

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 24 NOVEMBER 1927

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THURSDAY, 24 NOVEMBER, 1927.

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

QUESTIONS.

COST OF ADDITION TO TREASURY BUILDING.

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

“1. What was the estimated cost of the addition to the Treasury block?”

“2. What was the actual cost?”

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. M. J. Kirwan, *Brisbane*) replied—

“1. £230,000.

“2. The work is nearly completed; on completion the cost will be made available if desired.”

PROPOSED INQUIRY INTO CATTLE-GRAZING INDUSTRY.

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

“1. Have inquiries yet commenced into the position of the cattle industry similar to those recently made into the state of the sheep industry?”

“2. If so, will he inform the House as to when the report will be completed? If not, when will these inquiries be commenced?”

The PREMIER (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*) replied—

“1 and 2. Difficulty is being encountered in securing representative and competent men to conduct the inquiry. As soon as the personnel has been secured action will be taken to proceed immediately with the inquiry.”

SCHOOL INSPECTORS AND AGE OF RETIREMENT.

Mr. FARRELL (*Rockhampton*) asked the Secretary for Public Instruction—

“1. How many inspectors of schools are there in his department who have reached the retiring age of sixty-five years?”

“2. What are their names?”

“3. When is it proposed to retire these officers?”

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. T. Wilson, *Fortitude Valley*) replied—

“1. Four.

“2. Mutch, Alexander; Taylor, William; Kemp, Charles; Fowler, Joseph Longton (B.A.).

“3. Mr. A. Mutch is retiring as from 31st January, 1928. The date of retirement of Messieurs Taylor, Kemp, and Fowler has not yet been decided.”

BANANAS RAILED FROM GYMPIE-NAMBOUR AND MARY VALLEY RAILWAYS.

Mr. WALKER (*Cooroora*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

“1. How many cases of bananas were railed during the past twelve months from stations on the section Gympie to

Nambour (both inclusive); also from stations on the Mary Valley line?

"2. What was the total freight on such consignments?"

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

"The information is in course of preparation."

REPORT OF RURAL FIRES PREVENTION BOARD.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*), for Mr. COSTELLO (*Carnarvon*), asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"1. Did the board which reported upon the matter of rural fire prevention make a unanimous report and recommendation, and if not, who were the dissentients?"

"2. What was the total cost of the board?"

"3. In what districts during the last ten years has the Careless Use of Fire Prevention Act been in force?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. T. Dunstan, *Gympie*) replied—

"1. The report of the advisory committee on bush fires was unanimous except for several reservations expressed by Messrs. J. F. Brett and A. E. Coldham. These reservations expressed preference for—(1) Administration by local authorities; (2) continuance of the committee in office for three years; and made objections to (3) compulsory firebreaks and close seasons. (The minority reservations were given due weight in drafting the Bill.)"

"2. The members of the board gave their services without cost to the State. The total expenses for the three months' investigation and report were £23 5s. 5d.

"3. Districts—

Arrilalah—Petty Sessions District of.
 Bauhinia—Division of.
 Blackall—Police District of.
 Bowen—Land Agent's District.
 Burke—Police District of.
 Burnett—District of.
 Cairns—Petty Sessions District of.
 Cairns—(See Shire of Johnstone).
 Camooweal—Petty Sessions District of.
 Cardwell—Police District of.
 Charleville—Town of.
 Charters Towers Gold Field.
 Clermont—Pastoral District of Leichhardt and Police District of.
 Cloncurry—District of.
 Cook—District of.
 Croydon—Petty Sessions District of.
 Darling Downs—District of.
 Etheridge—Police District of.
 Goondiwindi—District of.
 Gregory North—Pastoral District of.
 Hughenden—Police District of.
 Ingham—Petty Sessions District of.
 Inglewood—Police District of.
 Ipswich—Land Agent's District.
 Isisford—Petty Sessions District of.
 Johnstone—Shire of, and so much of the Shire of Cairns as is contained in the Petty Sessions District of Herberton.
 Kennedy—North and South Pastoral District of.
 Leichhardt—District of.
 Mackay—Police District.

Maranoa—District of.
 Marathon—Police District of.
 Mitchell—District of.
 Moreton East—District of.
 Murweh—Shire of.
 Normanton—Municipality and Carpentaria Division of District comprised within.
 Northern Downs—District of.
 Port Curtis—District of.
 Rockhampton—District of.
 Rockhampton—Police District of.
 St. George—District of.
 Stanley—Electoral District of.
 Townsville—District of.
 Townsville—Municipality of.
 Thursday and Hammond Islands.
 Tinaroo—Division of.
 Warrego—District of.
 Wide Bay—District of.
 Woothakata—Division.

NOTE.—Words 'District of' mean 'The Pastoral District of.'

ALLEVIATION OF DISTRESS AMONGST UNEMPLOYED.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*), without notice, asked the Premier—

"1. Will he take the House into his confidence as to what action he is taking or proposes to take towards alleviating the evident distress amongst the present enormous number of unemployed people in this State?"

"2. Would he favour an immediate conference of representatives of both sides of the House with the object of exploring every possible avenue which might lead to some help being afforded to these unfortunate people?"

The PREMIER (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*) replied—

"The Opposition cannot offer any financial help towards alleviating unemployment, and the Government are experiencing difficulty, even though quite prepared to spend a sum of money to alleviate unemployment, in finding useful work on which to spend the money to give relief in the metropolitan area. Something is being done already. I have a conference this morning with his worship the mayor of Brisbane, Mr. Jolly, to discuss the matter of where we might do something conjointly; but there is the great difficulty that the Government have more men employed in the metropolitan area to-day than ever have been employed before. The unemployment is not due to slackness in Government employment, because we have considerably over 2,000 men employed within a short radius of Brisbane, and even if the Government did spend a sum of money—prematurely, I might say—to relieve unemployment the difficulty is to find work where the money can be legitimately and profitably spent."

Mr. CLAYTON: Mr. Bavin is doing it.

The PREMIER:

"Mr. Bavin is not doing anything. The New South Wales Government dismissed 250 men from the tramways some time ago. I do not wish to get beyond the bounds of this question, because it is a very important matter. I am prepared to find money to relieve unemployment so soon as I can, acting in

conjunction with the local authorities, secure useful work, designed and ready, where we can spend that money."

Mr. BRAND: Why not approach the Main Roads Commission?

