hon. member for Fitzroy can bear me out in what I am going to say with regard to the construction workers on the North Coast Railway and in the Normanby electorate in 1915. At that time there was a certain amount of jealousy about the number of construction workers who should be on certain rolls. I had experience in both the Mirani and the Keppel electorates. A number came over into the Normanby electorate about two months before the last day for enrolment, and they were put on the roll. They were from the Keppel electorate, and, so far as I know, there was no objection at that time. So much for that.

We have heard a lot this afternoon about the right of all Queenslanders to have a say in the government of their country as elec-

tors. Whilst I agree that every able-bodied man or woman has a right to the franchise and that no law should be passed to prevent them exercising it, whether they be nomads or not, at every election a larger number of respectable citizens are disfranchised through no fault of their own. I brought this matter up on the Estimates last year. In the Normanby electorate the polling-booths are as much as 100 miles apart, and sometimes, because there happens to have been a couple of inches of rain before the election, voters cannot get to the nearest booth. That is because hon. members opposite will not permit a system of postal voting in country districts. Those hon. members never rise in their places and say that men who are prevented by adverse wet weather conditions from going 100 or 150 miles to the booth should be allowed to vote in some other manner.

The CHAIRMAN: I would ask the hon. member to connect his remarks with the vote.

Mr. PETERSON: I shall do it in this way. On the vote last year I asked the Minister to make some provision that these people should not be disfranchised after they have become enrolled, and I crave your permission, Mr. Pollock, to bring it under the notice of the Attorney-General, because, when he looks at the matter fairly and squarely, I am sure that he will admit that they have a right to vote. I know of men who are living on stations and who have been deprived of the right to vote by wet weather. They cannot take a motor-car or a cab, so they have not been able to vote at all. I can quite understand that it may not be necessary to have a postal vote in the city, where there is a polling-booth at every corner.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope that the hon. member will not pursue that line of argument.

Mr. PETERSON: I shall bow to your ruling, Mr. Pollock, and, perhaps, at another stage I will be in order. I have no objection to having the roll as full as possible. I have always stood for the fullest rights from a franchise standpoint, and no vote of mine will be given to prevent that. I consider, however, that, after a person has been out of an electorate for five or six years at least, the opportunity should be given him by the Electoral Office to get on his proper roll. I say quite candidly that I have the names of three ex-construction workers deliberately kept on the Normanby roll so that they can vote for me at the elections. These three men have been out of the Normanby electorate for five years. One is in the Julia Creek district, another in Brisbane, and the other in Bundaberg. Under the law these men can retain their names on the Normanby roll. In future I am going to advise all my supporters who migrate from the Normanby electorate to keep their names on the Normanby roll to counteract the effect of those who are dumped into the Normanby electorate on the eve of an election. I think it is a fair thing under the circumstances to do that. In adopting that course we can check-mate Ministers in any action they may take to swamp an electorate at a particular time. So long as that loophole remains in the law, I intend to take advantage of it.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): We all agree that every man and woman is entitled to the

Mr. Kerr.]

right to vote, but that right does not obtain to-day in Queensland. Last election I sent a circular to every elector in my electorate, and from 600 to 700 envelopes were returned to me marked "Dead," "Left," or "Not known." It has been contended that probably those persons voted in another electorate. The returning officer for the district was kind enough to send to me what is known as a marked roll, showing all the persons who had recorded their vote in the Enoggera electorate. I compared the envelopes returned to me and found that the majority of the addressees had not voted at all. If that is the case, are those people obtaining any benefit by being permitted to remain on the roll? I say they are not receiving any benefit, because they are not taking any advantage of their right. Then again, there is the danger that a loophole for double voting is created. That is a thing we must avoid, and the law is entirely wrong if it permits of such a possibility.

Mr. COLLINS: They might have been living in adjoining electorates.

Mr. KERR: They cannot be on two rolls.  
Mr. COLLINS: No.

Mr. KERR: They did not vote in the Enoggera electorate.

Mr. MAXWELL: They can be on two rolls.

Mr. KERR: I know of cases where names have been on two rolls but that is more or less a mistake. I cannot see why people should be on two rolls. It cannot legally be done. They can leave the district for which they are enrolled and others can vote in that electorate in their place.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: No.

Mr. KERR: That is what is happening. I know of cases where it has happened.

Mr. COLLINS: You have an evil mind.

Mr. KERR: What we desire in Queensland is to have a cleansing of the rolls to prevent duplicate voting and other evils. If people leave the electorate and do not bother to have their names enrolled in the new electorate, then they should not be considered. One of the greatest rights of the people is the right to vote, and, if the people are not sufficiently concerned to have their name on the correct roll, then Parliament should take no responsibility in the matter. It is their fault entirely if they are disfranchised, and they do not deserve to have the right to vote. The Commonwealth method of cleaning a roll by deleting the name is much better than the one the State has adopted. The State rolls are in a deplorable condition. Through my own personal energy, I have assisted in cleansing the roll of the Enoggera electorate, and what is happening in one electorate is happening in another. Sufficient appropriation should be allowed to enable the Government to thoroughly overhaul the rolls. I cannot see why the taxpayers should pay for printing separate rolls for the Federal and State Governments. There must be some reason for it. Conferences have taken place between the Commonwealth Government and the various Premiers and Attorney-Generals of the States for the purpose of preventing the overlapping and duplication of electoral rolls, and with a view to saving unnecessary costs. Why has Queensland refrained from enter-

ing into an agreement with the Commonwealth Government to have a common roll? It is a small matter. Have the Government retained the right of issuing a separate State roll for ulterior purposes? There must be some nigger in the wood pile. Why will they not work in harmony with the Commonwealth Government in this matter? The Queensland Government have adopted a dog-in-the-manger attitude on the question. It is not incorrect for me to say that our rolls are in a deplorable condition, and it is surely the duty of the Legislature to remedy such an undesirable condition of affairs.

Mr. W. COOPER (*Rosewood*): The hon. member who has just resumed his seat declared that the State rolls should be purged because they are not clean, and that there should be some system whereby every elector can record a vote. He also said that he believed in every man recording his vote according to the dictates of his conscience. Let me remind the hon. gentleman that from 1915 or 1916 until 1918 the very National Government in the Federal Parliament that he supports refused to natural-born and naturalised citizens of this State the right to record their votes. It is only hypocrisy for the hon. member and his supporters to declare that they are in favour of giving a vote to every adult male or female. The National Federal Government deprived those citizens I have mentioned the right of a voice in the Government of the country. The hon. member has asked that the rolls should be purged and made clean, and has admitted that he took an active part in removing hundreds of names from the roll of his electorate. Why did he do that? Does the hon. member mean to tell me that he would have those names removed if they were likely to vote Nationalist?

Mr. KERR: How am I to know how they would vote?

Mr. W. COOPER: Of course he would not. The hon. member would remove only the names of workers, and those who would not be likely to vote for him or his party.

Mr. KERR: Nonsense.

Mr. W. COOPER: Every man born in Australia and every man who is a naturalised citizen of the Commonwealth of Australia has a perfect right to vote, no matter where he is. We have men moving from one place to another, and they should have a right to vote in any electorate they feel inclined to vote in and for any person they feel inclined to vote for. If a man were living in the electorate of the hon. member for Enoggera and had a sneaking regard for him—and I say there are not many of them—he would have a perfect right to record his vote for the hon. member and to have an opportunity to elect the man he wishes to make the laws and conditions under which he lives. Undoubtedly the men who are returned to this Legislative Assembly are the men who bring into existence the laws and conditions under which the people live. Unless he has the privilege of voting in the direction most suitable to his welfare he might as well be put in a compound—where the hon. member for Enoggera would put him if he had the opportunity.

Mr. KERR: Nonsense.

Mr. W. COOPER: The Queensland State rolls are as clean as the rolls in any State in Australia. No one can tell me that

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the members of this party have endeavoured to secure for themselves an unfair advantage by the use of a iniquitous system of roll-stuffing. I do not believe anything of the kind. The Department of Justice has instructed the police to collect names and endeavour as far as possible to enrol every man and woman living in every district. If I have a son living in some other district but his home is at my home, he has a perfect right to be enrolled in the electorate in which his home is.

Mr. KERR: There is nothing wrong with that.

Mr. W. COOPER: I have it at first-hand that at the last Rosewood election among the absentee voters recorded forty-two were practically dishonest and fraudulent, and they were certified to by men who had no right to put their names to the certificate. I secured that information from the returning officer in Rosewood, and also the fact that not one of those votes were recorded in my favour. If we are to establish a system of that nature, it is time something was done. Though hon. members opposite are afraid of the men enrolled in their electorates, surely to God they must admit that those men have a right to record their votes in the direction they think fit. I have no objection to any man voting against me, but I do object to a man becoming enrolled in my electorate under a fraudulent system. So far as the electoral officers and the returning officer in my electorate are concerned many of them do not, and would not, vote for me. In every polling-booth in my electorate at the last election I received the courtesy and fair play that should be extended to any man, and I say, in all fairness to myself, that I

[4 p.m.] never went into more than one polling-booth to record my vote. I hope the Minister will take into consideration the advisableness of seeing that every man is on the roll, and that every man, regardless of what he may be, is given an opportunity to vote.

I heard the hon. member for Normanby say that wet weather intervened, and that men were unable to get to the polling-booth. That is no fault of the Minister's, as the Act provides an opportunity for every man to record his vote. It is the misfortune of those men who are placed in that unfortunate position, but the Minister might take into consideration the question of establishing closer polling-booths to give every man a chance to vote. I hope the Minister will consider from every aspect the question of providing opportunities so that every man will have a right to record his vote provided he is a British subject, a naturalised British subject, or a native of Queensland or Australia.

Mr. WEIR (*Maryborough*): I desire to make a few comments on the remarks of the hon. member for Enoggera. I cannot conceive that his remarks can be verified. He made the statement here to-day that he had been personally responsible for having eliminated from his roll over 100 names. If that is true, it means two things. It means, first of all, that the officer responsible for that particular roll is not doing his duty, and should not be there. It might also mean that the hon. member and that officer are acting in collusion, and therefore the officer should not be there. It is a very serious

charge, and I trust the Minister will investigate the matter to the fullest extent. Clause 31 of the Elections Act provides—

“ Any name on a roll may be objected to by objection in writing lodged with or made by the Electoral Registrar :

“ Provided that a sum of 5s. shall be deposited in respect of each objection lodged by any person other than the Electoral Registrar or a prescribed officer.”

It should not be very difficult to prove the hon. member's contention, because in that case he must have deposited 5s. a head for each of the names objected to. I assume they were valid objections, and that he deposited the 5s. a head. If he did deposit the 5s. a head, the returning officer was not doing his duty, and, if he did not lodge the 5s. a head, why did he not do so?

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: What is to stop him from informing the police?

Mr. WEIR: This is a definite statement that I do not want the Committee to lose sight of, and I am going to add my suggestion to that statement of his, which I believe is the right one. I believe he is responsible for going out of his way to remove Labour voters from the roll, and I believe that is why he is a member of this House. If we go further, we find that subsection (3) of section 32 of the Act provides—

“ An objection on the ground that a person does not live in a district for which he is enrolled shall be deemed not to be good unless it alleges that the person objected to—

(a) Does not live in the district, and does not live in Queensland; or

(b) Does not live in the district, and has obtained enrolment for some other district.”

Those are valid objections, and if those objections can be sustained there is nothing seriously wrong with it. I would remind this Committee that the initial step must be taken by the person himself and not by the member, and therefore again the hon. member was butting into a business he had no right to interfere with. I do not know of any man in this Chamber who can claim that he watches his roll closer than I do. I have a card system in my office, where I have a record of every voter on the Maryborough roll. I have been of material assistance to the Federal enrolment. I am not saying this to boost my case, because I am in a favoured position in that the extreme boundaries of my electorate are about 1½ miles apart.

Unlike any other electorate I know of in Queensland, every worker on my roll works at something in the electorate, and not outside. I do not think that happens in any other electorate in Queensland. Take some of the electorates in the Brisbane area, for instance, such as South Brisbane and Kurilpa. The electors may live there and work at Northgate Junction, but it is quite different in my electorate. The men there work in the sawmills, at Walkers Limited, on the railways, or in some other industry within the four walls of the city boundaries. That is the reason why I can keep the card system I have in operation so complete, and not because of any special qualification on my part. I have proved how complete a

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man can keep his own roll if he wants to do so. I claim that my card system is the best in the State, because it is governed by the conditions I have mentioned, which do not obtain in any other place. Take the unions, for instance. Periodically I get a statement from the secretary of the Australian Engineers' Union. He gives me the names of the men who have been working on engine construction at Walkers Limited and have left Maryborough. If they have neglected their duty in regard to the matter, it becomes my duty to prompt the man who is keeping the roll, and tell him what he does not know; and in many cases the Federal officers have asked me to give them these notifications. I have no reason to interfere with the roll. If the officers responsible for the roll in Maryborough wanted me to direct them with regard to the deaths in Maryborough, they would not be doing their duty, because they have access to the records of deaths in the office of the Registrar of Births, Deaths, and Marriages. The fact that any hon. member can get up in this Chamber and claim that he has been personally responsible for eliminating hundreds of names from his roll appears to me to savour of corruption, and the matter should be inquired into. I trust that the Minister will find out from the officers of the department whether the statement of the hon. member for Enoggera is correct, and, if so, whether there was any collusion between the hon. member and the officer responsible. I view the matter very seriously, and I trust that the Minister will inquire into it.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*): Like the hon. member for Maryborough, I was astounded at the statement made by the hon. member for Enoggera, and I shall certainly take immediate steps to investigate and put to the test the accuracy or otherwise of the statement.

Item (Electoral Registration) agreed to.

#### FRIENDLY SOCIETIES.

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

“That £1,770 be granted for ‘Friendly Societies.’”

Mr. McLACHLAN (*Merthyr*): This is one of the sub-departments of the State in which I take a particular interest. It controls the friendly society movement in Queensland, and anyone who has taken any interest in that movement in this State or the Commonwealth generally knows the remarkably good work that is being done for the State of Queensland by those engaged in friendly society work. I regret, as I have said on previous occasions, that this sub-department is not being given the prominence which, in my opinion, it should get by reason of its importance to the people of Queensland. The time was when the friendly societies came under a separate branch, controlled by the Registrar of Friendly Societies, and the operations of his staff and himself were confined wholly and solely to friendly society work. At the time when Mr. Rendle, the late Registrar of Friendly Societies, relinquished that position, the Government deemed it wise not to continue the administration of the sub-department separately, but to place it under the control of the Registrar-General. For Mr. Porter, as Registrar of Friendly Societies, I

have nothing but the highest praise. I know that he has taken a very keen interest in the friendly society movement. He is a friendly society man himself, and for a long time prior to taking charge he acquainted himself with the ramifications of the movement in Queensland. He has put a lot of energy and labour into the office which has been placed upon him in addition to the other matters under the control of his department; but, in my opinion, the Government did not recognise in a monetary sense the great additional work which they put on his shoulders. I hope the Government will not lose sight of the importance of the office, and even though they have discontinued it as a separate sub-department and have transferred it to the Registrar-General's Department they will not in any way minimise the importance of its work.

I would also like to say a word or two for Mr. Daley, who takes upon his shoulders a big share of the friendly society work. He was next in charge when Mr. Scott was Deputy Registrar, but that office has now been abolished, and, whilst Mr. Daley has received an increased classification, I am of the opinion that the work is so important that Mr. Porter is entitled to have a deputy, and that Mr. Daley should be appointed to that position. Mr. Daley, as well as Mr. Porter, comes into contact with a great amount of the friendly society work in this State, and, speaking as one who for a great number of years occupied the position of secretary to one of the largest friendly society organisations in the State, I have first-hand information as to the great amount of work he has done for the movement. There have been occasions since the transfer of the department from the management of the Registrar of Friendly Societies to the management of the Registrar-General when Mr. Daley has acted as deputy during the absence of Mr. Porter, and evidently his ability is such that he is fitted for the position. I hope the Attorney-General will look into this matter with a view to seeing if it is not possible to attach to the friendly society work the importance which it really warrants.

Generally we have the report of the Registrar of Friendly Societies in our hands when we are discussing this Estimate. On this occasion we have not got that report. I am not attaching any blame to the office on that account. This year, perhaps, we are discussing these Estimates earlier than usual. I recognise that there has been a considerable amount of extra work thrown on the department by reason of the Act which was passed last year altering the date for furnishing returns from the various societies from 31st December to 30th June, thereby throwing upon the office a considerable additional amount of work. With a view to ascertaining the position concerning the membership and the capital of the various friendly societies I went along to the office yesterday, and Mr. Porter very courteously and very generously allowed me to have recourse to the figures showing, under a few headings, the progress of the friendly society movement in the State of Queensland during the last twelve months. The position is such an interesting one that I think it wise to give it publicity by having the figures recorded in “Hansard.” Up to 31st December last, the latest returns available show the total membership of the friendly society movement as

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61,571, or an increase during the year of 1,907 members. The total capital up to the same date amounted to £1,297,852, or an increase during the year of £71,011. The Registrar assures me that is the highest surplus ever recorded in the history of the movement in Queensland, and it is very satisfactory for the members of the various friendly societies to know that that progress is being made. Everybody knows that the friendly society movement is one which is an exhibition of thrift on the part of those who are associated with it. Working people predominate in the membership of friendly societies.

Let me now take the figures dealing with the benefits that have been paid during the same period of twelve months. When we recognise the small payments made week by week, it is astonishing to see the enormous amount of money paid away in benefits. During that twelve months' period the amount paid for medical attendance and medicine to the members and their wives and families was £87,082. The amount paid for sick pay was £58,622, and for mortality payment a sum of £22,750, or a total of £168,454. The cost of management has not been very great, and the work that is being done is something of which all hon. members and the people of Queensland generally have reason to feel proud. I notice that there are eighteen different societies in Queensland, composed of 634 branches as against 619 last year. That is a very creditable position. It is only when one reads the report or studies the figures that are compiled in the office that one obtains an idea of the great amount of work that is being done by the friendly society movement and the great amount of work done by the Registrar's office.

At 4.18 p.m.,

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

Mr. McLACHLAN: Before these figures could be arrived at innumerable tables had to be drawn up, statistical records compiled, and history cards looked after, so that from a statistical point of view the office is one of the most important in Queensland.