The PREMIER:

"That is not so easy. I have been in touch with the Main Roads Commission during the past fortnight hurrying up designs and plans; but hon. members will readily understand that in connection with organised work outside of the city, where the men have to go away from their homes, it means securing tents, kits, beds, machinery; and several thousands of pounds might be spent on material before any actual relief could be given to the men who have to do the work. It is not so easy as it looks. During the past week I have given the whole of my personal attention to the matter. I have asked the Railway Department and various other Government activities to speed up their designs, and to give me an idea where, in any portion of the State, a limited amount of money can be spent on actual wages work that will give relief to the unemployed, and that will be done as soon as we are ready."

Mr. CORSER: Do you not think that a discussion on the whole economic position of industry might be valuable?

The PREMIER: If anything could be gained from the hon. member's speaking, the problem would have been solved long ago.

Mr. CORSER: You are quite right. I wish you would listen to me.

SOUTH JOHNSTONE, GIN GIN, NORTH ETON, AND MOUNT BAUPLE SUGAR WORKS BILL.

INITIATION.

The TREASURER (Hon. W. McCormack, Cairns): I beg to move—

"That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to authorise the transfer of the management and control of the South Johnstone sugar-works, the Gin Gin sugar-works, the North Eton sugar-works, and the Mount Bauple sugar-works, from the Corporation of the Treasurer to an association in respect of the sugar-works concerned; to extend such authority in respect of other sugar-works; and for other consequential purposes."

Question put and passed.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—NINTH AND TENTH ALLOTTED DAYS.

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

HOME SECRETARY'S DEPARTMENT.

CHIEF OFFICE.

Question stated—"That £7,852 be granted for 'Chief Office.'"

Mr. KING (Logan): When the House adjourned last night I was giving some facts to show that the Minister had given an absolutely incorrect reply to a question I had asked regarding an application for a postal

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ballot by the Wyangarie Shire Council and the subsequent cancellation of the "Gazette" notice authorising the ballot. I would just like briefly to recapitulate the facts. The shire clerk wrote the Home Department on the 2nd September, 1926, asking for permission to conduct the annual elections by postal ballot. That request was granted on the 18th September. The permission was gazetted, and a copy of the "Gazette" notice was forwarded by the Home Department to the council. In October the ordinary monthly meeting of the council was held. The letter from the Home Department was discussed and agreed to. There was not the slightest objection offered to it by a single member of the council. At the following meeting in November the minutes—a copy of which had been previously sent out to each member and published—were adopted. It is utterly absurd to say that the shire clerk in asking for the postal ballot acted on his own initiative and without the authority of the council. He did so in the first instance, but his action was confirmed all through. No notice whatever was taken by the department of the granting of the postal ballot until some members of the Australian Workers' Union at Richmond got busy and protested against it. They got the member for the district, the hon. member for Burke, to move in the matter. I have brought this matter forward for two reasons—firstly, because there was an incorrect answer given in this Chamber, and secondly, because I strongly object as a member of this House to the Australian Workers' Union attempting to control the Home Secretary's Department or any other Government department.

Mr. DASH: They did not.

Mr. KING: They did in this particular instance, for, as a result of representations made by the Australian Workers' Union and an hon. member opposite to the Home Secretary, the permission to hold a postal ballot which had been previously granted was cancelled. No notice was taken from November until the following March, when the elections were about to be held.

Mr. HYNES: Are you sure of your facts?

Mr. KING: They are to be found in the file of the Home Secretary's Department. I asked that that file should be laid upon the table of the House, and in that way I got my information. I also communicated with the Wyangarie Shire Council, who had brought the matter before my notice in my capacity as secretary of the Local Authorities' Association. Realising that it was a most serious thing, I asked the council for permission to bring the matter before Parliament. The council held a meeting to consider that matter, and a motion that permission be granted to me to ventilate the matter was carried by four votes to three, the minority being the Labour members of the council. I strongly object to the procedure which was adopted. When a Minister approves of a certain course being followed and sanctions the creation of the necessary machinery to allow that course to be taken, then no body—be it a body of employees or employers—should use its influence with the department to alter the decision arrived at.

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

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, Mount Morgan): The statement of the case by the hon. gentleman is wrong.

So far as I am aware, the Australian Workers' Union never came into this matter at all.

Mr. KING: I beg your pardon—it was the Australian Labour Party.

The HOME SECRETARY: The Australian Labour Party may have come into the matter, but I only recognise the member for the district. This party piloted through an amendment of the Local Authorities Act to provide for a postal ballot in local authority elections, where necessary. It was considered that we might depart from the ordinary principle by allowing a postal ballot in cases where the scattered nature of the district would mean considerable expense being incurred in conducting the elections in the ordinary way, so long as the value of the election was not depreciated and the true opinion of the people was obtained. A request was made by the shire clerk and returning officer of the Wyangarie Shire Council. His letter stated that he was acting for the council, which is the authority recognised by the department; and, believing that the request did emanate from the council, a "Gazette" notice was issued. Then a protest came from the district.

Mr. KING: Months afterwards.

The HOME SECRETARY: It does not matter how long afterwards; I can only deal with facts as they come before the department. A protest came through the proper authority—the member for the district—pointing out that the shire clerk had no authority to make the request. That is a serious accusation, and, had I been aware of it at the time, the "Gazette" notice would not have appeared, pending the receipt of further information from the council. The department wired to the clerk, because it recognised that the request received from the member of the district that the postal ballot should be cancelled might entail considerable expense. The clerk was asked for information as to how far the ballot had proceeded. The reply was that certain stationery had been purchased and the ballot-papers were being printed. On investigation it was found that nominations had not been called, so that the ballot-papers could not have been printed. Seeing that the member for the district—the true representative of the people—had made certain representations, I, as Home Secretary, cancelled what was really an action based on false information conveyed to me. I have no particular feeling in the matter at all. Personally, I believe in the postal ballot provisions, and the reason why they were approved on this occasion was that a Royal Commission had been appointed to rearrange local authority boundaries, and, as Home Secretary, I recognised that, had it been possible for the commission to submit its report in time for legislative action to be taken this session, we would have altered the boundaries, which would have meant fresh elections in the various new authorities created, and it would have meant double expenditure. I extended the privilege on that occasion, believing that by doing so I was saving many shires what would really amount to unnecessary expenditure.

Previous speakers—particularly the hon. member for Toowong and the hon. member for Bundaberg—have referred to the question of the pollution of the Brisbane River by the sewage that is emptied into it at Luggage

Point. Five years ago the Health Department, in conjunction with the Federal Health Engineer, made exhaustive inquiries and at the point then reached in connection with the work of the sewerage the Brisbane area, there was no immediate danger to the health of the Brisbane people; but it was recognised, even at that stage, that it would become necessary either to erect purification works or adopt the chlorination process of purifying the sewage that was emptied into the river, which, as the scheme advanced, might become a menace to the health of the community.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Did not the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Act originally provide for that to be done?

The HOME SECRETARY: I have not much knowledge of that Act, as I do not control it. The Commissioner of Public Health has carefully watched the progress of events, and he recently drew the attention of his officers to the increasing number of services that were being connected with the sewerage system. A child in one of the schools contracted typhoid fever; samples of oysters were taken; typhoid bacilli were not found, and the investigation disclosed that there was no special danger. The full facts were placed at the disposal of the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board, and the statement made to-day by certain authorities that there is no danger is based on the report of five years ago. The hon. member for Toowong is anxious to know the present position. The Commissioner of Public Health has had officers at work taking samples of the oysters, water, sludge, and everything else, but finality has not been reached from the analytical point of view. So soon as the Commissioner has full data in his possession, he will take whatever action is necessary to see that whichever authority is responsible does its duty.

The hon. member for Toowong also referred to the licensing of fruit barrows and desired some information as to the procedure followed in regard to the issue of these licenses. At one period the Home Department controlled the issue of these licenses, and it is just as well to understand why barrow licenses were issued in the city of Brisbane. Fruitgrowers who were sending their fruit to the market found that only the prime fruit received a ready sale, while sound fruit, which was quite fit for consumption and quite within reach of the pockets of a vast number of people who could not pay for the prime article, was not placed on the market at all except by means of the fruit carters who hawked it round the various suburbs. The large population, however, which daily entered the city and left by train for the distant suburbs had no opportunity of getting what was a very necessary article of diet because the price was beyond them. The late Home Secretary—the present Premier—following the example of other cities, decided to give the majority of the people an opportunity of purchasing cheap fruit, and a certain number of licenses were issued—thirty-seven, I believe. These licenses were issued without any regard to location. It was not very long before it was recognised that the fruit barrows were becoming a menace to the traffic, which was an ever-growing problem in our midst, and a conference was held. While the Home Secretary had no desire to deprive any man of the opportunity of continuing to earn a living, a certain number of barrows was agreed upon

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as the result of the conference. To absorb the men then in the business it was decided that, instead of one man only being on the barrow, two men should share in it, and certain spots were allocated to these men. Naturally the men who were in the business recognised which were the most profitable spots and those spots were given a preference. Many barrow licenses have been issued since, but their location has prevented them being a success, and such licenses have been held for a short time only and then the occupant has disappeared.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Much depends on the individual.

The HOME SECRETARY: Much depends on the appearance of the individual, on the appearance of his barrow, and on his honesty in business. As the scheme progressed power was taken under the Fruit Marketing Organisation Act to remove from the Home Secretary's Department the responsibility of issuing barrow permits in Brisbane and vest the power in the Committee of Direction of Fruit Marketing. Therefore, the applicant for a license does not now approach the Home Secretary at all. Acting through the police, who are the custodians of the traffic of the metropolitan area, the Home Secretary has to see that barrow sites are not established at points that would make the congestion of traffic worse than it is to-day; and that is the reason why barrows have been shifted from the corners of George street between Queen street and Ann street. It is the same in Edward street and in the Valley, a certain limited space being allowed where the barrows may operate, and a limited number of barrow licenses only being issued.

The City Council rightly asked for some consideration in the matter of barrow licenses within its area, and I immediately instructed the Commissioner of Police to seek the advice of the City Council on the question of the new concessions in regard to barrow licenses, preserving to those who held existing licenses the rights which possibly belonged to them under their original permits. Before new licenses were issued the Commissioner would at least obtain some expression of opinion from the local authorities.

The hon. member for Normanby mentioned the Rockhampton maternity ward. I might say that, if the secretary of the board, Mr. Thomson, who wrote the hon. member the letter he quoted, had displayed anything like the enthusiasm shown by the Central members on this important question, no doubt Rockhampton would be in a better position than it is to-day in this regard. When the maternity scheme of this Government came into existence a building programme was drawn up, care being taken to place in the first schedule all the outlying portions of the State where the need was greater than in more closely settled districts.

In many instances places to which maternity wards were allocated resolutely declined the assistance, either because of the prejudice of their local people or simply because it was something emanating from a Labour Government, hence places which accepted early were in the happy position of having [11 a.m.] the work completed soon. The larger centres of population were placed in a later schedule; but, when the announcement went out that it was proposed to carry out the work in the different schedules, nearly every town of any magni-

tude in Queensland immediately started to make representations to the department for the early consideration of its claims. Whatever representations have been made on behalf of Rockhampton have only been made by the Rockhampton members. The old hospital committee evidently thought that because they had a women's hospital their purpose was served. It was only when their finances became so serious that they had to be proclaimed as a district under the Hospitals Act that they took any notice of the proposal at all; and then it was only after I had gone to Rockhampton and addressed the hospital board on the necessity of co-ordinating its different services and obtaining its own funds for that purpose that its apathy was overcome, although even then it did not make application for a loan till later. I pointed out that I was prepared to give consideration to any request the board might make to bring Rockhampton into line with other large towns which already had made direct application for inclusion in the scheme. My experience in the building of maternity wards teaches me that it is a mistake to construct them to a standard plan like a Ford car. I find that, whilst somebody in the head office of the Department of Public Works may be able to draw a very excellent plan of a building, nevertheless, unless he has local knowledge of the conditions of the site—the prevailing winds, the shady side, and so on—it sometimes happens that buildings have to be altered and the whole lay-out charged to meet the local conditions, which, of course, would be known to the residents. In the case of Rockhampton, I personally asked the board to give full consideration to whatever plan was presented, pointing out that it had as chairman a man who was recognised as an able builder in the person of Mr. Renshaw, and that it also had the benefit of the advice of medical men who should be able to guide it as to the location of the building and its design to meet the requirements of the district, and that, whilst I was willing to expedite the matter as much as possible, I would like it to apply that local knowledge to the plans. Of course, the Department of Public Works cannot complete a plan in a week, and sometimes there is considerable delay before I get the plans back. When I got the plans back I sent them to the Rockhampton board for consideration. They were then returned by me to the Works Department. They have not again reached me. The position is that I have this year embarked on the finalisation of the complete scheme of maternity ward work in this State, and naturally the funds I have at my disposal are being taxed. I can assure the hon. members from the Central district who have constantly kept this matter before my notice that as soon as possible a start will be made to give Rockhampton the benefit of this institution.

Several hon. members have referred to the traffic problems, the hon. member for Normanby in particular referring to a location in South Brisbane leading towards the Melbourne Street railway station. He complained that there was no policeman on point duty in Stanley street just over Victoria bridge.