The movement in Queensland is part of the movement in Australia, and I want to refer briefly to the membership of the friendly societies throughout the length and breadth of Australia. I obtained the figures I am now going to quote from the first progress report of the Royal Commission on National Insurance which is at present sitting and which visited Queensland some little time ago. The object of the Commission is to see if it is possible for the Federal Government to introduce a system of national insurance. For the purpose of finding out how the proposal would affect the friendly society movement evidence was called in the various States from men associated with the movement, and, as a result, a progress report was published in the early part of this year. I have read that report, which is a very interesting document. The latest membership figures that the Commission was able to secure were up to the end of 1923. When we know of the progress that is being made in Queensland, as the figures I quoted indicate, one can compute what would be the figures up to the end of 1924 had the Commission been able to secure them. The figures in relation to the membership of

friendly societies in Australia up to the end of 1923 were—

State.	Males.	Females.	Total Membership.
New South Wales ..	182,564	15,704	198,268
Victoria ..	140,181	10,589	150,770
Queensland ..	54,683	4,986	59,669
South Australia ..	61,304	11,150	72,454
West Australia ..	17,810	1,008	18,818
Tasmania ..	22,866	1,501	24,367
Grand Totals ..	479,388	44,938	524,326

The total membership of the friendly societies in Australia is equal to 9 per cent. of the total population of the Commonwealth, or 30 per cent. of the total number of wage-earners. Those figures should be sufficient to convince every hon. member of the importance of friendly societies not only in Queensland but Australia. I hope that the Minister will take as deep an interest as he possibly can in the movement. I know that he is a friendly society man and, when resident in North Queensland, occupied the position of district secretary in one of the largest societies in that part of the State. I know the hon. gentleman has a complete knowledge of the work the friendly societies are doing. All interested in the movement are aware that it is increasing year by year, and that the work is also increasing, and I hope the importance of the sub-department will not be lost sight of by the Minister and that the officers who are carrying out this important work will receive every consideration at the hands of the Government.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): Unfortunately I was out of the Chamber when the hon. member for Merthyr began his speech, but I can understand that a considerable portion of his remarks touched on the question that is exercising the minds of the large body of friendly society members—the nationalisation question. It has been keenly watched by everybody in the movement, and, when we recognise that in Australia we have upwards of £8,000,000 invested in that movement, it means something. There is a saying "Money counts and money talks," and it may be expected that we shall jealously watch the proposal for nationalisation. Speaking as one individual, I am not opposed to the great scheme of nationalisation. I recognise that we have accomplished much under the voluntary system; but, when we recognise that a large body of people in Australia well able to make provision for the day of sickness and distress will not do so and ultimately become a tax on the State and the Commonwealth, we realise that the voluntary system cannot go further; and we must consider what is best for the greatest good of the wage-earner, irrespective of what Government may be in power. All that we ask is that our position shall be protected. I go so far as to say that, if the Commonwealth Government proceed with the scheme of nationalisation, if they grant to the friendly society movement the payment of all indebtedness that will accrue at that time to the friendly societies, so that we shall be able to carry out our obligations, we shall not be greatly disturbed. I recognise that once nationalisation is established it will be very difficult for the voluntary

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friendly society to exist, unless we are given the control of the national movement; and that the men who have the controlling power will probably not do. When nationalisation was first discussed in Great Britain the friendly societies were promised a great deal of consideration, but I regret the Government did not give effect to those promises. They departed very much from their first proposal to the friendly societies, and I am anticipating, as the progress report of the committee has already indicated, that the Government of this Commonwealth will not be prepared to give much consideration to the friendly societies. In that event I think the friendly societies as a voluntary movement will pass out. The movement grows through the extension of branches. One may find a district with fifty or sixty people where some enthusiast will open a branch and that branch will grow into a very healthy and financial branch. If, on the other hand, a district is already catered for under the scheme of national insurance, the same possibilities will not exist and voluntary friendly societies will have a very "rocky" time.

If the National Government [4.30 p.m.] introduce a scheme of national insurance and they are prepared to guarantee to pay to the friendly societies any shortage which may be created by the introduction of national insurance, seeing that it is for the benefit of the Australian people, then I, as a keen member of a friendly society, will offer no opposition.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*): In common with the hon. member for Merthyr and the hon. member for East Toowoomba, I recognise the importance of friendly societies, and fully appreciate the good work they are doing, and I shall naturally follow with interest any development in connection with the proposed national insurance, and hope that nothing will be done to injure the magnificent organisation that has been established in Queensland.

Getting down to the details of administration referred to by the hon. member for Merthyr, I may say that I join with him in recognising that the Registrar-General, who is now the Registrar of Friendly Societies, is shaping well in his position, and no doubt will merit greater recognition in the future.

The hon. member referred to Mr. Daley, who was next to the Registrar of Friendly Societies, and expressed the opinion that Mr. Daley ought to be made Deputy Registrar of Friendly Societies. I must confess that for some time I thought the same, and I am not too well satisfied yet that he should not be appointed to that position, but the Public Service Commissioner went through the office and he was not prepared at that time to recommend that Mr. Daley should be appointed Deputy Registrar, although he did recommend a substantial increase in his salary. Certainly Mr. Daley has to do responsible work in the absence of the Registrar and also in conjunction with the Registrar. I further recognise that the Registrar of Friendly Societies, as Registrar-General under the new policy of the Government, may have to visit other portions of the State—because, if he wants to do his work properly, he cannot do it if he is confined to the Brisbane office—and, if it is found necessary for Mr. Porter to be away from his office more frequently in the future than in the past, it may be necessary to appoint a Deputy Registrar

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of Friendly Societies. Therefore I shall go into the matter again with a view to ascertaining whether it would not be advisable to appoint Mr. Daley Deputy Registrar of Friendly Societies.

Item (Friendly Societies) agreed to.

PARLIAMENTARY DRAFTSMAN.

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

"That £750 be granted for 'Parliamentary Draftsman.'"

Item agreed to.

REGISTRAR-GENERAL.

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

"That £10,470 be granted for 'Registrar-General.'"

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): The hon. member for Gregory yesterday stated that he believed that the figures supplied to us with regard to wealth production in Queensland were guesswork. I disagree with that statement, which was, in my opinion, a reflection upon the Registrar-General. For a number of years the Registrar-General has compiled figures in connection with the wealth production of this State, and those figures have been quoted from time to time in different parts of the Commonwealth. It would be just as correct for me to say that the "Commonwealth Year Book" is guesswork. I think that the Registrar-General is to be complimented on the good work he is doing in that direction. The compilation of the "ABC of Queensland Statistics" is a credit to him. I would advise the Attorney-General, however, that there is a long way to go yet in connection with statistics dealing with wealth production and with those who get the wealth after it is produced. I remember when Mr. Coghlan was Government statistician in New South Wales that on one occasion he gave us a lot of figures in connection with the wealth production in that State, and showed who got the wealth after it had been produced. Anyone who reads the works of Sir Leo Chiozza-Money and other English statisticians knows that those writers attempt to give the wealth production, and to show who gets the wealth after it is produced. I want the Attorney-General to move in that direction in connection with the Registrar-General's Department. It has been said by one of the greatest thinkers who ever lived that in the future the science of government will be one of statistics. The hon. member for Gregory last night referred to a Bill that would shortly be coming before this Chamber providing for the creation of a board of trade to function in connection with the Arbitration Act, by which statistics will be collected in matters appertaining to the fixation of wages, prices, and so forth. That proves to me that to some extent we are drifting in the direction when the science of government will be to a great extent in the direction of collecting statistics to show where we are really going. I compliment the Registrar-General on the good work he is doing. If there are not sufficient funds at his disposal to carry out all I have outlined, the funds should be placed at his disposal. It would be better for members of Parliament and the public in general to know more about matters pertaining to the welfare of the community.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*): The interesting and important question raised by the hon. member for Bowen in relation to the statistics with regard to wealth compiled by the Registrar-General's Department is one to which I have given a good deal of thought. It is only fair to say, after having heard the remarks of the hon. member for Gregory last night, to which the hon. member for Bowen refers, that I think the hon. member for Gregory was substantially right. (Hear, hear!) I have frequently been at a loss to understand some of the statements I have heard about national wealth and wealth production. I have myself taken a special interest in this matter during the last six months, as the question of wealth production has been debated in many quarters, and I remember ringing up the Registrar-General on the subject. I knew the answer I would get, but I thought I would test the matter, as he was the highest statistical authority in the State. I said, "You have seen those figures regarding wealth production published by various authorities, such as the Economic Commission and others?" and he said "Yes." I said "Can you tell me what the surplus value wealth of the State is?" Of course, he had to admit that he could not give it accurately. There is no greater fallacy than to conclude that, because we see a pile of figures showing a wealth production of, say, £60,000,000 in a year, the country is £60,000,000 the richer. Take mining, in which I am particularly interested. The statistics may show that the wealth production is £5,000,000, but that does not leave Queensland £5,000,000 richer. It may leave Queensland £500,000 poorer, because it may take £5,500,000 to produce that amount of wealth.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It costs £6 per ounce to produce our gold.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: What we want to get at, and what we ought to have, and what I believe we shall have as a result of the Bill to which the hon. member for Bowen referred—he wants it just as much as I do, and I want it just as much as he does—is a Bureau of Statistics by which we can get not only the value of any commodity produced in a year but also the surplus value; in other words, a national balance-sheet showing the profit and loss for the year. We shall then see the profit made by the State—it may be £10,000,000 or it may be £5,000,000—and then we can apporportion it between the State, the employers, and the employees.

Mr. WEIR: Will you deal then with watered capital?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Certainly.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): After fifty years of self-government, after the Chamber has been voting money year after year for a Registrar-General's Department—£10,180 last year and £10,470 this year—it was regretful to me to hear the Minister say he had to agree with the hon. member for Gregory that the compilation of figures supplied to members of Parliament, on which we have to base arguments, is guesswork. If that is so, the whole department should be wiped out and something better placed in its stead. I am just as well acquainted with the surplus wealth values as most men, and I say that the figures of the Registrar-General in regard to wealth production are fairly accurate. If we take the income tax returns

and look up the income figures, which we call surplus value, and find that there is an increase this year over last year, we can reckon that the wealth of the State has increased in somewhat similar proportion.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Profits are surplus wealth.

Mr. COLLINS: If what the Minister says is correct, this department is not up-to-date. There is no guarantee that even the Board of Trade will not work on guesswork, instead of getting down to bedrock. What do we pay men in the Registrar-General's Department for? If their statistics are not correct, the Minister in charge is responsible; but I say that they ought to be correct and not guesswork.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That is not the question.

Mr. COLLINS: They are put there to compile the statistics of this State—amongst them, the wealth production of the State—and, if it is not being done properly, then it is the Minister's duty to see that it is done properly and that correct figures are supplied to us. We should have the correct figures supplied to us. In the future when I get up and quote the Registrar-General hon. members opposite will be quite justified in saying "Guesswork." Where is this going to lead to when, after fifty years of self-government in Queensland, a Minister of the Crown has to admit in connection with the compilation of some of our statistics that it is merely guesswork?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*): It is only fair to the Registrar-General and his staff that no false impression should get abroad regarding the office and the capacity of the Registrar-General. So far as the machinery provided permits, he does his work as well and as effectively as any man could do it. I say there is no Registrar-General's Department in Australia that provides the information desired by the hon. member for Bowen regarding the surplus value. The Commonwealth Statistician's Department does not provide that information, as hon. members will realise on perusing the "Official Year Book." The real test of wealth production is to find what it costs to produce that wealth, and, as I said before, if we produce £10,000,000 worth of wealth, we must know what it has cost to produce that amount so as to arrive at the surplus value or profit. If in a mining field it costs £4,000,000 to produce £3,500,000 worth of mineral, there is no surplus value but a loss. We must arrive at the cost of production in each industry, aggregate the losses and the profits, and then take out a national balance-sheet which will reveal to us the profit or surplus value. I admit that we have not that necessary machinery, and it is time that we did have it. If the new Board of Trade is to be of any benefit at all and is worth creating, it must have a bureau established with the machinery necessary to provide that information. I quite agree with the hon. member for Bowen in that.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): The hon. member for Bowen and the Minister have opened up a subject which the further they pursue the more they will find it leads to considerable difficulties. If we are to obtain the information desired, it cannot be ascertained by the expenditure of anything like £10,000. Last November I was in

Mr. Roberts.]

North Queensland and asked certain questions with regard to the mining industry, and I knew that it would be next to impossible to ascertain the true surplus value in that industry. I do not know whether the hon. member for Bowen knows that. How could you arrive at the true cost of production to enable the Registrar-General to say what is the true surplus value? I found in the North that different railway freight concessions were allowed to men fossicking and working small shows that were not payable propositions and could not be made payable propositions. These concessions were made merely to give the miners a chance to exist. If those miners were to furnish returns showing the amounts obtained for the mineral and the cost of production, the balance would not be the real surplus wealth. It would be found that the State was paying about 75 per cent. of the cost of production, and that would not be considered at all. The miner could furnish a return showing only the amount received for the mineral and the amount paid in producing that mineral. I would not have been able to obtain this information had I not been a member of the Public Works Commission and found it necessary to ask certain questions concerning the mining industry. It will be impossible for the Registrar-General to supply the true information in that respect, consequently the return will not show the true mineral wealth of the State.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Some receive a 75 per cent. rebate on the freight.

Mr. ROBERTS: That means that the State is finding that 75 per cent. The State is carrying those minerals on the railways for 75 per cent. less than it actually costs the Railway Department. That is only one instance of the kind of information the Registrar-General will receive, and the information in other cases will be similarly unreliable. I know something of the information the Registrar-General receives from time to time in connection with the various industries in Queensland, and I can imagine what it would cost to arrive at the correct position. The men making returns arrive at the information by pure guesswork. That is what the hon. member for Bowen referred to. A lot of the information sent to the Registrar-General is guesswork. Take our manufacturers. The manufacturers set out that the goods are worth a certain sum, and invariably forward different information to the other side of the world as to what they cost. If the whole position were gone into, it would require a staff altogether different from what the Registrar now has. It is not that the staff is not competent to do the work, but it would mean the employment of considerably more men to secure the information necessary.

Item (Registrar-General) agreed to.

#### SHERIFF.

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

“That £10,450 be granted for ‘Sheriff.’”

Item agreed to.

#### SUPREME COURTS.

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

“That £17,490 be granted for ‘Supreme Courts.’”

[*Mr. Roberts.*

Mr. KING (*Logan*): I notice that no appropriation is asked for the Registrar of the Supreme Court of the Southern division. Has anything been done with respect to appointing a Registrar?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*): The Registrar was retired last year on reaching the age limit, and Mr. Kennedy, the Deputy Registrar, has been appointed Acting Registrar. We thought it wise not to make a permanent appointment until Mr. Kennedy had an opportunity of showing how he shaped. If he shapes all right, he will probably get the position, otherwise he will not.

Item (Supreme Court) agreed to.

#### TITLES.

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

“That £22,150 be granted for ‘Titles.’”

Item agreed to.

#### DEPARTMENT OF MINES.

##### CHIEF OFFICE.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. A. J. Jones, *Paddington*): I beg to move—

“That £17,955 be granted for ‘Chief Office.’”

The sum asked for last year was £17,415. Although the expenditure last year was only £15,463 7s. 10d., we require the extra amount asked for because there are certain automatic increases, and, although the amount may not be wholly expended, we anticipate at present that this sum will be required.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): I am not an authority on mining, but since this vote went through last year I have had an opportunity of seeing some of the difficulties under which men in North Queensland are delving for gold, silver, lead, and other metals. Having seen the country and the conditions under which those men work my sympathy goes out to them. I do not mean to the men who put in 10s. or £1 with the object of taking out £10 or £15 from the investment. These miners go out to such places as Mount Iva, where the climate is anything but satisfactory, and are mining under conditions which, when I think of all we have done for miners, did not seem to be at all satisfactory. They go down a mine over 100 feet, work in the small rises in the shafts, and they look as if they had just come out of a swimming pool.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Did you go down?

Mr. ROBERTS: I did. I would not have felt it right to have gone North and not seen the conditions under which those men work.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: How far did you go down?

Mr. ROBERTS: As far as it was possible I saw some of the places where even the Secretary for Mines has not been.

Mr. DASH: How did you go down?

Mr. ROBERTS: By bucket and ladder, just the same as the miners.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: What authority have you for saying that I did not go down? I have gone down every mine in Queensland.

Mr. ROBERTS: I am very glad to hear that the hon. gentleman did go down. I

know he had considerable difficulty in getting back to the surface in some instances. I am not speaking in any heroic sense. I did not go to conquer, but merely to see. I am satisfied that, if anything can be done to assist those men who are trying to make good in extracting our precious metals, it should be done. Having seen the conditions under which those men work I view the matter in rather a different light. Perhaps I have not that sympathy in a true mining sense, because I hold that every £1 worth of metal we recover costs us 25s. I was astonished to find what is being done, generally speaking, "under the cush," if you like to put it so. I do not mean that there is anything dishonourable about it, but the fact is those things are being done, and the great majority of our people and legislators do not even know they are being done. Huge quantities of ore are being carried for 600 odd miles over our railways at a rebate of 75 per cent. on the regular freights, and, in addition, we subsidise mining. It would be better if we found some other employment for those men and subsidised them in some industry that would ultimately be more successful than mining. I saw in some of those districts—not just in the mining belts, but adjacent to them—very fine stretches of country, and I am glad that I had the opportunity of seeing them. I recognise that Queensland is a vast

[5 p.m.] country, and what struck me most forcibly when in the Northern part of the State were the very fine stretches of water there. Seeing Southern Queensland as I have seen it, I did not expect to find water in such abundance in the various watercourses in the North. I hope we shall find a method of populating North Queensland, but I do not know that we are going to do it very successfully through mining. I rose to pay a compliment to those men, and to say that there are good indications as far as Mount Isa is concerned. Mount Isa may make good, and I only hope it will for the sake of the men engaged in the industry, and for the sake of Queensland.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Queenton*): I am very glad that the hon. member for East Toowoomba has had the opportunity of seeing something of the northern part of the State, and of seeing what the conditions are like there. If men working 100 feet below the surface excite his sympathy in the way he said it did, what would he feel in regard to the men in Charters Towers and other places, who were compelled to work at much greater depths? Hon. members representing mining districts have known for a very long time past that the men engaged in mining deserved all the assistance and help that they may have got. If the hon. member's sympathy goes out to these men, he certainly cannot take exception to the subsidy granted to working miners. They have to put in £1 of their own labour for every £1 they receive from the Mines Department, and they earn every penny of it. It has always been said that it costs a great deal more to produce gold than the gold is actually worth: but I have never yet seen anybody who has been able to give any figures that could be accepted as being reliable. If it is an actual fact that an ounce of gold, which is worth £4 2s. 6d., costs £6 to produce, and that this is the actual cost all along the line, then we can only regard ourselves as a lot of idiots for producing it. The fact that we do not know the actual cost and cannot get the actual cost of pro-

duction of any of our products goes to show that we are in the dark to a very large extent. It is only when our products are lumped together, and we see them in the shape of exports, that we have the slightest idea of what our products are actually worth, and whether we are producing more than we can consume; and, when we take into consideration the fact that we are not merely living on what we produce, but that we are borrowing money and expending borrowed money, it only tends to make the question more involved. If we could get statistics clearly setting out our wealth production, and what it costs to produce, it certainly would be a very fine guide to us from a statistical point of view.