Mr. PETERSON: There is a policeman on duty in the busy hours.

The HOME SECRETARY: Hon. members in their desire to solve traffic problems must realise that motorists have certain responsibilities, and pedestrians also have

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responsibilities. The particular point to which the hon. gentleman called my attention has been under my observation frequently. It is a place where one-way traffic is in existence. The idea of one-way traffic is to expedite the traffic in congested areas. The worst pedestrian offenders are women with young children. Standing at any tram-stop, can anyone say that they obey the regulations and wait until a tram is past or that they walk to the end of the footpath before crossing?

MR. PETERSON: There is no other way to cross over there. You must go across the road.

THE HOME SECRETARY: In a street in which one-way traffic is in operation and where there is motor traffic, the passenger in a tram has the responsibility of waiting until the tram has moved off, then crossing the street in safety instead of running round one end or the other of the tramcar.

MR. PETERSON: The motor cars come behind the tram on the other side. That is the danger.

THE HOME SECRETARY: The danger is that people will not wait until the tram has moved off, giving them an uninterrupted view of the street. If we were to compel all tramcars or all traffic to be held up behind a stationary tramcar in an important section like that, we would create congestion on the bridge or at some other point. In studying the traffic problem in the metropolitan area we must get down to the basis of the defect, and that is that we have only one bridge. When the second bridge has been erected, much of our traffic problem will disappear. If we had a population properly educated in regard to the traffic regulations, "silent cops" would perform the duty just as well as members of the police force. When I look at our "silent cops," I am glad that our live "cops" are not knocked about in the same way, otherwise my pension bill would bankrupt the Government.

Some hon. members have referred to the question of a tail light. Even amongst the small number who are assembled in this Chamber a diversity of opinion exists in regard to the tail light. Some hon. members object to having to switch on their tail lights at the back of their cars, whilst others protest that the tail lights cannot be observed at any distance. One of the dangers of having the tail light switched on from the driver's seat is that immediately a motorist infringes the law or knocks a person down, he switches off the tail light, accelerates his speed, and then the number of his car cannot be taken. I can point to the case of Constable Quinn, who, whilst on point duty, was knocked down by a passing motorist when there were hundreds of people about. The motorist switched off his tail light, accelerated his speed, and his number could not be taken. It has been found necessary to retire Constable Quinn on a pension as a result of the injuries that he received.

In company with traffic police the Under Secretary of the Department spent some nights at different points in the metropolitan traffic area observing motor cars as they passed by. Hon. members would be surprised at the large percentage of cars on which the number could not be distinguished 10 feet or 15 feet away. Some motorists had no tail lights; some had dim lights for tail

lights, while some tail lights were smeared by mud. A conglomeration of different methods was discovered. We have now passed a regulation under which tail lights will not be passed unless they are visible at a distance of 100 feet, and the switch attached to the tail light cannot be operated from the driver's seat. In other words, under this regulation the switch cannot be controlled by the driver; and, if he knocks a person down, he will have to stop the car and get out before he is able to switch the tail light off. That regulation has been passed, but there has been some delay in bringing it into force for this reason: Wrapped up with the question of the tail light is the question of the licensing of cars, which is controlled by another department. The number plate is issued by the Main Roads Commission. I could enforce the new provisions regarding the tail light, because it will only be necessary to give due warning to motorists to see that their tail lights are adjusted in accordance with regulations, and then those found infringing the regulation can be dealt with by the police. I do not want to inflict on the public the expense of procuring some light or some plate, and then find that another department has prescribed a plate of a different character. That would mean double expense to the motorist. The Main Roads Commission is to-day endeavouring to evolve a plate that will meet the requirements of my regulation and fit in with the ideas it holds, and that will help it in the collection of revenue. Personally, I believe there are many people in this city dodging motor licenses, and they will continue to do so while the present slipshod methods go on. You cannot expect anything else. Personally, I believe, and I am supported by many of my officers, that a double number plate should be issued by the Main Roads Commission. That is to say, a white and black number plate one year and a black and white one the next year. I have had a demonstration of such plates.

HON. W. H. BARNES: What about a red plate?

THE HOME SECRETARY: Red would be an excellent colour. (Laughter.)

MR. HANLON: It is certainly a conspicuous colour.

THE HOME SECRETARY: I hope that a blue plate will never be adopted, because that colour will make everyone feel despondent. (Laughter.)

MR. TAYLOR: Have you considered a scheme under which all licenses will expire on the 31st December?

THE HOME SECRETARY: That would facilitate matters for the police, but the Main Roads Commission states that it would not be possible with the facilities at its disposal to give effect to the suggestion. Speaking from the point of view of the traffic police—I do not know anything of the problems of the Main Roads Commission—I believe that, if the scheme were adopted whereby a black and white number plate was used one year, and a white and black the following year—these are the most visible colours at a distance—it would be an easy matter at the beginning of each year to discover whether a motorist had been to the office of the Main Roads Commission at the beginning of the year and renewed his

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license. The traffic police would thus be better able to control motor traffic.

Mention has been made of the report of the Commissioner of Public Health, and of the birth and death rates mentioned therein. Hon. members must recognise that the low birth rate is a natural corollary of the higher death rate. The report of Dr. A. Jefferis Turner, the director of infant welfare for Queensland, shows that Queensland is registering good progress in relation to its child welfare work. In New Zealand most of the deaths of infants occur in the winter months, and are due to bronchial and pulmonary infections. On the other hand, in Queensland the mortality is greater in summer due to diarrhoeal infections. The work of the baby clinic has been very successful. In connection with the 20,000 births which took place last year, the clinics were visited by 6,000 mothers. Considering the short time the work has been in progress, that is an excellent record. The system is being instituted in Rockhampton and Townsville, and it is hoped to provide clinic nurses with small motor cars to facilitate their visiting a greater number of cases. The figures for Brisbane show that direct results are being obtained. Take summer diarrhoea, from which unfortunately thirty infants died in Rockhampton last year. A significant feature of the work of the baby clinic is contained in the report of the local medical officer, who states that not one of the thirty deaths registered was in respect of a case which had been brought to the clinic for advice. On every occasion on which a baby was brought to the clinic and the mother was advised to seek medical advice immediately, no death resulted.