Whilst mining is not the important industry in North Queensland that it has been in times gone by, at the same time I am one of those who do not believe that Queensland is worked out as a mining State. I believe that the time will come when we shall see mining flourish again—that new fields will be discovered, and a fresh impetus given to mining.

I notice that the Under Secretary for Mines refers to Lawn Hill in his report. That was one of the fields which was very prominent in my first session in Parliament. It was one of the places to which a syndicate railway was going to be made, and there was a division of opinion in regard to it. From that time until a year or two ago we heard little or nothing about Lawn Hill. It is labouring under the same disability as many of the other mining fields in Queensland in being isolated and too far away from a railway and port, which makes the question of transport a very difficult one to solve. There are quite a number of these mining fields which would be good propositions if they were handy to ports: but, when you have to carry products to and from the mines over a distance of 500 miles, it becomes a difficult proposition. The fact that the Government have given rebates to the companies working the mines is evidence that they have been trying to help the mining industry all round.

Some hon. members appear to have some doubt on the subject, but there is no industry which will have the effect of increasing population as quickly as the mining industry. The discovery of a new mining field anywhere in Queensland of anything like decent area would increase population quicker than anyone can imagine. I am quite of opinion that in the days to come we shall see mining fields discovered and a large population in those localities.

I am glad to notice that there is an increase of £6,000 in the vote "In Aid of Mining." The previous vote has been fairly and judiciously spent. At the present time there are one or two efforts being made in connection with private mining in Charters Towers and adjacent districts, and I am hopeful that some of the money given as a subsidy in that direction will bring about good results.

Owing to the increase in the cost of labour and material, cost of insurance, and increase in general working expenses, it is a very difficult matter to make mining propositions pay. I find that my voice will not hold out, and I am afraid that I shall not be able to say all that I would like to say, so I just say that the Mines Department has done its level best in the interests of the mining industry, including goldmining.

*Mr Winstanley.]*

Mr. PETERSON (*Normanby*): On perusing "The Queensland Government Mining Journal," I noticed some figures in regard to the four coalmines in my electorate. At the Balmoral colliery at Blackwater, owned by Mr. Fraser, the output for the month of July was 1,050 tons, and it is stated that seven men have been employed on the surface and fourteen men below. The production for the same month of the Styx State colliery was 668 tons, and of the Bowman State colliery 1,074 tons, or a total of 1,742 tons; so that Mr. Fraser, with his twenty-one men, has been able to get out practically the same quantity of coal at the Balmoral colliery as the State authorities at the Bowman mine during the same period, although I suppose one could say that at the Bowman colliery there are at least seventy or eighty men.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Forty-five men.

The HOME SECRETARY: It may mean that developmental work is going on there.

Mr. PETERSON: It may be the result of that. I know that three shafts are operating—the Styx, the Bowman, and the Hartley—but the "Mining Journal" figures show that the output is considerably below what might be expected. Perhaps the accident which took place some time ago may have had something to do with it; but if the figures are misleading we should know it, because there is a big discrepancy.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The number of men in coalmining is regulated by the difficulty of mining the coal and the width of the seam.

Mr. PETERSON: I understand from the "Mining Journal" that the value of the Styx River coal is about £1 per ton and of the Baralaba coal about 16s. 6d. per ton. It would be interesting to know whether the demand for the Styx River coal is less than anticipated by the hon. gentleman when it was first opened. I am hoping that the Minister will be able to get rid of the whole of the output, because it has been going for a number of years and should now certainly be showing a profit; and, if the hon. gentleman is able to dispose of his coal at £1 a ton, which is a good price, the balance should certainly be on the right side of the ledger.

We listened the other day to a most interesting speech by the hon. gentleman regarding the necessity for building up secondary industries. One of the main factors in secondary industry is that it should secure fuel at the lowest possible price compatible with the observance of Arbitration Court awards. At the Styx River I understand there are coal measures on Crown lands, and I am led to believe that the department refuses to allow anybody to take up an area because it would then have opposition to the Styx mine.

At 5.17 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. PETERSON: If this area above the Styx coalmine were opened up, it would be possible to supply coal to the Mackay sugar-mills at 5s. a ton less than is being charged by the department to-day, and anything that will help to bring about reduction in the cost of production will enable those who are subject to the Arbitration Court awards to pay an increased wage to the men in the industry.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: How could they supply the coal at 5s. a ton less?

[Mr. Peterson.

Mr. PETERSON: By adopting a certain system of working. They would have to prove that later on, and probably they would not be able to prove it as well as the hon. gentleman. I am merely pointing out the fact that at the Blackwater coalmine, after opening that mine five years after the Styx mine was opened, Mr. Fraser is able to produce such an amount of coal with the number of men I have mentioned.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Where does he sell his coal?

Mr. PETERSON: I understand that he sells a good deal round Rockhampton, and I think the Railway Department takes some of it. I know that he is able to dispose of all the coal he is able to mine. I am hoping that in the near future the Styx mine will show a profit. There is no reason why the field should not be made a success. We have been having deficit after deficit, and, unless the Minister is able to place the mine on a paying basis, I do not think it is a fair thing to compete with people who have to pay income tax, comply with awards, and help to build up the industries of the State. Unfortunately, owing to the temporary closure of Mount Morgan, the Baralaba field is not working to its full capacity. I am hoping that Mount Morgan—with the aid of the Government, if necessary—will be able to recommence operations, thus tending to greater development of the coal measures at Baralaba. I am not so much interested in the closure of Mount Morgan as the Home Secretary; but my electorate takes in the suburbs of Mount Morgan, consequently I am interested in about 800 men in my electorate. Although the mine is closed down for the time being, I hope the Minister will use his best endeavours—I know the Home Secretary is doing all he possibly can—to bring about a condition of affairs whereby the bulk of the Mount Morgan men will be absorbed by the various local authorities instead of drawing the sustenance allowance. I am sure that the bulk of the men will be pleased to receive that amount in the shape of weekly wages from the different shire councils for services performed. I understand that the miners have put forward that suggestion, and I hope the Government will do their utmost to enable the men to be absorbed by the different local authorities in road work. I do not mean that they should be absorbed on expensive road work requiring a tremendous amount of material, but where the maximum amount can be expended for the least amount of material required. If that is done, then a considerable amount in sustenance fees will be saved, and the men will be able to perform a service in return for the money. Whilst this may not be a very important matter, I think it is a phase that should be considered. When a body of men lose their employment they deserve some consideration; and that consideration can be shown in ways different from granting railway passes to enable the workers to seek employment throughout Queensland. After all, it is a pretty hard job to find work at manual labour in Brisbane or any other part of Queensland. The Government are not now called upon to subsidise Mount Morgan to the extent of £60,000 per annum, and, if it were possible to loan that money or a portion of it to the various local authorities in the interests of the unemployed workers, it would be money wisely expended. We have heard over and over again that the unemployed man

is not an asset to the State. It has been calculated that an employed man is an economical asset to the State of £300 per annum.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: So long as he is engaged in social and necessary work.

Mr. PETERSON: I agree with the hon. gentleman. He will also agree that there are any amount of roads not only in and around Brisbane, but in and around Rockhampton and elsewhere, which are sadly in need of an overhaul, and it would be good reproductive work to help the local authorities to get these roads put in order. The expenditure of money in sustenance is a good thing, because it helps workers who are unemployed to keep their wives and families from starvation; but at the same time it is not sufficient to keep their wives and families, together with themselves, in a reasonable state of comfort. If the Government have been able for the past five or six years to subsidise the Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company to the extent of £65,000 annually, why not earmark some of that money this year and give it to the local authorities in the Rockhampton area, or in other areas, to absorb the miners who will be unemployed until the Mount Morgan mine is reopened? I am not casting any reflections upon the Home Secretary, who represents Mount Morgan. I know that he has been, like myself, besieged with requests, and has done his best to overcome the difficulties now confronting the men at Mount Morgan, but, as the representative of the area adjacent to Mount Morgan, I hope that something will be done to overcome the temporary dislocation of work at Mount Morgan on the lines I have indicated. I hope that the Minister in reply will give us good news in regard to the Styx coalmine and its future development.

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*): I want to bring before the Minister some of the difficulties under which coalmining operations are being carried on in the southern parts of Queensland, and to ask his consideration of the matters I shall bring before his notice in order that we may improve the lot of those engaged in the coalmining industry. I have information which has been supplied through the courtesy of the secretary of the Colliery Proprietors' Council, Mr. Thomas, and also through the secretary of the Colliery Employees' Union, Mr. Phillips. Mr. Phillips is in Sydney, but has obtained information for me in connection with the matters I desire to put before the Committee, and ask the Minister to see that something is done in respect of them. In the first place, I wish to deal with the great disability under which the coalmining industry is suffering owing to the shortage of coal wagons and the lack of efficient coal-loading appliances at our ports. I understand that the Railway Department has placed orders for about 1,000 new wagons, not solely for coal-carrying, but I am afraid that the connecting of the Northern Railway system—although excellent from many points of view—will continue to seriously affect the Southern district for many years, due to the fact that coal wagons, both flats and hoppers, are sent far greater distances than formerly. At the present time it requires at least 2,000 more wagons than formerly to carry on our coal industry and ensure an efficient wagon service, as other industries are gradually

expanding and using more wagons. The Minister controls several mines, and he knows that this difficulty exists. He should, therefore, take steps to have the trouble remedied.

Mr. Thomas has pointed out to me that there are two proposals by which the coalmining industry can be assisted. His first proposal is by the alleviation of the truck shortage; and, secondly, the provision of better coal-loading appliances at the port. I do not intend to deal with the first proposal now. I shall refer to it when the Estimates of the Railway Department are being considered. The second question of providing more efficient coal-loading facilities is a matter that the Minister might take up, as by spending more money in this direction some of the serious effects of the truck shortage can also be eliminated. The electric crane at the Woolloongabba wharf, although mechanically efficient, is not now of much use so far as the loading of ships ex crane is concerned. The reason for that is that the big ships do not come up to the Woolloongabba wharf, consequently the crane at the Woolloongabba wharf is used only to load lighters. Those lighters take the coal to the ship's side, and it is then carted by the coal workers into the ship in baskets. The proposal is that another crane should be erected at deep water, so that the coal may go direct to the side of the ship and be loaded there. I have information to show that that can be done and loading facilities supplied at a very reasonable cost. I have gone to the trouble of obtaining information from other directions, as well as from Mr. Thomas, and have quite a lot of photographs of the facilities in use at Newcastle. I also have information as to the number of cranes used there and the work done by the department in New South Wales to provide facilities for the loading of coal at Newcastle.

They have twenty-three cranes there of a capacity of 15 tons each—they do not believe in having cranes of a greater capacity than 15 tons. On the Bowen wharf we have a crane of 20-ton capacity, but there we have an excess capacity which will be lying idle, as the crane is bigger than we need. It is unnecessary to exceed 15 tons, because the bogies and wheels are not lifted; only the super-structure is lifted, and it takes the wagon with the coal in it. Those cranes lift 11 or 12 tons of coal quite easily and put it into the bins or vessel, as the case may be. I have not time just now to give full details as to each of the cranes at Newcastle, but the lifting capacity of each is 15 tons. Four or five of the movable cranes can load simultaneously a ship on either side and at a very quick rate. It is no use putting a proposal before the Chamber and asking that we should put up a crane or provide loading facilities at the port of Brisbane without giving hon. members some idea of the cost of those facilities. I would like the Secretary for Mines to go into the matter of whether it is advisable to erect another electrically driven crane, or whether it would be advisable to adopt the system adopted in the Balmain colliery in Sydney Harbour. There they have erected bins for the purpose of holding 4,000 or 5,000 tons of coal. From those bins they have erected an up-to-date conveyor belt with loading gear capable of lifting that belt up to any height required and loading a vessel expeditiously—much more so than the cranes, even when they are operating continually.

*Mr. Gledson.]*

Mr. Willis, vice-president of the New South Wales Executive, obtained this information for me—

“ West Side Basin, Electric Cranes.— The cost of the six 15-ton electrically driven cranes erected at this location was £76,130 17s. complete, or an average of £12,690 each. These were the latest cranes erected at Newcastle.”

That shows the cost is not excessive, and they could be built almost totally of material obtained in Australia. The Balmain colliery is at present working a conveyor-loading belt, and that is the system which I suggest the Minister should inquire into and see if we cannot adopt it in the port of Brisbane to deal with our coal business.

The following information was obtained by Mr. Willis from the manager of the Balmain colliery :—

The actual cost of the belting is £7 10s. per foot, the cost of the bins is about £3 per ton, and the sliding gear for the purpose of loading ships costs about £8,000. A 5,000-ton bin would cost £15,000; the sliding gear, £2,000; 150 feet of belting—which would be ample for all requirements—£1,125; wharfage accommodation, £10,000; or a total of £34,125 to erect similar loading facilities to what they have at the Balmain [5.30 p.m.] colliery, which are the finest known. That is not a very great cost to provide facilities for working a big industry such as we have here. The following table will give some idea of the importance of the trade in Brisbane :—

NUMBER OF VESSELS ENTERED AT THE PORT OF BRISBANE IN 1924.

	No. of Vessels.	Tons.
Number of Foreign Vessels ..	376	..
Tonnage of Foreign Vessels ..	..	1,644,059
Number of Interstate Vessels ..	459	..
Tonnage of Interstate Vessels ..	..	888,679
Number of Interstate Vessels ..	372	..
Tonnage of Interstate Vessels ..	..	547,661
Totals.. ..	1,207	3,080,399

	£
Value of imports, 1924 ..	10,266,617
Value of exports, 1924 ..	17,454,963

Total value of exports and imports, Brisbane, 1924 ...£27,721,580  
Quantity of coal taken as bunkers from Brisbane in the year 1924 = 124,794 tons.

That was all the coal that was taken through the port of Brisbane, although that number of vessels came in and that tonnage left Brisbane.

This is approximately 100 tons per ship per annum, or, 4½ tons of coal for each £1,000 in value of imports and exports combined.

In 1914 the quantity taken as bunkers from Brisbane totalled 259,299 tons, so that instead of progressing in ten years, the coal industry has lost 134,505 tons per annum of its bunker trade, and approximately 75,000 tons per annum of its export trade, a total loss of approximately 210,000 tons per annum. That is attributable to our lack of loading facilities in the port of Brisbane for dealing with our coal. I have quite a number of particulars

in regard to the coal dealt with, which make very interesting reading :—

QUANTITY OF COAL SHIPPED FROM WOOLLOONGABBA.

For twelve months ended 30th June, 1913, to 1925.

Twelve months ended 30th June—

Year.	Bunker Coal.
	Tons.
1913 .. ..	230,344
1914 .. ..	259,299
1915 .. ..	207,609
1916 .. ..	147,457
1917 .. ..	169,737
1918 .. ..	151,150
1919 .. ..	112,060
1920 .. ..	112,614
1921 .. ..	171,253
1922 .. ..	135,925
1923 .. ..	153,883
1924 .. ..	136,467
1925 .. ..	117,390

Showing that during the latter years our bunker trade in Brisbane has decreased, although the vessels visiting the port have been increasing both in number and tonnage, and now we are practically losing the trade altogether.

Another matter I would like to refer to while on this question is the fact that the vessels which come here have had some consideration from the Government. A rebate has been given in every port of Queensland by the Government for the purpose of trying to induce vessels to take a greater quantity of coal. Vessels taking over 300 tons of coal have had a rebate of 9d. per ton in connection with harbour dues to induce them to take a greater quantity of coal, but even that has not achieved the object in view. As the shipping companies point out, the coal has to be sent by rail to the railway wharf at South Brisbane, where it is put into lighters. It is then taken down to the side of the boat, put into baskets, and hoisted up by a crane. Then it is tipped into the hold out of those baskets. Apart from the cost of putting it into the vessels, it costs 5s. a ton more than if it were put over a conveyor belt or over the electric crane. That is an additional burden of 5s. a ton which we have to meet in the port of Brisbane because of the lack of facilities in loading the coal. No industry could carry that burden, and the coal industry certainly cannot carry the additional burden. It will be necessary for us to provide facilities for the loading of the coal expeditiously. As the Secretary for Mines knows, the coal in Queensland in nearly every case is of a friable nature, and the hon. gentleman finds quite a lot of difficulty himself in getting rid of the small coal or the slack coal, as the case may be. That can only be got over by reducing the handling. Every time you handle the coal you increase the amount of slack coal, dross, or dust that is in the coal. If we can do away with two or three handlings in putting the coal into the bunkers, we shall not only be able to supply it cheaper but to put a better article on the market. I have already placed before the Committee information showing the efficacy of our coal for bunkering purposes. That is what we want to do at the present time in the port of Brisbane. I am not dealing now with other ports, because that matter is a far greater one. The coal business at Rockhampton and Bowen depends upon a big

[Mr. Gledson.

export trade. It is no use thinking that we can carry on successfully a business in Bowen, Rockhampton, and the Styx River coal unless we can find an outside market for the coal, where we can sell it at a price above the cost of production. It is no good producing coal or any other mineral unless we can obtain for it more than it costs to produce. But that is a question which will take longer to deal with than the time I have at my disposal.

I want to ask the Minister to go fully into these matters, and consider the advisability of providing proper facilities for the purpose of putting our coal into the vessels and of selling it at a rate at which it will be readily purchased. Work has been going on for some time in the direction of providing additional facilities in this direction, but it is not yet completed. I find that £180,000 odd has already been spent for the purpose of providing facilities for the loading of coal at Bowen. It is not going to cost anything like that at Brisbane, if we put up loading facilities there.

Mr. COLLINS: The jetty cost a good deal of that.

Mr. GLEDSON: I am glad to understand that the cost of the jetty, which was a large amount, is included in that sum, because I was surprised that it should be so large. When we take into consideration the fact that for £8,000 we can get coal-lifting gear such as that at Balmain colliery, with cranes and electric winches—or, at any rate, of a size which should give the industry a helping hand—it does not seem a big item. The bins would enable us to store 5,000 tons of coal, and we could load it into vessels up to that limit. If a vessel came in for 2,000 or 3,000 tons of coal, there would always be sufficient on hand to supply the order. The coal would be taken along the conveyor or the belt and automatically weighed before it went into the vessel and the weight recorded, so that we would know exactly how much coal was being supplied. With the winches included, I understand that such a coal-loading plant as that at Balmain could be obtained for £35,000, and I hope the Minister will go into the matter and see that it is provided to enable us to help the industry in the southern part of Queensland. That equipment would not allow us to go into the export business, but it would enable us to secure the legitimate business of coaling vessels which call in at this port, and would keep the men in the southern part of Queensland fully employed. Not only would it give the miners in the Southern districts of Queensland a decent wage—they would then be able to get perhaps ten days a fortnight instead of two or three days a week and would get better wages than for years past—but it would also enable our railways to pay handsomely, because I believe that they get better profit out of coal than out of any other kind of freight. At the present time about five out of every twelve vessels which come to the port take bunker coal, and, if we were able to get the other seven, there would be no difficulty in keeping the miners going full time. We could send the coal down to Brisbane, store it somewhere—perhaps opposite Pinkenba—load it into the vessels by up-to-date means, and so get the business which we are entitled to, and which would enable the mines to get enough trade to keep going. I appeal to the Minister for his assistance in the matter.

Mr. WELLINGTON (*Charters Towers*): I am glad that the hon. member for East Toowoomba, as a member of the Royal Commission on Public Works, had the opportunity to go to Mount Isa and go down some of the mines there and see the conditions under which the miners work. Those conditions are a thousand times better than the conditions under which the men worked in mines prior to 1915 under the Government which he sat behind. As you know, Mr. Pollock—you have worked in the Brilliant Extended—the men on one occasion objected to one of the shift bosses, and they came out on strike until that shift boss was dismissed and better conditions for the men in the mine were brought about. That was under a Liberal Government. The hon. member for East Toowoomba and the hon. member for Burnett should have visited the mines of Charters Towers and Gympie prior to 1915 and gone below to see the conditions under which the men worked. The Government of that day were responsible for the number of miners' phthisis cases. Those cases have been reduced by sevenths since 1915. The cases were due to bad ventilation. The ventilation was so bad that the men had to return to the surface after working three or four hours. In certain mines the levels were bricked up, so that other mines could not get ventilation. At that time the mining inspectors were in favour of better conditions for the men, but pressure was brought to bear on the Government by the shareholders of the companies, with the result that the men could not obtain fair working conditions. Charters Towers has produced £30,000,000 worth of gold. I regret that the gold return for Australia and Queensland has fallen considerably. At one time Charters Towers was the premier goldfield of Queensland, and produced over one-third of the State's gold production, but to-day it can boast only one mine with four men working, and they are receiving a subsidy from the Government. I cannot complain of the assistance given to the mines of Charters Towers since 1915, but there are some persons on the field who would ask for anything. They would ask for the moon, only they know they cannot get it. Clark's Gold Mine in Charters Towers was a good mine, and I have it on good authority that the chairman of directors is proceeding to Brisbane to interview the Minister in an endeavour to obtain assistance to re-open the "Black Jack" mine at Charters Towers. A public meeting was called at Charters Towers attended by the shareholders of Clark's Gold Mines and the public, and it was decided to ask for a certain subsidy. Some time ago the Government Geologist visited the field, and I hope his report to the Minister will be favourable, and that the Minister will consider the application by Clark's Gold Mines and the people of Charters Towers with a view to renewing goldmining activities in Charters Towers. The Government Geologist has also visited the tin fields in the Herbert electorate. The companies in that area accepted the advice of Mr. Saint-Smith, and they have benefited as the result. Although I have no great faith in geologists, it turned out on this occasion that the geologist was right. There is a little mine, Mount Clear View, outside Pentland, on which £2,000 has been spent. Mr. Morton, Government Geologist, has visited that field, and I believe his

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report is favourable. I hope the Minister will give some assistance to that mine. The Government Geologist has also visited Ravenswood, but I believe the directors there are not on all-fours as to the operation of their claim. Mr. Clark will be visiting Brisbane and will be interviewing the Minister with a view to a subsidy, and I hope the Minister will offer some assistance. Mining generally is on the decline. When the hon. member for East Toowoomba was at Mount Isa the deepest shaft was 160 feet. He should have gone down some of the old shafts in Cloncurry, which are about 1,000 feet deep. If it brought the perspiration out of him at 160 feet, what would it do at 1,000 feet or 4,000 feet? I hope the Minister will give serious consideration to the question of goldmining and metalliferous mining, and give assistance where it is deserved.

Mr. WALKER (*Cooroora*): We were all interested to hear the speech delivered by the hon. member for Charters Towers on account of his valuable knowledge of practical mining, and as one associated with mining for a number of years. We all deplore very much indeed the fact that mining generally has declined. If we had cheaper costs of production many of the mining fields now almost extinct, such as Charters Towers and Gympie, as well as others too numerous to mention, could be worked. We all know perfectly well that Gympie was about the easiest mining field in Australia to work, and that, owing to the conditions under which it was worked, miners' phthisis was practically non-existent.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You know that the remedy for the present position in the mining industry is in better treatment.

Mr. WALKER: I recognise that the remedy for the present position to a great extent is in the more economical treatment of the ore-bodies. The cost of producing gold in the early days of Gympie, according to returns published about ten years ago, was about £2 12s. per ounce. That was in days when the miner received £2 10s. a week, when all mining requisites were much cheaper than they are to-day, when there were no excessive workers' compensation premiums, and practically no income tax to pay. The increased costs are such that it is impossible to work many of our mines profitably to-day. If we discovered another Gympie to-morrow, the gold under present conditions would cost £6 or £7 an ounce to produce. There is, therefore, no incentive to the investor to search for new goldfields. Many prospectors will go out, as it is their livelihood or amusement, and you cannot stop them.

Through mining in places like Charters Towers and Gympie shutting down, we shall shortly be called upon to deal with a great problem. The whole of the mines where operations have ceased are now flooded with water, and inside a couple of years every mine will be filled to the surface. It will be a problem almost as great as the prickly-pear to deal with. The genuine prospector will be unable to prospect in the old workings. Fields like Charters Towers now employ about twenty or thirty men only. That is not a desirable state of affairs. We must consider the scientific treatment of ores more generally than has been the case in the past. I am not referring to Gympie, which was easily worked on account of the gold being freer in character than on other goldfields,

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but to the other fields in Northern Queensland. We know that there are other minerals besides gold in Northern Queensland which we can exploit and work to advantage; but we must remember that with regard to silver, lead, tin, and the other rarer metals, we must compete with the world's markets. The centre of those markets is either London or America. We must also remember that other countries are producing the same that we are doing with black or coolie labour. That is what I want the Government to remember when considering the construction of a railway to the Mount Isa field. That railway will be of very little use except to the Mount Isa field and the adjacent mineral belt, and the Government should pause before spending an enormous amount of money on a line to serve a mineral field which will have to compete in the world's markets under the conditions I have mentioned, when we have many parts of our State where the money could be spent much more profitably.

Mr. RYAN: The objective of that railway is Camoowal. It is not proposed to stop at Mount Isa.

Mr. WALKER: I recognise that, and hope that the Government will take into consideration when considering that line how it will serve the pastoral industry as well as Mount Isa.

I listened with a great amount of interest to the speech of the hon. member for Ipswich with respect to the coalmining industry. I find that the cost of coal at the pit's mouth is 17s. 6d. per ton. That seems high, but it is not high in comparison with the price of coal in other parts of the world. The cost is high when it reaches the ship's side. When travelling over the world recently I had the pleasure of going into this question, and I am pleased that the hon. member for Ipswich has introduced it. The hon. member made reference to the facilities for loading coal into the ships' bunkers, and I can honestly say from the experience gained in my travels that in no country did I see such obsolete methods for loading coal as we have in Queensland.

Mr. COLLINS: You have not seen the new coaling appliances at Bowen.

Mr. WALKER: Of course they are not working yet, so they cannot be judged. At Newcastle they have almost the most up-to-date and effective loading apparatus that I know of. It is up-to-date, cheap, and effective.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: They use niggers with baskets at Colombo.

Mr. WALKER: I admit they have very poor methods there, due to the industrial economic position. As we are unable to secure that cheap labour we must deal with the problem from a scientific point of view. In dealing with the loading of coal, we know perfectly well that we have to compete with other nations. It may be news to some hon. members to know that English coal is actually brought out to Australia to coal vessels. The whole of the coal loaded at Colombo is English coal. We should go to Colombo and endeavour to capture that trade. With the rich coal deposits that we have throughout Queensland and right along our coast, with the acres and acres that are not yet exploited, we should be able to command all of that trade.

Take the matter of the big ocean liners which come to Brisbane. I do not refer to

the small ones that may load alongside the crane at the Woolloongabba coal wharf or those loaded by baskets at Pinkenba, but to the great ocean greyhounds which come to Brisbane from time to time. Those vessels come to Brisbane, discharge their cargo and take in other cargo, but no coal is taken in by them. A small quantity is sometimes taken in at Sydney, but only sufficient to take the vessels to Colombo. That is deplorable. We want all the ships coming to Australian waters to be steamed wholly by Australian coal.

I was particularly pleased with the speech of the hon. member for Ipswich, and I hope the Minister takes into consideration the suggestions put forward by that hon. member.

The Minister knows perfectly well, as a practical miner, and also as one who knows something about the gem industry, that we are not doing the wise thing in England in connection with the export of our gems. I met the hon. gentleman in England, where he made exhaustive inquiries and to a certain extent took me into his confidence with respect to the disposal of our gems. I would like to know, when the hon. gentleman makes his reply, what is being done in the matter. We know now that it was a mistake to drop the old contract which was made with Rubin Brothers. In the meantime what is being done to put our miners on a better footing than they are to-day with regard to their best stones? The rare stones they are recovering could be sold to better advantage than is being done, and it should be possible to expand the industry by opening up new fields. The cost is small, as no treatment is required except washing.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: There is additional cost if they are cut.

Mr. WALKER: There is room for better selling conditions than exist at present, and I hope the Minister will go thoroughly into the matter and see if something can be done.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): I am very proud of the position that the Bowen State mine occupies in the Auditor-General's report, page 86. I give the page for the benefit of hon. members opposite, because we know that in the past the hon. member for Oxley has criticised the Bowen coalfield, the Bowen jetty, and the Bowen State coalmine. Unfortunately the hon. member is absent—perhaps fortunately, as I understand he is up North on an electioneering tour at the present time.

[7 p.m.]

On page 86 of his report, the Auditor-General, dealing with the Bowen State coalmine, says—

“The profit for the year 1924-1925 was £8,141 14s. 2d., as compared with that of £338 11s. 4d. for the previous year.

“The quantity of coal sold was 78,656 tons 14 cwt., while 1,479 tons 5 cwt. was consumed in the mine boilers.

“Production practically ceased during the period when the trains were unable to cross the Inkerman Bridge.

“From 6th October, 1924, the coal has been won under a hewing rate of 6s. 3d. per ton, as compared with the daily rate of 22s. 5d. operating previously.”

I think the profit can be considered as satisfactory. On the same page the Auditor-General says the quantity of saleable coal produced in 1924-1925 at the Bowen State

coalmine was 80,136 tons, and the sale price per ton was—

20s. per ton screened.

16s. per ton unscreened.

16s. per ton screened slack.

14s. per ton unscreened slack.

The average cost per ton for the year 1924-1925 was 14s. 5.6d. per ton, and the average cost per ton for the year 1923-1924 was 16s. 5.5d. per ton. I have had a long experience in connection with mining, and so far as my experience goes I know nothing like the success we have had in connection with the Bowen State coalmine. From the first day the rails reached the coalfield this mine has been a profitable concern. It is quite true that some people may say we have an advantage over other mines inasmuch as we have a ready market in the Railway Department. Now, if we turn to page 36 of the annual report of the Under Secretary for Mines, we find that, dealing with the Bowen State coalmine, he says—

“The total quantity produced amounted to 79,021 tons 8 cwt., valued at £65,296 1s. 9d., as compared with 80,139 tons, valued at £65,111 8s., for the previous year. This coal was supplied to the following consumers:—

	Tons.	Cwt.
Railway Department ...	52,434	19
Private firms ...	12,893	12
Bunker coal ...	10,329	16
Navy coal ...	1,174	0
Consumed at mine ...	1,296	19
Slack coal at grass ...	892	2
Total ...	79,021	8”

Members will notice that a fair amount went to private consumers and also for bunker coal.

While I am dealing with production in connection with State coal, it will be just as well to mention that there is a privately owned mine 3 miles 10 chains distant from the State-owned mine. On page 36 of the report of the Under Secretary for Mines I find this—

“BOWEN CONSOLIDATED COAL MINES LIMITED.

The year's output from this mine was 24,963 tons 5 cwt., valued at £20,053 10s. 5d. These figures show that more than double the quantity was produced during 1924 than during 1923.”

We can see that the Bowen coalfield at the present time is producing a fairly large amount of coal. While we hear from time to time about State enterprises not paying, the Bowen Consolidated Coal Mines, Limited, which has been in operation for a number of years on the Bowen coalfield, has up to the present time not paid any dividends at all. I want to tell the whole truth.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: They had not got the railway.

Mr. COLLINS: The railway to the private mine was built shortly after its completion to the State mine, but one of the reasons why they are not paying any dividends is because they are putting the profits into developmental work. It will be noticed that in his report the Auditor-General refers to the fact that the production at the State coalmine practically ceased during the period of about nine weeks that the Inkerman bridge over the Burdekin

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River was impassable, owing to its partial destruction by floods. That goes to show that, but for that washaway, a much better result would have been shown in connection with the State coalmine. We have to deal with the future, and the future is very important so far as the Bowen coalfield is concerned. The Bowen jetty will be completed at the end of this year. When completed, it will have cost a little over £200,000. We are told that we have there the most up-to-date crane in the Australian Commonwealth—a long way ahead of the cranes mentioned by the hon. member for Ipswich this afternoon. Of course, the £200,000 includes the cost of the jetty as well as the crane. We have been told that this crane is capable of loading 350 tons per hour, that is with two ships, one on each side of the jetty. If trucks can be got up to it, it is capable of lifting that amount—its lifting capacity is 20 tons. The Railway Department has already ordered the construction of fifty new hoppers, which will each contain 11 tons of coal, and, with the hopper combined, the weight will be a little over 16 tons. In my opinion, that is not sufficient, by a long way, if we are going to build up the export trade we are looking forward to. I do not know whether the hoppers are to be gone on with, but I understand that in the Maitland and Newcastle districts they prefer hoppers to bins. Failing to get coal hoppers, we must have bins; and I have been impressing on the Government during the past two years that bins must be built either at the Bowen State coalmine or else close to the jetty. We have been told by Mr. Cullen that bins cannot be placed on the jetty, as the jetty could not carry them. I want the Secretary for Mines and the Government to take notice of what I am saying. While we are showing a much bigger profit than we have shown previously, if it had not been for the washaway on the Burdekin bridge we would have shown a yet bigger profit, assuming that we had had sufficient railway trucks to supply the orders received by the Bowen coalmines. There has been a shortage of trucks not only for the State coalmine but in connection with the privately owned mine there from time to time.

When the Minister gets up he can tell the Committee what has been done in regard to the treatment of the small slack which remains after the coal has been screened for the making of coke. I understand that certain experiments have been carried out by the Department of Mines under the guidance of the Minister, and I should like to know what the result has been.

I am very pleased with what has taken place in that part of the Bowen electorate in developmental work, and, as the hon. member for Ipswich has pointed out, we ought to be doing a larger trade in the bunkering of vessels than we are. Let us hope that in the future provision will be made so that we shall be able not only to do bunkering but also embark upon an overseas trade. I do not think we have anything to fear from competition. On the Bowen coalfield we have a very good article, and we can produce it in millions of tons. Everybody knows that it is one of the largest coalfields in the world.

Coming to prospecting, I am very pleased at what has been done by the department at

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the Mount Coolon. The new Empire battery has been erected, and I hope that the Minister will explain something about that battery, because I understand it is new to Queensland.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: New to the world.

Mr. COLLINS: I understand it has been very successful. That will counteract the statement made this afternoon by the hon. member for Coorooora that if we discovered a second Gympie to-morrow it could not be profitably worked under existing conditions. Here is a battery which the Minister says is new to the world, and which astonished the natives, so to speak, so that the cost of production of gold should be lessened. At any rate, the Bowen goldfields are in a developmental state, and I am pleased with what the Minister has done to assist that part of the electorate. Judging by the falling off in the gold yield, which is astounding when one considers the enormous production we used to have some years ago in this State, there is ample room for Government assistance for such developmental works. Another goldfield in the electorate is the Normanby goldfield, where there are two mines working. Both have been assisted by the Mines Department, and on one of them two men are operating, and I understand that the work they are doing is simply wonderful. It all goes to show that in different parts of Queensland we can look for good results. At any rate, encouragement has been given by the Government in this direction.

There is any amount of scope for prospecting generally. The old type of prospector seems to be slowly disappearing. It may be that there will come a time when younger men with wider experience and better training will be able to look not only for gold—as the old-time prospector looked for it—but for other metals as well. I am satisfied that, as time goes on, other fields will be discovered in Queensland, and the department should give every assistance it can to the genuine prospector.

I have no complaint to make against the Department of Mines for the treatment meted out to my electorate in regard to prospecting and mining generally.

Once more I want to impress upon the Minister the urgent need for considering the question of the establishment of bins as quickly as possible. No time should be lost. The sum of £200,000 has been invested in the jetty, and we must now look for an export trade in coal to enable the Harbour Board to meet its liabilities in connection with the money expended in the construction of the jetty.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*): The hon. member for Bowen truthfully states that his part of the State has no reason to complain of the attention which has been given by the Government to mining. Indeed I think the Auditor-General's report, which is again before us this evening, discloses the fact that quite liberal treatment has been meted out to the Northern centres. I am far from one of those who underrate the value that mining has been to Queensland. I put in some of my boyhood days at Gympie, and I know what the development of that field did for this State during those days. I am also aware that the discoveries which took place at Charters Towers and elsewhere rendered mighty assistance to the development of

Queensland I question if the fine effort in agricultural and dairying development at Gympie would have brought those industries to their present state if they had not been preceded by the development of the mining industry there. Not only Queensland but Australia owes a great deal to the mining industry.