The hon. member for Queenton read into the report of the Commissioner of Public Health the failure of the health department of the Brisbane City Council. I do not want that to go unchallenged, because I believe that the council is embarking upon a scheme of health work that will have good results.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

THE HOME SECRETARY: I believe the council is tackling the true functions of local authority health work in a manner that must reflect itself in benefit to the whole community. Prior to the advent of the Greater Brisbane Council, many of the local authorities had no inspectorial work except that which was done spasmodically by the Government Health Department. The council's scheme is a comprehensive one, which will take some time to finalise; but I believe that once that stage is reached it will be a most profitable work from the point of view of the ratepayers.

THE CHAIRMAN: It appears to me to be almost impossible to allow each of these votes to be discussed on its merits. Consequently I intend on the vote for "Chief Office" to allow the widest possible discussion without prejudice to any other vote appearing in the Estimates of the Home Department; and then hon. members will be confined to the strictest relevancy of all votes following that for the Chief Office. This is simply a trial, and it depends on the amount of latitude taken by hon. members as to whether the experiment is continued with respect to other departments.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*): I listened with interest to the reply of the Home Secretary to the statement I made last night in

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reference to the pollution of the Brisbane River. It is of such great importance that I certainly make no apology for bringing it under the notice of the hon. gentleman. The hon. gentleman says that the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board is considering this scheme, and he hopes that before very long some desirable solution will be arrived at. This is a matter that brooks no delay. We have the reports of the responsible officers of the department, and the Commissioner for Public Health states that a condition does exist there that is a discredit to the community. He states that the stream is polluted. I am not foolish enough to think that this state of things can be remedied in a minute, but we must not forget that it has been going on for some time, and the evidence submitted warrants the statements made in the public press and my bringing the matter before the Chamber.

The hon. member for Queenton drew attention to the Greater Brisbane Council and its lack of attention to health matters. In reply, the Home Secretary stated that the condition of things that obtained now amongst local authorities did not obtain formerly. As an old local authority man I resent that. I say undoubtedly that the Brisbane City Council, prior to the constitution of the Greater Brisbane Council, had its health officers, who were subject to the Commissioner for Public Health, who, if they had not done their duty, would have been dealt with by that gentleman, and, if they had been guilty of breaking any of the laws, he must have been wanting in his duty if they were not "towelled up." They were not "towelled up," so that disposes of that argument of the Home Secretary.

I want to draw attention to the serious position we have arrived at in Brisbane and outside districts in connection with motor transport. Every year attention has been drawn to motor cyclists, with no silencers on their machines, being allowed to race about our streets and outside districts like a lot of wild men, both early in the morning and late at night, and the Minister has promised that something will be done in the matter. Here we are in another session, and nothing has yet been done. Undoubtedly the way in which some of these young men race about on their motor cycles is a menace to the community.

THE SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: You cannot silence them when you cannot get hold of them.

Mr. MAXWELL: No. I am not blaming the police, because I realise that it would be necessary to have a tremendous number of police in order to catch these individuals. So far as my electorate is concerned, the police are doing their work well, but there is an insufficient number to secure the necessary prosecutions. The police are an earnest body of men, courteous and obliging, doing their work well.

There is another point I wish to refer to, and that is the absolute danger of the searchlights on motor cars, as the hon. member for Murrumba called them during the debate last night. I have been in a motor car on various occasions, and it has been a great wonder to me that some serious accident has not happened. I venture to say that such an accident will happen sooner or later.

I have known occasions going along the River road from Toowong when the lights have been so glaring that it has been an impossibility for the man in whose car I have been travelling to see where he was going. Something should be done for the protection of the public in connection with the dimming of lights; and I hope the Commissioner of Police will issue some instructions to provide for the safety of the public, who have some rights in this matter. Our motor car proprietors have some rights; but there are some people who walk about our streets who seem to think they own the streets, just like some of the motor car proprietors do, which is not fair. If steps are taken in the way I have indicated, serious accidents may be avoided.

The push bike may not appear to be of serious account, but it also is a menace in the streets, as some of the machines have no bells on them.

Mr. BEDFORD: Some of the motor trucks have not got horns. The motor trucks are the greatest danger of the lot.

Mr. MAXWELL: I agree with the hon. member. The other day I was standing on the kerbing at the corner of Edward and Adelaide streets when I had a narrow escape from being run down by a push bike, and the usual Australian term of endearment was given to me by the person who was riding the bike. These persons should be punished if they have not got a bell on the machine. They seem to be running the roads in the metropolitan area, and, unless some drastic treatment is resorted to, we shall have some very serious accidents.

I congratulate the police on the excellent work they are doing with the number of men available. I understood the Home Secretary to say that it was impossible to do any better with the number of men at his disposal, and that there was a big responsibility resting upon the civilian. I have waited sometimes on the footpath to cross the street expecting to see people knocked down by motor trucks. It is necessary that these individuals should be told that it is time to stop, that they do not run the earth, and that other citizens have rights just as well as they have.

Mr. WRIGHT (*Bulimba*): I have been very much interested in the debate in connection with traffic problems. I am one of those who up to a very short time ago had 100 per cent. sympathy for the pedestrian, but recently my opinion has been somewhat divided. I have now a car, and, as a result of my experience in driving through the metropolitan area, my sympathies have become somewhat mixed. Whilst I still retain a fair percentage of sympathy for the pedestrian, some of my sympathy certainly goes out towards the motor driver. The hon. member for Oxley last night struck a good note in connection with the "jay walking" which takes place in the city of Brisbane to-day. Anyone who has been in the capital cities in the South will know that the traffic authorities there have taken fairly drastic action in connection with this "jay walking" problem. There is no doubt that the measures which have been taken in Melbourne and Adelaide have added to the security of pedestrians very considerably, and that without any serious inconvenience either to pedestrians or to motor or other forms of transport. If the

traffic officers gave consideration to the excellent methods which have been adopted in the Southern cities, they [11.30 a.m.] would do much to remove "jay walking" in our principal streets, and thereby remove a good many of the dangers which confront our pedestrians.

Several hon. members have made reference to the dangerous corner leading to Stanley street in South Brisbane. There is no doubt that there is a considerable danger to pedestrians there, and my suggestion would be that the traffic authorities should consider the question of moving the tramway stopping place. At present trams stop just round the corner in a position which hardly gives to motorists or other drivers of vehicular traffic a clear view of the street. If the stop were moved a few yards further along Stanley street, I think the difficulties would be relieved to a large extent.

Mention has also been made of tail lights on motor cars. Personally I find no inconvenience in having to get out of the car and switch on my tail light at the back, but I would suggest in this connection the provision of a tell-tale light on the dashboard near the ignition switch, to be operated by the same switch as the tail light, so that the driver would know at once by the fact that the light in the front of the car was not burning, that his tail light also was out. I have this in my own car, and, although I have to get out to switch on my tail light in accordance with the regulations, the same operation lights the little light near the ignition switch automatically at the same time, and acts as a tell-tale against my tail light.

Another matter to which serious consideration ought to be given is the question of glaring headlights. If there is one thing which requires attention in connection with motor accidents, it is this. Glaring headlights are not necessary.

Mr. BRAND: That is all right in the city.

Mr. WRIGHT: They are a continual danger not only to pedestrians but also to any other traffic on the road. I feel sure that the hon. member for Quentton and the hon. member for Kennedy, who drive home nightly with me, will agree that whenever we meet glaring headlights it is almost impossible for the driver of the car to see his road ahead. The effect of approaching glaring headlights is to throw a dark shadow over the track in front of you, and not until the other car has met and passed you do you get a clear view of the road ahead. In fact, if you are at all careful and consider the safety of yourself and those with you it is always necessary to slow down, particularly on any road outside the city where there are no overhead lights.

Another matter affecting traffic problems to which some attention has been given is the speed of motor cars. I refer more particularly to outside districts, and not to the areas in close proximity to the city. There is a tremendous amount of traffic nightly on the road from Brisbane to Sandgate and on the road from Brisbane to Wynnum and Manly—two very good roads. I am continually on the Brisbane to Manly road, and am quite sure of my facts. It is quite a common occurrence to encounter cars travelling along this road nightly at a rate of from 30 miles to 40 miles per hour and even at a higher rate of speed. They are a constant worry, and give the careful driver on either of these

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roads a most anxious time. These "speed hogs" should be severely dealt with. Personally I would abolish the glaring headlights altogether, because I deem them to be unnecessary.

Mr. BRAND: They are necessary in the country.

Mr. WRIGHT: I do not think there is the slightest need for them within the Brisbane City Council area, and even in the country I do not think there is the necessity for the strong rays of light that are emitted by some cars.

Mr. FARRELL: I would like to take you over some of the roads outside the metropolitan area.

Mr. WRIGHT: I have driven my little 'bus over some of the roughest roads that I have seen anywhere in Australia.

Mr. LLEWELYN: You do not know what bad roads are if you say that the present headlights are not needed.

Mr. WRIGHT: I have been over some very bad roads, and I fail to see that glaring headlights are necessary, bad as the roads may be. There is no necessity for a brilliant light which has a blinding effect on approaching motorists.

Mr. CORSER: Drive from here to Gympie at night.

Mr. BRAND: After 2 inches of rain.

Mr. WRIGHT: The Minister and other hon. members have referred to the control of the health of the community which is exercised by the Brisbane City Council. The Minister eulogised the work that has been done by the council in that connection; but my experience of the Brisbane City Council in its control of the health of the community has not been such as would permit me honestly to eulogise it this morning. There existed in my electorate a very glaring nuisance which was given some prominence for some months by means of agitation by myself and by Alderman Harrison, the alderman for the area, who drew attention to the matter at council meetings. I approached the Commissioner of Public Health, and the agitation in connection with this rotten nuisance existing in a very nice locality in the Bulimba electorate continued for some months. It was not until the "Truth" newspaper devoted a full front page and quite a number of photographs to this nuisance—that this so-called paper manufacturing industry—that the Brisbane City Council officers eventually saw fit to take action. I strongly resent the delay on the part of any Health Department, whether controlled by the Government or by the Brisbane City Council, because health is a matter of supreme importance to the community. This particular individual was living in outrageous, evil, dirty conditions amongst filthy matter right alongside quite a number of very decent residences, and his undertaking constituted a menace to the neighbourhood by way of fire. His business was the collection of used or waste paper from the city, packing the paper that might be useful, and selling it to the various confectionery houses in the city for the wrapping of lollies. This matter was brought under the notice of the Health Department by myself. The paper that was not used was simply stacked in a heap alongside his camp and burnt; but on two different occasions the fire station in my district had to answer calls in connection with the ignition of the fences of neighbours. This

went on for four or five months before any definite action was taken by the Brisbane City Council. There need have been no delay. I submit that the City Council had full authority under its ordinances to clear up that mess without any delay whatever. Consequently, I cannot associate myself with the Home Secretary's eulogy of the operations of the City Council's health department. I hope, at any rate, that its methods will be quicker and more efficient for the future.

The HOME SECRETARY: You must remember that the scheme has been in operation for a short period only, and it takes time to operate properly.

Mr. WRIGHT: I do not know that that affects the matter, because a definite complaint, supported by photographs and a newspaper article, was brought under their notice before they acted in respect to this flea-ridden bag hut, where indecencies occurred to the annoyance of neighbours. I do not know whether it was necessary for the scheme to be in full operation before they took action.

I desire, also, to make some reference to fire brigade matters. Quite a number of hon. members—particularly representatives of metropolitan constituencies—are interested in these matters. As one of the representatives of the Government on the Fire Brigades Board, it is only proper that I should say, for the benefit of hon. members, that the board has given serious consideration to a further extension of the fire district of Brisbane, particularly in the direction of the Enoggera electorate. Arrangements have been made for the extension of the fire district to what is known as No. 1 ward of the shire of Enoggera. Provision has been made in this year's estimates for the establishment in that ward of a fire brigade station, together with the necessary men and equipment. The hon. member for Enoggera can assure the people in that district that everything possible is being done to satisfy their request. We receive a good many requests from various associations in the metropolitan districts asking us to extend the boundaries of the fire district. These are always investigated by the members of the board, who also ask for and obtain a report by the chief officer. In many cases we find little or no justification for the extension of the district, and that such an extension would only result in greater charges on the local authorities and the insurance companies concerned, without securing any adequate benefit in return.

I also desire to stress carelessness in the use of petrol shown by some people who ought to know better. Last year the fire brigade had several serious fires resulting from downright carelessness in handling petrol. A short time ago we had an instance of a man associated with the petrol trade emptying petrol at night from a large container into an open vessel by the aid of a hurricane lamp. Of course, the most natural thing happened—an explosion and a fairly serious fire followed. How that man managed to escape being blown to smithereens I do not know. There have been several cases of men carelessly handling petrol and serious fires resulting. Some householders are also very careless in handling petrol, and the fire brigade has had quite a number of calls to suppress fires caused through petrol used for cleaning purposes in the household being placed too close to a naked light. I mention these matters this morning so that the public

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may be informed, through "Hansard" and the press, of the serious consequences attendant upon the careless handling of petrol. The fire brigade authorities wish to impress upon all users of petrol that they can do much to assist to prevent outbreaks of fire by the careful handling of a commodity which might be considered even more dangerous than dynamite.