I congratulate the hon. member for Bowen upon the statement he made regarding the Bowen coalfield, and, if he had not made the statement, I was going to make it. Interested as one must be in the wellbeing of the State, one is only too happy to congratulate the hon. member and the Government upon the achievements on the Bowen coalfield. I remember the hon. member for Bowen passing round a photograph disclosing the magnitude of that field, and I imagine that it is only in its infancy. The only thing I hope for is that some means may be assured for encouraging shipping to come to our ports. Just by the way, we are not offering very much encouragement in that direction at present, but let us hope that the day is not far distant when a far better feeling will exist between all concerned, and that there will be a vast co-operative movement amongst shippers as well as men, so that the riches of our land may be developed as they should be. However, despite all that, one is a little alarmed at the enormous amount of money going into these various enterprises. Referring to the Mines Department, the Auditor-General in his report states—

“The expenditure from Consolidated Revenue for the year 1924-25 totalled £66,357 3s. 8d. as compared with £69,796 11s. 3d. for the previous year.”

He further states—

“Financial statements for the year 1924-25 of the various State mining enterprises other than the Chillagoe smelters, Irvinebank treatment works, and Mount Mulligan coalmines, appear on pages 88-93. Styx coalmine No. 3 was still in the developmental stage, and a balance-sheet only of that mine is appended.”

The indebtedness to the Treasury of these concerns is shown in a table which is appended. The Bowen coalmine, allowing for the credit in the Trust Fund Account, is in debit to the Loan Fund Account to the extent of £87,000. That is a fairly large amount, and shows the assistance the Government have given to the Bowen coalmine. There is, in addition to that amount, the expenditure on the construction of the railway, and the £200,000 referred to by the hon. member for Bowen. It is only a fair thing, in the face of that expenditure, to expect that there should be a return. I am pleased to note that last year the Bowen coalmine showed a profit of £8,141, as against £338 for the previous year.

The other mining ventures engaged in by the Government show a fairly considerable loss. The Baralaba coalmine shows a loss again of £4,622 6s. 8d.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: We sold that coal very cheaply.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The question whether that was wise depends upon the contra results. If the results have been good, then the real loss to the State has not been so great. I understand that the railways derived some benefit.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Coal was supplied from the Baralaba mine to the railways and the Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company at 14s. 9d. per ton, which is a ridiculous price.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Notwithstanding that fact, the railways do not pay. The report further shows that the Styx No. 2 coalmine showed a loss on the year's operations of £14,534 18s. 1d., compared with £14,384 3s. 9d. for the previous year. The report further states—

“Styx No. 3.—During the year 1924-1925 further capital expenditure aggregating £22,403 13s. 8d. was made, and revenue totalling £561 6s. 11d. from sales of coal won in the course of development of main levels was paid to Treasury in reduction of the indebtedness which, at 30th June, 1925, stood at £67,893 11s. 4d.”

That is a very considerable sum. The indebtedness to the Treasury of the State mining enterprises, other than the Chillagoe smelters, the Irvinebank treatment works, and the Mount Mulligan coal mines, is shown to be—

	£	s.	d.
“Consolidated Revenue	84,292	11	10
Trust Fund	95,561	7	10
Loan Fund	239,258	10	9”

The total indebtedness represents a sum of something like £500,000. The Minister, no doubt, will have a good deal to say regarding this expenditure. The total loss, exclusive of interest, in connection with the State smelters as appearing on page 100 of the report of the Auditor-General is shown to be—

	£	s.	d.
“1920—Profit	6,014	11	3
1921—Loss	37,371	13	5
1922—Loss	50,086	14	6
1923—Loss	26,337	15	5
1924—Loss	56,897	19	6
1925—Loss	29,923	16	8”

That affords pretty serious reading. We cannot go on indefinitely making losses of that nature. Certainly the Auditor-General seems to indicate that an inspection by various hon. members of this Assembly would probably lead to some better conclusion being arrived at. I imagine the Auditor-General to be an exceedingly cautious man, who would not make a recommendation such as this without being fully seized of the importance of it. He says with regard to the State smelters—

“During my visit I learned that since the inception of the enterprise in 1920 only four Ministers and two private members (who accompanied Ministers) have visited Chillagoe. In view of the importance to the State of the undertaking, and its financial responsibilities, might I suggest for the consideration of the Government the desirability of inviting both Parliamentary parties to delegate, say, three or more of their members to visit Chillagoe and Mungana (14 miles distant), where the State mines are situated, for the purpose of obtaining first-hand information, and seeing for themselves what the existence of this enterprise really means to the State.”

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I am one of those who have visited the Chillagoe and Mungana mines.

Mr. G. P. Barnes.]

Mr. G. P. BARNES: On page 103, the report sets out—

“The expenditure for the financial year amounted to £282,352 14s. 11d., as compared with £407,957 6s. 5d. during the year 1923-24, a decrease of £125,604 11s. 6d.”

It is quite evident these mining matters require looking into with exceeding care. Going back to page 7 of the report, I read that the amount of £281,821 17s. 9d. was transferred to Loan Fund from Trust Funds. No doubt it is satisfactory to Trust Funds to get rid of an incubus like that, but where the fair play comes in of loading the Loan Fund with that amount is a question to me. The matter certainly requires looking into, as the question is an exceedingly difficult one. There are many other items in the report that might be referred to, and the following is one:—

“The following table shows the Treasury indebtedness from its inception in 1920 to the year 1925:—

	£
1920 ... ..	243,881
1921 ... ..	292,213
1922 ... ..	525,160
1923 ... ..	710,618
1924 ... ..	974,830
1925 ... ..	790,548

The figures for the year 1925 are explained by the writing off by the Treasury of £281,821 17s. 9d., which represents the accumulated loss to the 30th June, 1924.”

In all conscience it is a pretty serious thing for a State which is so exceedingly heavily taxed to find that a huge sum like that, which has gradually accumulated for a number of years, is now written off. I have no doubt that the Minister will give a full explanation regarding these matters, and I hope he will not allow his general optimism to run away with him, but that he will indicate that a very much firmer hand than has been in evidence heretofore will be kept on mining enterprises.

[7.30 p.m.]

What does astonish me in connection with mining matters is that no attention has been given to mines in Southern Queensland. While the hon. member for Bowen can take credit for what has been done in the North, scarcely anything has been done in the South. We have a very fine prospect in Southern Queensland, a prospect that would yield a return without any gift of money and without running the risk of the loss of money, if only ordinary help in the way of carrying out a railway enterprise were given. Without direct help we might have had a mighty development in connection with Silverspur, as the hon. member for Carnarvon will no doubt tell hon. members. Some eleven years ago a railway was approved from Texas to Silverspur, but this Government have not had the courage to construct that railway, which would have developed this fine mining enterprise and would have found employment for a great number of people. Further daylight has been given to this matter just recently. Since the Silverspur mine commenced screening it has put through something over 100,000 tons, the metallic contents of which were worth something like a million of money. About £325,000 in cash has been distributed, whilst the slag content is valued at £620,000. I feel sure that the building of that railway would have assisted this great mine. Of

course, I know all mining people are optimistic, but as a result of the fullest inquiry there seems to be every evidence that, as a result of the construction of that railway, this Silverspur mine would yield a fine return to the State, and would give employment to a vast number of people. Up to 1921 the mine had produced 2,031,987 oz. of silver, 4,797 oz. of gold, 1,049 tons of copper, and 1,428 tons of lead, whilst the largest production in any one year was in 1908, when 174,883 oz. of silver, 426.3 oz. of gold, 84.07 tons of copper, and 98,853 tons of lead were produced. The slag dump is estimated to contain £620,000 worth of minerals, and of these it is estimated that at least two-thirds of the value would be recovered by treatment. The point to be remembered is that it is not possible to cart coal or coke by road and make the work of the extraction of the metals from the slag or from the ore pay, but it would pay handsomely if the railway were built. It is estimated that the traffic by the railway from Silverspur alone would be 9,000 tons per annum inwards, and 7,000 tons outwards, when the mine was in full working order. A small expenditure only is requisite in order to make that mine give a very handsome return to the country, and to provide profitable employment for a large number of men.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It was the action of the Hughes Government in issuing a proclamation with regard to minerals during the war that caused the closing down of the Silverspur mine.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: There has been ample opportunity during recent years for the Secretary for Mines to develop the mining industry there. Evidently the Government realised that something might have been done during the regime of Mr. Hughes that was not done, but they did not rise to the occasion. We want to know what the attitude of the Government is going to be in regard to the matter not only of developing the Silverspur mine, but also the immense area in the Dumaresq Valley, which is exceedingly fertile. The railway would bring the trade of a considerable district which now goes to Sydney, a distance of 600 miles, to the port of Brisbane, which would be only 300 miles distant, and the carrying out of the intention of Parliament by building that line would bring into operation one of the best silver mines in Queensland.

Mr. RYAN (*Cook*): The hon. member for Warwick quoted a suggestion by the Auditor-General that it would be a good thing for the mining industry in Queensland if a delegation composed of members from both sides of the Chamber were to visit and report on the possibilities of Chillagoe, as the knowledge gained by investigating the possibilities in that centre would be of great value. I think that the Auditor-General might have gone further and suggested that the delegation should also include in its itinerary Mount Isa and other portions of the State which are essentially mining areas.

General regret has been expressed by hon. members on both sides because of the decrease in the production of gold and other minerals throughout the State. To anyone who has followed the history of mining it might appear that to some extent the mining industry is undergoing a process of evolution. We look back to seventy years ago when gold was first discovered at Ballarat, and the miners there laid down the foundation stone of working-class democracy. If we visited Ballarat

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to-day, we should see that, although so many tons of gold have been produced there in the past, there is not a mine in operation or a miner working within 20 miles of the Ballarat Post Office. The same remark almost applies to Bendigo, except that there are one or two shows working there. I mention these two formerly great centres to show that the old fields of Gympie, Charters Towers, Croydon, and other gold mining centres in Queensland are not peculiar in this regard.

Although some hon. members on the other side talk about the optimism of the Minister in regard to mining, I believe that the hon. gentleman is following the right track, and I congratulate him upon his endeavours to do something to resuscitate the mining industry in this State. As I have already said, the mining industry is passing through a process of evolution. We have only to go back a few years to the time when mining in this State was flourishing. I am speaking now of the rare metals, apart from gold, but the values now are so low that it is impossible for the miners who were producing them to go on with the work. The reason is that the great war, one of the milestones in the history of mankind, has changed the position for the present, although I believe the time will come when the mining industry will get back to its old plane. During the war the coolies in China, as mentioned by the hon. member for Cooroora, woke up to the fact that the production of rare metals was a paying thing and they began to mine that kind of metal. They are producing it at a rate which makes it impossible for the miner in Queensland or any other part of the world to compete with them. I do not say that it is possible for them to work their fields out, but we have to remember that during the war about two-thirds of the molybdenite of the world were produced in North Queensland. The fact that the product was in demand to such an extent enabled men to work their mines, but to-day it does not matter how small the mines may be it is impossible to do so, because of the present values.

Mr. VOWLES: Is there any demand for molybdenite now?

Mr. RYAN: There is some. As a matter of fact, I believe the miners at Wolfram Camp are getting between £9 and £10 per cwt., which is very different, indeed, from the £33 to £35 which they were receiving just before and just after the war concluded.

Mr. VOWLES: That was for barrels of guns, was it not?

Mr. RYAN: It was used for the hardening of steel, but to-day a molybdenite mine is not profitable. To a certain extent it is payable if it is a fairly rich mine, but, if it is worked on a large scale, including the low-grade metal, it is not payable. That is only by the way, but it shows that the war had something to do with this process of evolution in the mining industry.

I am very pleased to notice that there is an increase in the vote for prospecting. The hon. member for Bowen has drawn attention to the fact that the old type of prospector is fast passing away, and the action taken by the Mines Department in encouraging prospecting will bring forward a younger type of prospector. I have noticed in the far North that the younger type of prospector is outdoing the older type of prospector. I congratulate the Minister on his efforts to

assist prospecting in the far North. Although some time ago it was said that the mining industry was settled and it was impossible to revive it, I am sure it must be encouraging to the Minister to know that even on an old tinfield adjacent to the old Croydon goldfield, which tinfield was worked from twenty-five to twenty-seven years ago, a bona fide prospector, by virtue of the increased knowledge he has gained, has been successful, by following along one of the shafts through the granite into the country holding tin in that district, in locating the proper tin country of such a value as will create Stanhills tinfield one of the best tinfields in Australia.

I congratulate the Minister for the assistance he gave to the miner and for the assistance he gave in connection with the erection of a battery to crush the miners' stone, for which they work very hard. Irrespective of what hon. members opposite or on this side may say, undoubtedly the real pioneers of this country were the miners. We have only to look at the old landmarks of Australia to know that the first men and the best men and the real pioneers were the miners. It is that type of man who again is going to open up the back blocks in this country. There is one portion of this State, the Cape York Peninsula, which should be opened up and prospected with assistance from the Mines Department. A party should be organised by the Minister—paying no consideration whatever to local considerations at Cooktown, or any other place in that area—consisting of a geologist, with guides to be selected at Cooktown and other far Northern places to conduct this party in order that a scientific investigation may be made into the whole of the Cape York Peninsula.

Mr. COLLINS: A good suggestion.

Mr. RYAN: Forty years ago the great Palmer goldfield was the saviour of North Queensland, if not of Queensland itself. On account of the value of the wash on which the men were working diminishing, the men drifted to the Hodgkinson field and other places that were opened up. Those men were mostly young men at the time. A few of the old hands remained at the old place, but the Mines Department at that time turned its eyes to the new places, with the result that the Palmer field was allowed to slip into the hands of the Chinese. It is only during the last five or six years that a prospector who had put in some time thirty odd years ago on the Palmer field was successful in obtaining sufficient capital to enable him to convince the Government that it would be to the benefit of the mining industry if they were to assist him to some extent in boring, to show that a theory which he held against some of the greatest geologists in the Mines Department was the correct one. The Mines Department decided that it would assist him. I happen to be the member for the district, and this old friend of mine, who has now passed away, proved his theory to be true. At his suggestion the Mines Department bored with a diamond drill and proved that gold-bearing country existed 100 to 130 feet under the conglomerate sandstone. His theory was proved absolutely, but unfortunately he and the other two in the syndicate—between them they put up £10,000—passed away within a short time of each other. The result is that the whole of the work is now hung up. These three men were not poor men, but the trustees of the three different estates cannot come to an agreement to carry on the good

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work of prospecting that ore on the Palmer. I hope that the Mines Department will not lose sight of the work done by this syndicate, and, if the trustees do not proceed with this very important work, that the department will either continue the work itself or subsidise another syndicate to prove that this great Palmer goldfield is what my old friend, the late Jim Watters, believed it to be.

I also desire to extend congratulations to the Minister for the manner in which he has assisted mining by visiting the outposts of the mining fields of this State.

Mr. COLLINS: Hear, hear!

Mr. RYAN: I have accompanied the Minister on two or three occasions as far as Croydon. Any person who has had a trip like that will understand that it is not a picnic for the Minister or anyone else. It is fairly hard work for any man to pay a visit to any of the outback places. I congratulate the hon. gentleman on his foresight in visiting these places and in overcoming the inconveniences that his predecessors might have seen in front of them. I have worked on the mining fields in Queensland, and I believe that the Mines Department or Minister should make it compulsory that the warden should make periodical visits to all the mining fields in the district under his control.

Mr. COLLINS: Hear, hear! A good suggestion again.

Mr. RYAN: There is not the least doubt that miners are more pleased to see the warden than any other person who visits their centre. I hope that the Minister will make a note of my suggestion, and see that the warden visits the various fields in his district in order to make himself conversant with the conditions of those fields. It does not matter whether the clergyman or anyone else visits a field, his welcome is not to be compared with that given to the warden, who is received as if he were a little god. It surprises me that the wardens do not make more frequent visits than they do to the mining fields. That may be due to the fact that some of them are a little bit over the age when a man has an adventurous disposition or a love for travelling, but his visits should be more frequent and be a part of his duties.

I want to refer to another matter which, although really a railway matter, has some bearing on the mining industry. I refer to the Etheridge goldmining field. A railway runs from Almaden to Forsyth, about 134 miles. There is one train service a week. The miners go to no end of trouble to convey their ore to the rail-head, and very often when they arrive there they find no trucks. There is a shortage of rolling-stock. I have been speaking to several of the old miners up there, and, to give some idea of what a liberty-loving class of men these miners are—and it is generally conceded that they are a very free-handed lot of men—they are prepared to pay 5 per cent. of the cost of the railage from Forsyth to Chillagoe, provided that money is spent in the building of extra rolling-stock. I hope the Minister will do something to relieve the position so far as this is concerned.

Mr. CLAYTON: The primary producers pay more than that for demurrage.

Mr. RYAN: That is their own funeral. These miners are prepared to pay 5 per cent. or 10 per cent. if they are guaranteed that

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rolling-stock. I hope the Minister will bring pressure to bear upon the general manager at Chillagoe in order that sufficient rolling-stock may be available for the miners in the Etheridge district.

I do not intend to say any more, as the different votes will give me an opportunity of touching upon other matters, but I again want to congratulate the Minister on what he has done for the far North. Without showing that I am in any way trying to pour jam on his bread or anything of that kind, I can say that the miners of the far North appreciate the fact that they have the best Secretary for Mines they have ever had in Queensland.

Mr. COSTELLO (*Carnarvon*): It is generally admitted that, in the mining industry in Queensland at present, there is a great depression, which has existed for the last seven or eight years. Probably it may be of interest to hon. members opposite to know that I claim to be the most bona fide miner in this Committee, having first seen the light of day in a miner's camp, and spent my early days—the palmy days of mining in Queensland—among the mining districts of South Queensland. I saw goldmining in New Guinea, and, generally speaking, have been associated with mining in South Queensland for the last thirty years. During that time mining has not displayed that success which we might have expected. In the electorate I represent we have not only goldmining, and the great Silverspur mine mentioned by the hon. member for Warwick, but also copper, and that great arsenic mine which the Minister has so often been proud to mention, and, last but not least, we have the lime quarries. To-day the lime quarries at Gore are probably the most progressive quarries—if I may be allowed to bring them under the heading of mining—that we have in Queensland. Last year those quarries alone were worth £30,000 in freight to the Railway Department. At the present time that department is running eight special trains a week to Gore to cope with the output of those quarries. About 12 miles from Warwick also there are great quantities of lime that can be won easily. Then there is the Dumaresq Valley district, where we have prospects of copper. A little while ago we

[8 p.m.] had bright hopes that we might have a new copper field opened up there, but the cost of mining and treatment was so great that it killed the show that was being developed in a small way by enterprising people in Warwick. It is most disheartening to-day to go over the old goldfields. These old goldfields in Southern Queensland have been reserved as mining leases, and the prickly-pear took early possession of them. If a party of two or three desired to prospect these goldfields that were so rich in the boom days, it would be almost impossible for them to locate any portion of the area that was not overrun with prickly-pear, and, instead of the fields being available to intending prospectors, the mining fields in my electorate are a curse to the community, as they are seed-beds for the great prickly-pear scourge. Of course, we cannot blame any Government for this, as these areas were reserved for mining purposes, and they have been practically a no man's land, and it was nobody's business to attempt to prevent the spread of prickly-pear. I am still hopeful that mining in Queensland will revive, but the only way that is possible is, as the hon. member for

Cook mentioned, for the department to make further money available for prospectors. Where are the old miners of bygone days? We have none like them in the State now, and, as the hon. member for Cook mentioned, a new type of miner is interesting himself in mining, and I am very much afraid that the new man will not follow mining with the same esprit de corps that was shown by the old miners. They are not in a position to carry on mining, as they have no capital behind them, and it is very little use for a prospecting party to go out unless they have capital or unless the Government are prepared to finance them. If you ask an old miner in my district why he does not take on prospecting in these days, he casually remarks, "Well, I cannot afford to carry on mining any longer." It is beyond them to undertake mining or prospecting, as it is not the one-man's job to-day that it was when some of us were kiddies on the early fields.

There seems to be a depression in the State arsenic enterprise at Jibbenbar. I notice there is a decrease in the vote this year, and I would like the Minister to make a definite statement with regard to the future prospects of that mine. The mining for arsenic in the Stanthorpe district has been profitable to Roberts's pear poison factory at Wallangarra. The output of that company has been taken over by the Prickly Pear Land Commission and distributed to prickly-pear selectors at very much less cost than it was ever supplied to the selectors before.

The Secretary for Mines has always claimed a good deal of credit for making available arsenic from the State arsenic mine at Jibbenbar, but that mine has not been a success so far as the eradication of prickly-pear is concerned. Of course, the arsenic supplied now is manufactured by the firm of O. C. Roberts at Wallangarra. I notice that there is a reduction of about £5,000 in connection with the expenditure at that mine. There are a good many people who have been depending on the mine for a living, and they are anxious to know whether it is the intention of the Mines Department to continue the working of the mine.

I must congratulate the hon. member for Warwick for the information which he has given the Committee with regard to the Silverspur mine near Texas. I would point out to the Committee that the Silverspur mine is a permanent mine, and one of the greatest assets of its kind in the State. It can, at any rate, be claimed that the mine has not cost the Government anything in the way of encouraging and developing it. Hon. members who represent Northern constituencies may boast of their mines—as the hon. member for Bowen, for instance, did about the Bowen coalmine—but what has it cost the State in the way of development of those mines? What have the Chillagoe mines cost?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: We have given assistance to the Silverspur mine.

Mr. COSTELLO: That is not worth mentioning compared with the large amount which has been spent in the North in helping to develop some of the mines there.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The Silverspur Company applied for £1,200. They got it and paid it back.

Mr. COSTELLO: That should be an inducement to the Minister to use his

influence with the Government to construct the long-promised railway to Texas, which would be a great advantage not only to the miners but to the agriculturists along the Texas Valley.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Did you promise the railway?

Mr. COSTELLO: I have promised the railway, and I am going to live to see it constructed. The prospects of the construction of the railway are brighter to-day than they have been for the last ten years.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. COSTELLO: I would like to quote from a report of Mr. Ball, a geologist in the Mines Department, on the Silverspur mine. We must give due credit to our geologists, who are competent men. Mr. Ball states—

"The mine is worked by a vertical shaft sunk to a depth of over 500 feet, with levels at six different depths, varying from 80 feet to 500 feet. The present position is that all outcrop ore-bodies have been worked for their silver ore down to 300 feet, only zinc ore remaining. Between 300 feet and 400 feet some silver ore on cross formation has been mined, and a small quantity between 400 feet and 500 feet. It is estimated that about 9,000 tons of high-grade silver ore is ready for stoping between the 300 feet and 400 feet levels. Large quantities of zinc ore have also been developed at various levels, and crosscuts and winzes have also brought to light large reserves of ore."

This mine is not in a defunct state; it is absolutely in its prime. The situation of Silverspur is ideal, and the district is one of the finest and healthiest in Queensland. It is one of the prettiest little places one could see in any part of Australia.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: What sort of a mine is it?

Mr. COSTELLO: It makes a difference when you have cheerful surroundings instead of those in some of the electorates of hon. members in the North. The proprietors of Silverspur are not asking the Government for any assistance to develop the mine. They are simply asking the Government to carry out the promise made long ago to construct a railway. There are many contented happy families in that district, and, if we could only get the Government to assist them with this railway, the district would be on the high road to success. It is not a matter of great financial outlay, and we are not asking the Government for large sums of money to develop the mine. All we ask is that they give us the long-promised railway and the company will do the rest. I congratulate the hon. member for Warwick upon quoting the figures the Committee have heard, and I hope that before long the Government will be prepared to grant our request with regard to the railway.

Mr. BRUCE (*Kennedy*): The hon. member for Warwick and the hon. member for Carnarvon have suggested that a railway should be constructed to Silverspur by the Government. They have not told us anything about the ore which has been taken from Silverspur or the cost of winning the ore. These railway propositions are made to the Government, and, if they turn out to be a failure afterwards, as they very often

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do, we have the hon. member for Warwick and others attacking the Government for expenditure on unpayable railways. The hon. member for Warwick is an excellent business man, and I do not think he would put his money into a mining proposition of this kind. We have heard a lot of criticism of our mining policy from hon. members of the Opposition, but they are handicapped by the fact that they have in their ranks very few, if any, who have a practical or scientific knowledge of mining. I believe that the hon. member for Cooroora has some knowledge of the industry, but we have had other hon. members of the Opposition getting up time after time on these Estimates and, without any knowledge of the subject on which they are speaking, criticising the policy and administration of the Government.

Let us take the amount of money expended by the Government on mining propositions. Anybody who has any knowledge of mining at all knows that a large expenditure is necessary to develop any mining proposition of any considerable size. Private enterprise from time to time has had to spend tens of thousands of pounds before it was ultimately able to say that success had been achieved. In short, mining is one of those things which come within the category of the discussion we had this morning. It is purely and simply a gamble. You may be working on a show with no values at all, and in a few minutes or in a few hours you may strike very high values. I have in mind the discovery of the "Welcome Stranger" nugget in Victoria. The discoverers were making about 7s. or 8s. a day in working an alluvial show, when one day a member of the party got his pick into something and could not get it out. When they had cleared the earth away from it, they realised that they had a nugget valued at about £12,000.

Mining is purely and simply a gamble, and it is the duty of a Government that has the interests of the State at heart to assist mining as far as possible. I advise the Minister at the present time to follow a cautious policy in regard to assistance given to mines that have reached deep levels in the past, or where operations have been suspended at the present time owing to the cost of treatment. We know that since the war certain economic factors have not yet readjusted themselves. Those economic factors are the cost of fracture, the cost of steel, and the cost of practically every other material required to carry on the mining industry. Large stocks of metal were accumulated during the war, and those stocks are not yet exhausted, and until they are the values for the world's market will not improve sufficiently to meet the increased cost of production.

Take copper, for instance. Prior to the war copper was used for the making of many domestic utensils, but during the war it was held by the different nations for war purposes, and in the meantime enamel and aluminium ware and articles made from other metals took its place in the world of domestic articles. Copper has not recovered that particular market yet. No doubt a demand will be created by the increased call for copper in making electrical machinery, etc. A cautious policy should be followed in assisting mines. The hon. member for Cook mentioned one or two deep-mining centres where mining had been entirely closed down. The mines of Bendigo, Ballarat, Gympie, West Australia, the Ovens District of Victoria,

Charters Towers, and numerous other places have ceased to be payable at the depths they have reached. Any money expended on deep-level mines would be absolutely wasted, and the money granted by the Government should be granted principally for prospecting and developing mining propositions that are still at shallow levels.

The hon. member for Carnarvon had something to say about the prospector not being able to follow his occupation to-day. I agree with him to this extent that the prospector has many hardships to contend with in his occupation of prospecting, and does not receive the consideration that I consider he should receive. Nevertheless, if a man has prospecting in his blood, he will still go prospecting, although he has to live on damper and corned beef. Nothing can stop that man from following that occupation. The Mines Department should give the prospector much greater consideration than is given at the present time. The present Secretary for Mines is very sympathetic towards the prospector, and any request for assistance that I have made has been dealt with expeditiously.

Some time ago, when dealing with the question of forestry, I referred to Mount Spec, on the top of which I found that there were men working a tin show with a very promising outlook, if they could obtain a certain amount of assistance from the Mines Department. On going into the question I was able to secure that assistance for them, and I feel quite sure that Mount Spec and the surrounding district will ultimately develop into a mining field. Naturally mining is a slow process, and it is not a thing that can be carried on rapidly. It takes time to develop any mining field.

I want now to refer to Mount Isa. I would certainly say that the prospects of Mount Isa warrant the construction of a railway line to that field. I am hoping that in the very near future the line will be commenced and quickly completed in order that Mount Isa may be pushed forward to its fullest capacity. We have a large number of some of the finest and most independent type of miners in Australia who are either at present unemployed or engaged in other callings who would be employed once this railway line was completed. From what I can gather, that field has wonderful possibilities. From my own personal knowledge of Cloncurry, I am prepared to say that the mining possibilities of Queensland—irrespective of the fact that we have had those wonderful producers in the past in Charters Towers, Gympie, Croydon, and other fields—has not yet got beyond the A B C stage.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BRUCE: Throughout the Cloncurry district there is metal of all descriptions over a belt covering something like 100 miles across and perhaps 200 miles in length. There are mines held up at the present time owing to the economic factors I mentioned at an earlier stage. In the future we shall be dealing largely with base metals, and those base metals exist in enormous quantities in the Cloncurry district. The time will come when we shall have larger cities in the western part of Queensland than the cities which exist outside the metropolitan area to-day. Queensland is not yet done as a mining factor. Up to the present only the outcrops have been worked and the surface scratched. There has been no systematic prospecting carried on in the Cloncurry district.

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Some of the prospectors have gone out and endured great hardships. They have experienced difficulties in securing water, and their only plant has been a buckboard and several horses. They have done excellent prospecting work to develop the field as it has developed to-day, but, as a whole, the field has not yet been touched. The possibilities of Cloncurry are enormous. In that particular part of Queensland at some future date when the economic factors mentioned by me are overcome, we shall have one of the greatest mining fields and hives of industry in Australia, if not in the world. I trust that, as a stepping-stone to that development, the railway line from Duchess to Mount Isa will be completed at the earliest possible date.

Mr. CLAYTON: The Hampden Company shifted their plant over to New Guinea.

Mr. BRUCE: If the hon. member had a private chat with the directors of the Hampden Company, I believe he would be told that they now wish they had not been so foolish as to take their plant to New Guinea. They have buried more money in New Guinea than they did at Cloncurry. They thought that by extending their business to New Guinea they would be able to exploit the native labour and make a profit out of their hides; but they found that the proposition in New Guinea was very poor, and I feel sure they now wish they had not expended two shillings there. The Hampden Company still retain their interest in the Cloncurry district. The reason why they left Cloncurry was because the price of copper dropped and their ore reserves were not sufficient to keep the plant working for more than four months in the year. The reduction in the price of copper occurred at a critical period in their history and prevented them from purchasing other properties. The company lost a considerable amount of money owing to the fact that some persons interested in it purchased the MacGregor mine and sold it to the Hampden Company. This deal resulted in a loss to the Hampden Company of between £70,000 and £80,000.

Mr. BEDFORD: Quite correct.

Mr. BRUCE: If the hon. member for Wide Bay wishes to deal with any other mining company on the Cloncurry field, I shall be only too pleased to discuss it with him.

Mr. CLAYTON: I have no brief for the Hampden Company. They are sorry they left Queensland.

Mr. BRUCE: They are. It is unnecessary for me to stress any further the possibilities of the Cloncurry district. Any man with a practical knowledge of mining, any man with a business knowledge, and any man who has visited that district, knows what that district is. Cobalt, a very rare metal, has been found in large quantities in the Cloncurry district, also gold, although not to any great extent so far; but I would not be surprised at any time to hear of a gold discovery in the Cloncurry district, and I should be very pleased to hear of it. Copper is found in enormous quantities, and the only copper shows worked were outcrops, and because those outcrops were so prominent it was unnecessary to develop the copper-mining to a greater extent, owing to economic conditions due to the war. The Cloncurry companies closed down on some very fine ore reserves, but I am prepared to say that, if you exempt that one very rich mine, the "Oxide," owned by the Mount Elliott Com-

pany, the richest copper reserves in the Cloncurry district were held by the Mount Cuthbert Company.

Although I have had a lifetime experience of metalliferous mining, I have not had much practical experience in connection with coalmining, but I desire to state some facts that came before my notice as a resident in Bowen and the Bowen district. The Bowen coalfield was known forty years ago to business men and the politicians who sat in this Chamber at that time. I think the late Sir Robert Philp was fully acquainted with that coalfield, but nothing was done until this Labour Government opened up the field and extended the line from Bowen to Collinsville. That coalfield, first of all, assisted the sugar farmers to an enormous extent. Any number of small sugar farmers on the Burdekin use coal to assist them to irrigate their farms. It is also being used in the sugar-mills. Our wood areas are gradually being cut out, and the time is not far off when the whole of the mills in the North will have to use coal as a fuel. Up at Ingham, at the Macknade Mill, they have installed one boiler for the consumption of coal. The Bowen coalfield will be a most important factor in supplying power to those mills, and also to our railways. Those who have travelled on our railways in the North must have noticed that the coal used up to a certain distance fills the carriages with grit, but directly you reach the area where Bowen coal is used you have a clean trip and the carriages are clean, due to the use of that coal. It is an excellent fuel coal, and, so far as quantity is concerned, there is sufficient—I am speaking not from my own imagination, but from statistics supplied by scientific investigation—to last future generations after we who are sitting in this Chamber have gone; so we need not worry about that point. That excellent coal will be a tremendous factor in the pushing ahead of North Queensland industries. When criticising the expenditure on that industry that factor must always be taken into consideration. But before that coal can be won it is necessary that a tremendous initial expenditure shall be involved. When that coal is won, not only should it return a profit on its extraction, but it should return tremendous indirect profits by the furtherance of other industries which are allied to it, and which depend upon it from the fuel point of view. The Minister informs me that approximately £100,000 has been saved in fuel costs to the Railway Department through the opening up of the Bowen coalfield.

Before I sit down I do want to make an appeal to the Minister—not on behalf of the prospectors who have a small show, as I am satisfied that the Minister has and does help them fully and freely, because [8.30 p.m.] you can put your finger on their propositions, and it is not a difficult matter to trace their operations—but on behalf of the man who is in the bush at the present time prospecting—the man who is not working a show at present, but who is out travelling through the bush looking for a show. Take Mount Isa. Everybody admits that there is tremendous wealth for the State of Queensland in Mount Isa. It would never have been discovered had it not been for the prospectors. While some of these prospectors did get a return for their discoveries—and I am very pleased to have met many of them, and I am very glad that they did get some return—nevertheless the State as a whole

Mr. Bruce.]

and those people who have raised the necessary capital to develop these mines are the ones who will reap the greatest benefit. The prospector could not raise the necessary capital to develop the mines, but the prospector should never be forgotten—not only the prospector who discovers some of these places, but the prospector who is out endeavouring to discover something at the present time. If you are about the bush to any great extent, you will come across these men living under the hardest possible conditions, never growling, never grumbling, never making any complaint, and, as the hon. member for Cook said, they are the men who have done more for the development of this country than any other class of man, because, when a mineral field is discovered, people rush there in large numbers, and railways follow mining interests. After the railways have been constructed to mining fields the people who engage in pastoral and other industries follow, and, when they see suitable ground, they settle. The country is developed on those lines. Where there are recognised organisations of proper gougers and mining prospectors, I suggest that they should be got in touch with and the little concessions and assistance that they are entitled to should be given to them. I want to congratulate the Secretary for Mines on being a sympathetic administrator of the department. If you take into consideration the fact that he is administering an industry which at present is under a cloud, one cannot but feel that he has made splendid progress, and he should be congratulated on his efforts by every member of this Committee.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I support the hon. member for Kennedy in his advocacy of the development of the North and the wonderful mining possibilities in that part of the State. Had it not been for the energy of the prospectors in the Mount Isa district we might not have been aware of the great possibilities of that field. Anybody who has visited the North-western portion of our great State must be impressed with the tremendous latent wealth and the wonderful possibilities there which are almost unsurpassed in any other country in the world, but which are lying dormant to-day. It strikes me that, if we want to develop that great North-west, we have to find an easier means of access to a port. In order to develop the mining areas in that portion of the State we should, first of all, try to find a port in the Gulf from which it would be possible to export the minerals that are lying there. That appeals to me more than anything else with regard to the development of mining in the North. I am not going to damp the ardour of those who wish to develop the North through the operations at Bowen. Bowen has been well developed, and the book which has been published regarding its possibilities as a port and its mineral wealth is a credit to the district and to the State generally. Had the other towns in Queensland had the same advocacy as Bowen has had in regard to the possibilities, we should have seen more development in connection with mineral areas in other parts of the State which are awaiting development to-day.

Everyone must admit that Mount Isa presents untold possibilities of wealth. When it was first discovered its possibilities were realised to a certain extent, but since then the anticipations with regard to it have been justifiably increased, and there is a great outlook for Mount Isa in the future. Time

[*Mr. Bruce.*

alone will bring the reward which is the just due of those who have put their money, time, and energy in endeavouring to develop the field, and everyone wishes them success. It is not very far from Mount Isa to the silver-lead field of Lawn Hill. There appears to be evidence of untold wealth there awaiting development, but that development will not take place until the railway and port facilities are provided.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I think that Burketown will be the natural outlet for Lawn Hill.