HON. J. G. APPEL: What about persons smoking near petrol bowisers?

MR. WRIGHT: That also is dangerous. In quite a number of the garages in the city, not only those associated with the garage but also visitors may be seen smoking in close proximity to places where petrol is stored. There is a general carelessness on the part of the public in the handling of this most useful and beneficial, but, at the same time, most dangerous commodity.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): The discussion so far has been particularly interesting. I think the Home Secretary is perfectly correct when he says that the provision that is made during the busy hours in Stanley street, near Victoria Bridge, is very inadequate. Two policemen are stationed there during the busy hours, one to control the heavy traffic at one side of the bridge and the other to look after the motor traffic on the other side. From daily experience I am convinced that, despite the very great care that is shown by the police authorities, the crossing is a most dangerous one, for which some remedy would be welcome. It appears to me that a good thing would be to compel the pedestrian traffic to cross on the right-hand side of the bridge and get to the new building in Melbourne street before getting into the street running parallel with Stanley street. That is what I do myself, and I find it a safe way of crossing. I commend the suggestion for application to those travelling by rail, although I realise that people travelling by tram in the direction of East Brisbane may not find it the most suitable way. That crossing is not the only dangerous one in the city, because at the intersection of Albert and Ann streets there is room for improvement. Whilst a "cop" is provided there it is not sufficient to provide direction for all the traffic, seeing that traffic turning into Roma street or coming into George street cannot go round that "cop." At certain hours of the day there is a policeman there. I rose more particularly to say that that is one of the places where a policeman should be stationed in the busy times in the morning and late in the afternoon. Occasionally there is a policeman there, but not permanently, and I venture to say that it is one of the most dangerous corners in the city.

With reference to the pollution of the Brisbane River by the sewage discharged into it at Luggage Point, I fancy that the Minister will find, if he looks up the Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Act, that the original Bill made it imperative that certain treatment works were to be erected at the point of discharge.

THE HOME SECRETARY: The area is there, but nothing has been done.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The area is there right enough, but the treatment works have not been carried out. That is where the trouble is. At the time it was suggested that certain things should be done a

medical man—now deceased, so I am not going to give his name—who was much esteemed, thought that an awful mistake was made by the Water Supply and Sewerage Board in not having the sewage dumped into the river at Victoria Bridge. He said it would cost much less.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Who said that?

HON. W. H. BARNES: A medical man who is now deceased, and I do not think it right that I should give his name. This medical man came to me—I dare say the hon. member for Albert will remember—and said, "You are a business man, are you not? Now, if you are able to do something for £100,000 that will otherwise cost £500,000, what would you do as a business man?" I said, "There is only one answer. I would spend the £100,000." Then he followed it up by saying, "Then dump your refuse in the river at the bridge." When it was proposed to discharge the sewage into the river nearer the city than the present point of discharge, Mr. Cullen, the Engineer for the Harbours and Rivers, had a series of floats drifting in the river to find where they went, and quite a number of them went to the Sandgate beach and quite a number to the Wynnum beach. That is one reason why the Government of which I was a member insisted on having treatment works constructed immediately in the vicinity of the point of discharge. When the Minister tells us that nothing has been done, I can only say that I am very much surprised indeed, because it seems to me that it is vital in a growing city like ours.

At 11.53 a.m.,

MR. MAXWELL (*Toowong*), one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, relieved the Chairman in the chair.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I raise the point, as I am deeply interested in the question, and the hon. member for Sandgate is deeply interested in it, too. No one knows except those who are in the habit of frequenting the beaches how Wynnum, particularly, and Sandgate are growing; and it is most imperative from a health point of view to see that whatever is necessary is immediately carried out by the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board. I am surprised to hear that apparently nothing has been done in that direction. I am assuming that what the Minister has said is correct. I do not want to charge the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board with neglect of duty, but I understood the Minister to say that nothing had been done. If nothing has been done, it is a disgrace to those concerned. It was one of the first things that should have been tackled when the sewerage scheme came into operation.

I may say, in anticipation of what is going to follow, that the officers of the department, when approached, have been most sympathetic and have immediately taken steps to deal with matters. I emphasise that point, because I do not want to make a statement which would implicate in any way the officers of the department who have the control of operations. A returned man, a resident of Wynnum, came to me about ten days ago. He said that he had been to the hospital authorities a week before, and they had made an X-ray examination of him. When he went back a week later they told him

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that he was suffering from tuberculosis. He asked them for some medicine, but they said, "We cannot consider you because you are a returned man. You must go straight to the military authorities, who will probably give you medicine and treat you." I may say that this man had previously been discharged in good health. When he went to the military authorities, they immediately said, "We cannot take you on, because we shall then be responsible for you; you must go back to the hospital." Here was the poor unfortunate fellow driven about between the hospital and the repatriation authorities, so he came to me. I said, "This is one of the cases which must be attended to. Meet me at the Home Department." And it was there that I received the most sympathetic treatment. When I met him there, he said—and all honour to the Red Cross Society—"I did not know what to do until I met you at the time appointed, and I went to the Red Cross Society, and they said 'We will take you in.'" He did not want me to go to the Home Office to see Mr. Chuter. I said, "You must go; your case may be only typical of others." When I made representations to Mr. Chuter, he said, "This cannot be allowed to continue." He asked who was the doctor, but I did not know. Here was this unfortunate man in this country of ours, which is supposed to be sympathetic to the man who is weak and afflicted, drifting from pillar to post, and having to come to a member of Parliament to get redress. I do not know who the doctor was, and, if my statement has been verified after inquiry, that doctor ought to be brought up with a round turn, because medicine ought to be available for any man who requires it.

I have another case which has also to do with a Wynnum resident. A request was made for an inquiry, and the request was willingly granted by the Justice Department. A child was ordered away from Wynnum to the Children's Hospital. The child received every attention and care there; but, after it was there for some time, it was said to have developed some infectious disease, and was put into the infectious diseases hospital without the parents being advised. The first message they got was to say, "Come at once; your child is at the infectious hospital, and is dying." Whilst the attention at the Children's Hospital is usually perfect, it is the duty of every member of Parliament who finds that the weak in the community are not being given proper treatment to call attention to it. When the parents got to the infectious hospital, they found the child was exposed in the open and that there were other little children there, one or two of them lying in excreta with no one to attend to them. I understand that an inquiry is to be held in regard to that. The parents are going to attend that inquiry. They

[12 noon] say, "We have buried our child, but we want, if possible, to save somebody else's child." If there is any looseness, I hope that it will be remedied, whoever is responsible. My own impression is that sufficient attention was not given at the infectious diseases hospital to the children who were located there, and that they were exposed and allowed to get into a condition which is a disgrace to the community and to those who have anything to do with it; and I hope that anybody who is responsible will be brought to book.