At 8.36 p.m.,

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

Mr. CORSER: Without wishing to damp the ardour of the Burketown people whilst the suitability of that port is being considered in relation to its suitability for the mineral fields in that part of the State, it would appear that the bar trouble and the possibility of big steamers not being able to come into the port will stand in the way of its selection.

Mr. HYNES: Is not Townsville nearer the market?

Mr. CORSER: Not nearer the Asiatic or European markets than a Gulf port would be. When we consider the possibilities of that great area, we have to come back to the question of finding a suitable port in the Gulf.

Some hon. members have referred to Mount Oxide, which up to the present has not been developed, and which is supposed to be one of the greatest copper possibilities in the world. Throughout that area for hundreds of miles there appears to be great copper possibilities. Since the war the great copper shows in America have come together in one great combine and gone in for bulk production, under which system it is cheaper to produce the copper than by the operations of companies similar to those in Queensland. This method of operation has put us out of the field at the present time. However, if the methods now availed of in America are later put into operation in mass production in Queensland, there is no reason why, with reasonable port facilities, we should not exceed any of our accomplishments of the past and enter the field in competition with them with very reasonable hopes of success.

Every time we come right back to the question of railway communication. Mount Isa cannot and will not develop without railway communication. We have also agreed to a railway designed to open up the undeveloped field at Mount Oxide, and we have to remember that some special consideration will have to be given to such propositions as mining propositions pure and simple. I am not going to say that mining should take the place of pastoral or agricultural industries in such areas—they have their own place, judged by their own importance—but we must remember that we have passed pastoral and agricultural railways estimated to cost £6,000,000 which have not yet been built. Hon. members, therefore, will realise that, if we are to give consideration to these great problems, we shall have to approach the subject from a mining point of view, not allowing them to enter into competition with other railways. I think that when sufficient development is possible at Mount Isa a railway should be a very paying concern, and, if

the mines then promise one-quarter of what they promise to-day, it will be a very happy day for Queensland, and the field will, as it were, come to the rescue of the Government of the day.

In my own district, as the Minister is aware, mining is not altogether a thing of the past. There have been some wonderful mining propositions in the Burnett, and when the smelters were in full swing at Mount Perry we enjoyed very comfortable days in that district. I hope the time is not far distant when those smelters will be able to operate again, when the great Eidsvold field will reopen, and it will be possible throughout that great area to recommence work on many shows, such as Rawbelle.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: What about Mount Shamrock?

Mr. CORSER: I was just about to refer to Mount Shamrock. It had its dashing moments, no doubt, but it did no harm all the same. It was being handled by a Labour Government, so I cannot growl about that. It certainly is a great field if it could only be developed. Railway communication has been provided, and we hope that the day is not far distant when the mines will reopen again. The possibilities of mining in this State, given harbours and the opportunity to utilise our coal which only needs a market, are second to none in Australia, and anybody who will visit our great fields cannot help being struck by the wonderful future which lies ahead of them, nor can he refuse to assist the Government to develop them.

Mr. BEDFORD (*Warrego*): I want to congratulate the State and the Minister upon the possession of an excellent geological staff, and I do that with the greater heartiness since I regard that staff as being greatly underpaid. One of my reasons for believing that—in fact my main reason—is that I have not forgotten the last imported geologist who had to learn his job here because, having been brought to Australia as an alleged petroleum geologist, he admitted that he had no field practice whatever, and in the course of eleven years—at a cost to the Commonwealth of nearly £2,000 a year—got acquainted with the job which men on the Queensland geological staff did better than he does now.

In the course of farming out Dr. Wade's services to the various States the West Australian Government was asked to pay a fee of 1,500 guineas for his services in deciding, by galloping over the landscape in the usual globe-trotting way, as to whether there was any petroliferous evidences in the south-west of West Australia. Before engaging him the West Australian Government, then a Labour Government, with Mr. Phil. Collier as Minister for Mines, cabled to the Agent-General for West Australia in London, asking what experience Dr. Wade had, and the reply was that he had no field experience, and that he was appointed by the late Sir George Reid after dinner. Judging by the value of his services after he got here I should say he was appointed by the late Sir George Reid after a pork supper. In the matter of geologists the Australian Tory Governments have had the importing craze so badly that they were prepared to bring in at three times the cost of a local man an inferior geologist from the other side of the world. I have no objection to the importation

of bishops, because Australia does not grow them well, but I certainly have an objection to the importation of geologists or men who fill other technical positions in the community. It is utterly impossible that such a tremendous area of marine tertiary beds in the south-west of this State extending well into Central Australia should be non-petroliferous. It is utterly impossible that such a tremendous undisturbed strata of the necessary age should not have large reservoirs of oil. The trouble is that alluvium covers this country to such an extent that structures are hard to find, and in this connection there is an excellent instrument which has now made its way into the American oilfields after proving itself in the oilfields in Galicia and Roumania, and that is the Eotoos tortion balance.

Mr. BULLOCK: Like the Dr. Abrams' instrument.

Mr. BEDFORD: The Abrams machine, as far as I can see, is a fake with a few wires to it. The Eotoos tortion balance is a highly scientific instrument by which we weigh the gravitational weights of the various strata of the earth, and are able to point out the existence of petroliferous bodies or structures favourable to petroleum. It is not asking too much to ask the Government to send one of its geologists to London there to secure the necessary experience of the geophysicist in learning the working of this tortion balance, and thus discover by it the structures favourable to petroleum in the large marine tertiary areas that we have in the West. Orallo has been a tremendous disappointment. I believe that the time has come when the Government, having protected itself properly by a proper system of royalty, should permit anybody and everybody to drill. In the case of Orallo, I wish to state my utter disgust of the management and the way the board of directors in Sydney have run the show—apparently more for the market than the discovery of oil. It is an object lesson to mining men and the public generally, and a lesson which most mining men have already learned. To have a board of lawyers or a board of city merchants on a mining proposition, without any sentiment or technical affection or technical interest in a mine, is almost as bad for the progress of mining as having a board of directors established who would run it only for the market.

It has been stated by certain God-help-us members of the Opposition—(laughter)—that the times have changed, and that the old-time prospector is becoming extinct. They use as an argument in proof of that statement of alleged fact that great mining fields are now very rare in the discovery. A member of the Opposition regretted that Mount Isa had not been discovered long ago. I am very glad that Mount Isa was not discovered when lead was £15 a ton, and when zinc was a liability and not an asset. It would have been much better for the prospectors themselves if Herberton and the Walsh and Tinaroo tinfields had not been discovered when tin was £50 a ton. It would have been much better for the individual miner and the State if those fields had waited for discovery until now. It is easy to see in this tremendous area of country that we have why prospecting must be slow. There is in this great State of Queensland only the population of Melbourne—850,000 people. A great number of them are sitting in the cities,

*Mr. Bedford.]*

though not anything like the shocking incidence of the population of Sydney and Melbourne as opposed to the States of New South Wales and Victoria, but there are not sufficient men of the prospecting kind to go round in this area. The discovery of new mineral fields has been slow. I believe that I have passed Mount Isa on the road to Camooweal a dozen times at a distance of a mile. I have looked from the road at the black manganiferous outcrop on top of the hill, and only thought it to be manganese-filmed country rock, such as you see in the Cloncurry district. The reason why Mount Isa was not discovered before was the fact that the average local prospector was a copper miner looking for an outcrop stained with copper salt like a map of Ireland, and when he saw this black outcrop at a distance he did not closely examine it. Mount Isa was discovered by the usual mining accident which has discovered most of the mining fields in the world. I wish without in any way touching any personal connection with Mount Isa to draw the attention of the Committee to the fact that in no mining field in the world has such a tremendous area of payable ore been developed for such a small amount of money and for such a small amount of time as has been the case at Mount Isa. The hon. member for Logan made some insinuation when prospectors were being mentioned that the companies have obtained all the mines in preference to the prospectors. This was a field which was essentially not a gouger's field. It is a field which calls for tremendous plants capable of treating 1,000 tons of ore a day in each plant. The prospector has had a very fair deal, because out of £50,000 that my company has spent on the field the prospector has got £23,000. It is an excellent thing that the Government limited the areas to 10 acres, because many of the old prospecting battlers would have been left out had there been an acreage of from 40 to 80 acres, as can be obtained under the Act. Many of these prospectors who are now safe for life through holding these smaller areas would not have been in that position to-day if the areas had been larger.

During the time that the companies have worked in this field beginning late in March, 1924, it is estimated that 20,000,000 tons of ore have been shown to be inferentially in sight. We have as manager for the Mount Isa Proprietary Mr. E. J. J. Rodda, one of the most careful and pessimistic men, as he naturally became after having engaged a lifetime in mining. Mr. Rodda would never do to be Secretary for Mines, because he would look at a thing very coldly and cautiously before he touched it. Mr. Rodda estimates, taking only half the outcrop, that there are 544,000 tons of ore to every 100 feet of sinking in the Ibus, which is one 10-acre lease of the Isa Proprietary Company. When we came to crosscut and drill we found that width not 100 feet but 230 feet. We have now drilled to 600 feet sulphide, 192 feet to 605 feet, and the value of the ore is £8 a ton on present metal prices. Broken Hill last year treated 270,000 tons of ore at an average of 45s. 11d. per ton, and working on our available ore, even allowing £2 for a fall in the price of metals, there should be a working profit of £4 per ton and at least a dividend profit of £1 a ton. There are 3,250,000 tons in sight, inferentially, because the metal is not in sight until it is blocked out on four sides; but, taking the figures,

[Mr Bedford.

200 feet and not 230 feet, we have 6,500,000 tons proved to 600 feet. There should be an equal quantity in the Isa Mines Limited's Blackstar. Similarly there are £4,000,000 to £5,000,000 worth of metals in the Out on Her Own and Black Rock lines, and generally it will be found there are 20,000,000 tons of ore that can be called in sight and relied upon for plants to treat. To give some idea of the life of these mines, even on the 3,250,000 tons certificate of the lower figures, at 1,000 tons a day treatment, there is at least a twenty years' life ahead before we see the end of the Ibus mine. I congratulate the State on this tremendous discovery, which will provide profitable work for the best part of a century.

I thoroughly believe that in the areas in the south-west of my electorate the great ironstone outcrops that come up the Grey Range to Windorah, until it becomes the Cheviot, great mining possibilities will yet be discovered. Queensland, in a mining sense, has only been scratched, and little more than the unburned gold has been discovered. For instance, on the Isa Proprietary Company's Argyle lease, sinking for a lode which we expected to reach at 140 feet, we struck a blend lode at 60 feet, whose ore assayed up to 63 per cent. lead and 60 oz. silver. I thoroughly agree that there will be a tremendous mining revival which will benefit the railway system, as it will bring a high price freight, while I admit the real standby of the country is, of course, agriculture and pastoralism, which will be assisted by any such revival as providing rich local markets for the produce of the soil.

Mr. CONROY (*Maranoa*): I notice that the report of the department lightly touches upon the question of the discovery of oil. I do not hold with the remarks of my colleague, the hon. member for Warrego, in connection with Dr. Wade, because I am one of those who believe that Dr. Wade had certainly some grounds to go upon. The Commonwealth Government at [9 p.m.] one time offered a reward of £50,000 for the discovery of oil in Australia. Quite recently they altered that and made it a subsidy, but the unfortunate part about it is that they gave £22,500 to New South Wales, £22,500 to Western Australia, and only £5,000 to Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That is their usual treatment of this State.

Mr. CONROY: I cannot understand the action of the Commonwealth Government in this matter, more particularly after we have the report of Dr. Wade, and I propose to quote Dr. Wade's report in regard to the discovery of oil in Queensland, as I have not yet read any better report in connection with the discovery of oil so far as it relates to Queensland, and particularly as it relates to the Orallo district. Dr. Wade, dealing with the results from the various bores put down, made these remarks on the analysis of gas at Roma—

"It is a wet gas, which is very suggestive of the presence of oil in the strata. No evidence of a structure can be found at Roma, unless the rounded hill on which the bores are situated represents a local dome-shaped fold, but I am of opinion that some favourable structure exists, since I think the presence of such large bodies of gas under such pressures in this locality connote the existence of favourable structural conditions. It may be that

the gas is sealed in by the lenticularity of the beds, but such conditions are favourable to the accumulation of oil also. In such a case, however, the presence of the lens at depths cannot be ascertained by geological work at the surface, which is very unfortunate, for the only means of locating such a structure is the drilling of wild-cat wells, which is a very expensive and often a very disappointing business."

Dealing with the finding of traces of oil in various bores, Dr. Wade inclined to the belief that they were due to seepage from operations on the surface, and that to test the beds at Roma for oil something like 4,000 feet of drilling will be necessary, and that is an expensive operation. He further remarked that a sample from the Lander Oil Company's bore at Orallo had the characteristics of a true oil sand, that the log of the bore hole, if accurate, showed some very hopeful and interesting features; and he expressed the hope that the second bore would settle the question of the existence of oil in commercial quantities in that region. A note, however, remarks on the abandonment of the second bore. Operations have been recommenced in the first bore. The expert said that the evidence indicates that there is hope of oil being present at moderate depths, where structural features are favourable, and the chances of obtaining oil are put down at 30 in 100, and he reports—

"I suggest that an attempt should be made to geologically map this area in as great detail as possible, and that special attention be given to localities where there is any indication of suitable structural conditions. Even if natural gas can be obtained, provided that it is in such quantities as were proved to exist in the No. 3 bore at Roma, the exploitation of such gas should prove profitable, and would be likely to lead to the development of secondary industries in this part of Queensland."

A good deal of comment has been made, and the Government have been blamed in connection with their attitude in regard to the lease granted the Lander Oil Company. I think that was a very good proposition, because the Government were protected under the Petroleum Act of 1923, and a certain area in the Maranoa district was reserved for oil-boring operations for State purposes. Later on the Secretary for Mines entered into an agreement with Duncan Charles Milsom to prospect for oil under certain conditions. I refer to that because the Lander Oil Company were really prospecting, and if oil was discovered the Government would receive the benefit as provided under that agreement, clause 8 of which reads—

"That all the petroleum recovered from the said area shall be the property of licensees who shall pay to the Crown a royalty at the rate of 12½ per cent. of the gross value of such petroleum."

Then clause 9 reads—

"That Duncan Charles Milsom shall forthwith scientifically search for petroleum on the said area and will erect a boring plant thereon, and in so doing will within the first two years of the term of the license spend such sum or sums of money up to £50,000 as shall be necessary to produce petroleum or prove that the said area is barren."

I think that is sufficient evidence that it was a very good proposition for the Queensland Government. Even if the Lander Oil Company had discovered oil in the first instance, as it was thought they would, they would have had to expend £50,000 in developmental work, and if the company had discovered oil in payable quantities the Government would have received a royalty of 12½ per cent. That was a very good proposition for the Government.

I have heard statements made by hon. members with regard to the possibility of the success of the Lander Company's operations. The leader of the Opposition, when speaking in the debate on the Address in Reply, referred to the efforts of Dr. Jensen, and I shall now quote from an article by Dr. Jensen with regard to the operations of the Lander Oil Company in the Orallo district, as reported in the "Western Star" of 12th August last—

"The Lander Oil Company, whatever may have been its initial mistake, has made a bona fide, costly, and courageous endeavour to do something.

"Personally, I think that in the early stage of oil prospecting the ordinary artesian drill should be used instead of spending large sums on modern rotary plants such as are used on proved oil-fields. But whether that expenditure on the part of the Lander Oil Company was justified or not, the company has expended a very large sum in testing its area, and has justified the confidence of the Government of its good intentions."

I think that is sufficient evidence that the Government were quite justified in entering into the agreement with the Lander Oil Company. I do not think that the Lander Oil Company is the only company which should have access to that area, which is what is known as the 60-miles reservation lease.

I would point out—and I think this is borne out by Dr. Wade's report—that prospecting for oil is not only a very expensive proposition, but with a great risk attached to it. The Lander Oil Company has been operating in that district for about two years. During that time they have put down two bores to a depth of about 2,600 feet each, but up to the present time no beneficial results have accrued. I would suggest to the Minister that the question of the reservation of that area be reconsidered. There are other companies which I believe would like to prospect in the area, and, while I do not believe in wild-cat companies or companies with only small financial resources—because I do not think it is possible for a small company to do any good work in prospecting for oil—I think the opportunity should be given to companies with good financial backing to prospect in the area.

The leader of the Opposition asked the Secretary for Mines what amount of money had been expended up to date by the Lander Oil Company, and I think the Minister's reply was that somewhere about £75,000 had been spent. That shows that prospecting for oil is very expensive. I hope that the Minister will entertain applications from other companies which are strong financially. I would like the whole matter reconsidered, and, if there is a chance of discovering oil—and I honestly believe that, if oil can be discovered, it is going to be found in the Orallo district—other companies should be

given an opportunity of prospecting. We have had three bores put down and we have had a long report on the subject, and I think that, if any of these companies had had the same opportunity of getting below the gas-bearing area, the possibilities of getting results would have been much improved. The first bore which was put down was that of the Roma Municipal Council, which went to a depth of 3,700 feet and there struck petroliferous gas. The Roma Mineral Oil Company then put down a bore, which also struck petroliferous gas. That company was unfortunate enough to have the gas from the bore catch alight, and it burned for about six weeks before it was put out. Then some of the tools were lost in the bore, and the company was not financial enough to go on. Later on the Government proceeded with a bore, with the same results. A portion of the drill was lost, and the hole had to be abandoned. I think that venture cost the Government something over £40,000, which was really for experimental work. That fact only goes to show the great experience which is necessary in boring for oil. I would like the Minister to reconsider the position regarding the reservation area, and I suggest that, whilst he might grant other leases, one portion of the area could still be reserved for the Crown, because, if the Government did strike oil, they would get back not 12½ per cent. of their money but the whole lot.

Mr. BULCOCK (*Barcoo*): Some time ago the Federal Government very kindly placed at the disposal of this Government the services of a geologist, Dr. Wade, who visited a certain portion of our State and devoted particular attention to the possibilities of securing oil in the Central Western district. He visited my electorate, and he reported that there were certain indications of oil in that area which were highly promising and well worthy of investigation and possibly subsequent development. He instanced the Ruthven artesian bore, 4,070 feet deep, from which an oily wax was still flowing although it was put down twenty years ago. There were also favourable indications at Springleigh, also at Minnie Downs, and again at Malta. In the latter instance a company is endeavouring to develop what it believes to be a favourable proposition. Summing up Dr. Wade's report, one is driven to the conclusion that he was somewhat optimistic about the occurrence of oil in the Central Western district. I want to ask the Minister if he is prepared to devote a portion of the £5,000 which the Commonwealth Government are granting to Queensland towards the work of practically testing the resources of this tract of country. It is not a wide area, but, basing my opinion on what Dr. Wade has said, it is country which should be investigated for the existence of oil. I am sorry the Federal Government did not allow more than £5,000 for research work of this character in Queensland. It seems to me to be strange that in Queensland, where we have undoubtedly every indication of the existence of oil, the meagre sum of £5,000 is made available, whereas in New South Wales, where the indications are not so favourable, £25,000 is the amount provided.

At 9.15 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the Chair.

Mr. BULCOCK: I suppose we shall have to be content with what we have got, but I would ask the Minister to utilise a portion of the £5,000 for research work in the

[*Mr. Conroy.*

district in which I am interested. At the present time the Commonwealth Government have a standing offer of £50,000 to any company or individual who succeeds in finding oil. That £50,000 is practically of no importance to any company or individual who discovers oil. The £50,000 would be a mere bagatelle as compared with the value of the income the company or gentleman would derive from the discovery of oil. I suggest to the Minister that he get in touch with the officers of the Commonwealth Government who are responsible for making this offer, and endeavour to induce them to adopt an alternative scheme. Instead of £50,000 being given as a reward for the person who discovers oil in Australia, it would be an infinitely better proposition, and would lead to infinitely greater progress, and offer greater possibilities of success, if this amount were spent in the subsidisation of bore operations in promising localities. There are promising localities. A moment ago I mentioned the Malta bore. In connection with that area a small enthusiastic company are putting down a bore, and I know that their financial resources are very limited. If they are given some assistance in the purchasing of casing and meeting expenses incidental to a venture of this kind, I feel sure that they will be able to progress a good deal quicker, and will ultimately obtain a great deal more success. I commend that suggestion to the Minister, because I believe that we are not approaching the question from a correct angle in approaching it from the idea of a reward when oil is discovered. If a scheme for the subsidisation of boring in approved localities, in spots selected by the Minister's advisers if necessary—or selected after research has been undertaken in that regard—it would lead to better and more effective results than we shall obtain under the present system. I hope the Minister will discontinue on that side of the question and point to the necessity for an alteration in the present system.

Mr. PAYNE (*Mitchell*): A good deal has been said to-night by hon. members on both sides concerning the Cloncurry mineral belt. Quite recently I visited that area. I first went through that country in 1883 to a gold rush called Pumpkin Gully, not far from where the township of Cloncurry stands to-day. I have been a practical miner, working in the different States of the Commonwealth, principally in connection with copper and gold, and, after having an opportunity recently when travelling with the Public Works Commission of going over the Cloncurry mineral area I have no hesitation in saying that it is one of the most unique deposits in the whole of Australia. I hope some day, within my lifetime, if minerals will only increase in value, to see wonderful development in the Cloncurry mineral belt.

Something has been said to-night about oil, and the hon. member for Barcoo has drawn the Minister's attention to some very favourable signs located in his electorate. I am given to understand—the Minister can correct me if I am wrong—that the best prospects of oil being discovered in Queensland are at Longreach.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The biggest flow.

Mr. PAYNE: When that flow was discovered the chairman of the shire council at Longreach, who is an energetic

young chap, immediately applied for a lease on behalf of the shire council. I think that boring is at a standstill now. I understand there is a waxy substance coming from it now. If what I am told is correct, then the best indications of oil being discovered in Queensland are at Longreach. I am given to understand that it will only take a few thousand pounds to shut off the water and test the bore. The Government should get busy. If the Longreach Shire Council cannot undertake the test, and if the ratepayers are not prepared to back the council in testing the bore, then the Government should either undertake it themselves or allow someone else to do the work. It does seem a pity that the Government should allow that bore to be sunk a further depth for water without first testing it for oil. The Government will make the greatest mistake they have ever made if they do not take steps to test this bore. I was there a few months ago, and the oil was freely flowing then. Traces of oil could be found along the bore drain running away from the bore. The simple fact of the Longreach Shire Council having taken up a lease should not enable them to hold that area without attempting to develop it. Opposed as I am to private enterprise, I say that, if the Government or the Longreach Shire Council do not intend to develop that wonderful proposition, and the indications for oil being so good, it would be very much better for Queensland if they allowed some private person to do so. I hope that the Government will urge the Longreach Shire Council to test this bore, and if they do not do so that they will take it over even at the expense of compensating the council for the boring that has been done. I am very doubtful whether the bore will be a very good proposition for a water supply, seeing that the water is impregnated with oil.

Mr. CORSER: Are the tests of oil being discovered hopeful?

Mr. PAYNE: I have not gone into the matter carefully, but I understand from the Minister and the geologist that the indications of oil are the best that have so far been discovered in this State. All I am emphasising is that it would be a pity if the Government decides not to test that bore and allow the Longreach Shire Council to further manipulate it if they have no intention of testing the oil possibilities.

Mr. DASH (*Mundingburra*): I congratulate the department on the work it has been doing. One important matter that the department should carefully watch, in view of the possibility of the opening of silver-lead mines, is the ventilation in the mines. Where this contract system is in operation contractors, who are out to make as much as they can, will take all sorts of risk with life and health for the purpose of making money. When having the mining conditions reviewed by the Arbitration Court we have endeavoured to have those conditions specified so that the health of the miners shall be protected. The department should also see that proper appliances are installed for the laying of dust in the mines.

The medical inspection of miners is another matter to which the Government must give attention. The time is not far distant when every miner working underground will have to undergo a medical examination to ascertain whether he has any symptoms of miner's phthisis. We realise that this is an important step to take, but it is one which will

have to be faced if we are determined to stamp out this disease. At the present time men enter mines knowing that they are attacked with phthisis, and under the system of drinking water in the mine the disease can easily be spread. The water-bag is usually hung up in a cool drive, and when miners require a drink they put the bottle-neck in the bag to their mouths, drink from it, and then hang it up again, thereby communicating phthisis to others.

One of the most important items that could be dealt with under the mining vote is the amount voted to prospectors. It has been mentioned very clearly to-night that something must be done in the matter of prospecting. Our territory is a very big one, and one in which prospectors should be engaged. There are plenty of men prepared to go out if they get anything like a fair deal from the department. They are prepared to test new fields and give satisfactory work in return for the assistance they receive. If it were left to the mining wardens to recommend the amounts to be granted, I am satisfied we should encourage good men to go prospecting. It would be much better than having those men travel around the country seeking work in other directions. We know that prospectors, when short of money, will put their plant aside and go out and earn money to enable them to put in another three or four months prospecting, and those men should be encouraged.

Another matter of importance that was mentioned to-night was in connection with a railway to Mount Isa. I had the pleasure of visiting and inspecting that field. The hon. member for East Toowoomba went down only 100 feet, but I went down considerably further. That field is a big one, and a railway should be built to it as soon as possible. The Public Works Commission visited the district and gave their report, which was favourable, and it is now only right that a line should be built from Duchess to Mount Isa. If the Government take immediate action, the mining companies will set about installing machinery and working an efficient plant. The companies will not do much in the way of developmental work until they can get machinery on the ground to cope with that work as cheaply as possible. With the advent of a railway those companies could go ahead and give employment to many men. Now that Mount Morgan is closed down a large number of good miners will be out of work, and the Cloncurry field is the only one that can absorb those men. At present it can take only a limited number. It has been reported that the Mount Elliott Company is going to restart in the Cloncurry district. That company has a large amount of money. It has to do something with it, and it realises that the Cloncurry district presents an excellent opportunity for the expenditure of that money. The company has mines, both freehold and leasehold, and I am satisfied that, if the proposition that is mooted goes ahead, we shall see a great deal more life in the Cloncurry district than exists at the present time. When mining was in full operation, the Cloncurry district had something like 4,000 to 5,000 workers engaged in mining and smelting, in addition to a large number of prospectors and gougers.

At the present time the gougers in Cloncurry are trying to make ends meet in the hope of better things coming their way. If the company erect the big smelter works

*Mr. Dash.]*

that they say they will it will be a great thing for Queensland, because something will

have to be done in that way to [9.30 p.m.] find work for the unemployed.

I am satisfied that, if big coke-works are erected on the Bowen coalfield, the mining companies will be able to get coke at a reasonable figure and reduce their overhead charges in that respect. At the present time it is very difficult to get trucks to complete the orders which the agent of the Bowen coal has received. He is doing good work, but the difficulty is in supplying the orders which he has received and year after year is receiving, because sufficient trucks are not available to cart the coal. Something will have to be done in that direction, otherwise the Government will lose orders that would naturally go to the Bowen coalfield. The coal is of good quality, and it only needs facilities to transfer the coal from the mine to the person desiring it in order to develop the field.

The whole of the mining in the Cloncurry district will go ahead if greater attention is paid to the matter. The mining inspectors have to suffer a good deal of hardship in having to travel round such a large area as the Cloncurry mineral district. The Department of Mines has realised that the old system of travelling by horse and buggy is out of date, and is supplying the inspectors with motor-cars so that they can get around more quickly and do the work they are expected to do.

I again lay stress on the fact that special attention should be given by the mining inspectors to the question of providing proper ventilation to minimise the danger from miner's phthisis.

Mr. FOLEY (*Leichhardt*): In common with other hon. members, I desire to congratulate the Minister on the way in which he has administered the Department of Mines during his term of office, and, like other hon. members, I have no grouse as regards the treatment meted out to me as member for *Leichhardt* in the matter of assistance to mining in that district. I want to deal with the Clermont district, and to point out that the question of reviving goldmining in that district should merit very sympathetic consideration from the Minister. The hon. gentleman has been attending to that matter, and has already sent a party of miners from Brisbane to endeavour to open up what is known as the old "Wildcat Lead," which, in the past, produced many thousands of ounces of the best gold. Latterly very little has been done owing to the fact that after working this lead for something like four miles water was struck, and the methods of operation at that time were such that the average miner, with his limited capital, could not possibly cope with the flow of water, and consequently the lead had to be abandoned. At present a prospector named *McRitchie* is trying to pick up that old lead. There is a theory held by that man and other individuals in the district that, when they struck the water, it was only a cross-stream, or what is known as an underground lagoon. He has already sunk one shaft at a point allowing a margin of space between the old workings where they struck the water originally, with the result that he has struck a huge flow of water on the site he has chosen. With further assistance from the Minister and by getting a party of men locally to assist him he is at present trying another site to see if

it is possible to locate the old lead in dry ground. As this lead was previously worked for 4 miles with very little or no water in the workings, it seems a very peculiar thing that at the end of the 4 miles of working he should suddenly meet with a dip and then strike a flow of water to such an extent that it was impossible for the average working miner to continue operations.

I have been looking up the old records, and I would like to bring under the notice of the Minister a report by Mr. Dunstan, the Chief Government Geologist, in the "Queensland Parliamentary Papers" for the session of 1902, volume 3. In that report he goes into the question of the alluvial deposits in the Clermont field, and in one portion of it he deals with the prospecting which was done by the Prospecting Association in Clermont many years ago in an endeavour to locate the lost lead by boring. Looking at the map that accompanies the report, in my opinion, the boring operations were started from a point at too great an angle from the old original lead that had been worked. Furthermore, the report also points out that the distance between the bore holes was such that it was possible for a lead to exist between them. Looking at the scale on the map accompanying the report, I find that the distance between some of the bore holes is over a quarter of a mile. Nineteen holes were bored, and wash was found in some of them and traces of gold in others, but nothing to warrant any further expenditure of the average miner's time and money to prospect it thoroughly by sinking shafts and drives. I would suggest that the Minister should give favourable consideration to the question of getting one of the Government bores—I believe there is one at Mount Isa now not operating—sent to the Clermont district, and arrange for a systematic prospect by boring, so that the underground strata can be located and the information given to prospectors. I do not say that by the boring method we are going to determine whether there is any extent of value there, because it is possible for a bore to be within a few feet of what is known as the run of gold. The best we can do is determine whether the lead exists. The boring of that particular strata would show the average miner whether the lead existed underground, and also give an indication as to whether the lead was worked out, whether it was wet or dry, or a volume of water existed to enable him to determine whether he could carry on sinking operations and cope with any water which existed. If that information were obtained in the Clermont district, it would mean a big saving in prospecting grants by the department and a big saving to the Prospecting Association at Clermont in financing prospectors on the field.

If the Minister has sufficient money at his disposal, and if he undertakes boring and finds any trace of the lead—we know that the heavy gold is there where mining operations ceased; good values were procured from the last shaft prior to meeting with the heavy water—he could give consideration to the question of financing the sinking of a shaft, say, half a mile or a mile down the lead and the installation of a plant to pump the water and drain the country ahead. I might illustrate that suggestion by saying that at one time on the deep lead in the Herberton district, when the miners could not carry on their operation on a great portion of it owing

[*Mr. Dash*

to the strong flow of water underground, a company was formed to drive a tunnel from the bank of the Wild River into the lead at a point a mile or so down the lead from the Herberton township. The tunnel was eventually driven into a favourable site underneath the lead, and then they worked up and drained the water out of the lead, with the result that hundreds of miners were able to work the ground higher up, and the production of many thousands of pounds' worth of metal was made possible. The same thing could be done in the Clermont district. We know that the gold is there where the work stopped, and it only requires a little prospecting ahead and the installation of pumping machinery for a short period to drain the ground above so that the average prospector could carry on, I believe, and many other authorities believe, that that is possible, and if it were carried out many men could be well employed on the field with the prospect of increasing the gold production of the State.

I should like to say something about the question of dealing with the low-grade wash which exists on the surface in many parts of the Clermont district. I suppose the same thing occurs in many other parts of the State. In all alluvial districts you will find deposits at the surface of too low a value for the average worker with pick and shovel to work if he has to carry it to the nearest water to treat. It is also in some cases of too low a value for the hand dry blower, but a process has been tried out at Clermont for this purpose with good results. The Minister some time ago financed the inventor and gave it a good test. Miners from all parts of the district attended at the trial, and were unanimously of the opinion that the process was absolutely unbeatable as regards the saving of the precious metal. It can be adapted to practically any kind of metal. Unfortunately, at that time the inventor desired too much for the Queensland rights, and the Government would not undertake to purchase those rights. Since then the Minister has been sympathetic enough to purchase one dry blower and intends sending it to the Clermont district to be put into operation with the object of proving to Queensland generally that low-grade surface wash can be treated by this process.

The secret of the success of this invention is the fact that it will put through a much larger quantity of washdirt of low-grade value than can be put through by the hand process. It can put through 60, 70, or 80 tons a day, according to its capacity, whereas a pair of miners with the old hand dry blower would have to work very hard to put through 6 or 7 tons. The volume that is put through compensates for the low values that are procured. We have a couple of miners who are willing to give this a try-out before it is sent to Clermont, and I hope the trial will be held in the course of a fortnight in a prospecting district where there is a deposit, and possibly at a later date be sent to Clermont if the values in the Clermont district are more favourable to work upon.

Dealing with the low-grade surface ores in the Clermont district, I would like to suggest to the Minister that he arrange for a geologist to systematically prospect the whole surface wash existing in that district on similar lines to those adopted on the area

at Taylor's Hill on the South Coast. I have seen a map of that district, at a place called Taylor's Hill, where Mr. Ball systematically prospected the whole surface and gave the value that existed on the surface. If the information was available for the whole of the Clermont district, the miners would be in a position to form themselves into small parties for the purpose of raising £250 or £300 to purchase one of these machines, and the whole district, which consists of many thousands of acres, could be worked successfully not only in the interests of the district itself but in the interests of the State generally.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The geologist shows it very clearly on the plan.

Mr. FOLEY: He does at Kingston. I was suggesting that a similar systematic prospecting be made in Clermont, where there is a much larger district and a greater number of deposits than in the Kingston area.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: How would the values compare with the Kingston area?

Mr. FOLEY: I think the values would be very much more favourable. I was informed by one man, when discussing this process with him in the Clermont district, that he knows of places that would average at the very least 3 dwt. per load, and there is a good deal of land there. It could not be worked by one pair of working miners in the course of two or three years. Now, 3 dwt. of gold per load would average somewhere about 12s. per ton, with the result that the capacity of this plant putting through somewhere about 8 yards per hour would enable the miners working it to show a turnover of from £32 to £37 per day. That return would be impossible with the old dry-blowing process. The expense of feeding the machine by a tractor, ploughs and scoops, or by an excavator, would be very little compared with the amount that is produced on fair values.

A good deal has been said during the discussion about prospecting for oil. One would not gain much by appealing to the Minister to take steps to do a little prospecting in Queensland for oil, because the vote would not allow him to do so.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I will give that dry blower a good test.

Mr. FOLEY: Thank you.

I would like to refer to the report of Dr. Jensen on the country known as the Consuelo district, south of Springsure. Something should be done to bring this district more under the notice of oil prospectors. The report of Dr. Jensen in regard to the possibilities of obtaining oil there is one of the most favourable that we could read. Not only have we got the report by Dr. Jensen on the possibilities of obtaining oil there by boring, and the possibilities of striking an oilfield similar to the Mexican field, but there are seams of shale, one of which averages 4 feet in thickness and analyses somewhere about 58 gallons of oil to the ton. Right on the spot we have a number of seams of coal that were inspected by the Public Works Commission during one of their visits to the district.

I would like to touch upon one more point—the recent coal find in the Clermont district. We have a big deposit of coal in the Blair Athol district, which I do not intend to deal with to-night, but quite recently a

*Mr. Foley.]*

find was made of a different class of coal a few miles from Blair Athol in a southerly direction, in a locality known as Douglas Creek. The prospectors of that deposit located it when boring for water. They are only struggling workers who have done a good deal of hard work boring and sinking, and up to date the analysis of the coal has been favourable, although not quite up to the desired standard. We have proved, however that, whereas Blair Athol will not coke, the new coal find, although not giving quite as good an analysis from a steaming point of view, has proved that it will produce a fairly good, hard coke, which will mean a good deal for the Clermont district. Because of the fact that just adjacent to this coalmine we have the old Copperfield mine that was worked longer than any copper mine in Queensland, and which would have been opened by the Mount Morgan Company but for the recent slump in copper, I would like to see the Secretary for Mines arrange for the Chief Government Geologist, who is an authority on coal and has made a survey of the Copperfield district, to make a visit to that district and thoroughly survey the deposit for the purpose of helping the prospectors who are there at the present time.

At 9.55 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN said: Under the provisions of Sessional Orders agreed to by the House on 29th July and 25th September, I shall now leave the chair, report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported progress.

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

The House adjourned at 10 p.m.