[Hon. W. H. Barnes.]

I am interested in the lazaret. I quite recognise what is being done for those who, unfortunately, are suffering from leprosy. I am sorry to see from the report on this institution that one of the inmates who had been away for over two years had to be sent back because he had again developed the disease. Will the Home Secretary inform us whether anything has been done in the direction of providing wireless for the inmates?

The HOME SECRETARY: They prefer their own wireless sets.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Are they allowed to have individual sets?

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes; we give them to them.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I can only say that the hon. gentleman is to be congratulated upon having done that, because there is no question that these persons are prisoners—they imagine, too, that everyone is up against them—and it is essential that they should be provided with everything possible to make their lives happy. I can remember that the hon. member for Albert, who was one of the most sympathetic of Home Secretaries, even sent a dentist down there to give the inmates gold teeth.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. W. H. BARNES: I would like to ask the Home Secretary as to what conditions prevail in connection with the steamers which are allowed to go to Dunwich. The statement has been made to me—I cannot vouch for its correctness, but I am bound to bring it before the Committee—that some of them have been so plentifully supplied with spirits that on the way down and on the way back a large number of those on board were intoxicated.

The HOME SECRETARY: Do they go in Government boats?

HON. W. H. BARNES: They are said to go in Government boats; and, if so, I say that the thing is highly improper. What private people may do on their own boats, of course, is their own business.

The HOME SECRETARY: We have given instructions that, if there is any breach of the agreement under which the boat is hired, the society concerned will not be allowed to charter the steamer again.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am glad to hear that the Home Secretary is mending his ways, and that he is not permitting this to occur.

I would ask the hon. gentleman whether he considers it a fair thing that the inebriates institution at Dunwich should be so near the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum? Look at the dangers! One scarcely likes to touch upon them in debate in this Committee. The first danger is that you have amongst the inmates of the inebriates institution quite a number of young fellows who are addicted to drink. We all know that when a person is addicted to drink the drink frequently leads to other things. There you have these people planked down amidst our old people at Dunwich, and they are liable to become a nuisance. The point I specially desire to make is that, being so near to the main building, it is almost impossible to keep drink away from them when they get there. In many cases it seems that conveniences are

found for them to get drink, instead of carrying out to the fullest extent the object of putting them into a home for inebriates. I would like to ask the Home Secretary if he has given the matter any thought, and what are his intentions in connection with Dunwich. I thought that Dunwich was a place where the aged and infirm could receive special care in the evening of their lives. One can readily understand what a menace it must be to them to have near by a number of people addicted to drink who might sometimes become a nuisance. We know that it is almost impossible, no matter how careful the Home Secretary might be, to prevent drink being taken down there. It would practically be necessary to search every person who landed at Dunwich. Drink is taken by many people under the impression that they are doing a kindness to those concerned.

The question of motor tail lights has been referred to by some hon. members. Of course, it is inconvenient for a man to have to get out of his car and light his tail light; but the fact remains that there are some people who will break the law, and, as is the case with all other laws, the man who will do the right thing has to pay the penalty for the other fellow. There are some motorists who cannot be too severely dealt with for the way in which they break the law from time to time. If the department considers it necessary to have the tail lights controlled in the way they are to-day, then we must bow to the inevitable, and, as in other cases, conform to our duty.

THE HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, *Mount Morgan*): I wish to reply to the question raised by the hon. member for Wynnum in connection with drinking on the boat plying to Dunwich. So far as my knowledge goes, on only one occasion that the boat was chartered was there any excessive drinking. When the matter was brought under my notice, definite instructions were given to the captain and crew that any breach of the agreement under which the boat was chartered would mean that the offending society could not secure the boat again.

I quite recognise that Dunwich is not a suitable place for the care of inebriates. I question very much whether the policy of permitting these people to remain at Dunwich is a wise one, because, if you are merely going to treat the inebriates to a sojourn at Dunwich to build them up physically to enable them to come back to get drunk again—which they usually do—then you are not going to get anywhere with the supposed reform of these sufferers.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I think the trouble is that they get drink whilst they are there.

THE HOME SECRETARY: They get treatment. The institution I have in mind is one where they would be subject to greater discipline than they can be subject to under the conditions prevailing to-day. For some time I have been thinking along the lines of an institution that will serve that purpose and will work in with certain ideas that I have in regard to prison reform for the housing of men imprisoned for failing to meet payments under maintenance orders—men who are not criminals in the strict sense of the word, but are imprisoned because of some domestic trouble. I am still conferring with officers of the department in an endeavour more effectively to solve the problem of dealing with this class of people.

MR. CORSER (*Burnett*): This vote affords an opportunity for discussing the policy of the Government in regard to the carrying on of our public hospitals. Under the Hospitals Act which was recently passed by the Government provision is made for the establishment of a board to take charge of the administration of the hospitals in a district created under the Act. That board was to be constituted by representatives of the local authorities, contributors to the hospital, and representatives of the Government. Without in any way wishing to say anything against or to refer to the personnel of the representatives of the Government, I am going to show that the outcome of this Act has meant in many districts the Government control of our hospitals. The Central Burnett Hospital Board is composed of nine representatives. Five of these are nominees of the Government, who were not elected at a meeting of the residents, or by the local authorities. Their appointment was suggested by the Labour organisation in one centre of that great district. The intention of the Government was to have these institutions democratically controlled so that the people concerned would have an opportunity of nominating or electing a certain number of the representatives; but the policy adopted by the Home Department falls far short of the democratic control that the people hoped to get when the Act was passed. When the Bill was before Parliament the Opposition made some very strong representations with respect to some aspects of the measure; but it never entered the mind of any hon. member that these boards would be constituted by a majority of Government nominees, instead of by representatives elected by the people concerned. It would not be so bad if the local authorities were able to suggest the Government's nominees, and allow the Minister to choose from the names selected. We have three hospitals in the Central Burnett Hospital Board district. One is at Gayndah, where there is also a local authority; one is situated at Mundubbera, where there is also a local authority; and one at Biggenden, where there is also a local authority. There are no Government representatives from either of these two lastnamed areas. The five representatives of the Government were nominated, not by the local authorities in the centre, but by the Labour organisation in Gayndah. The desire of the electors to control their interests was flouted. The result is that the Government nominees are in a five to four majority on that board. Very strong exception was taken to this course of action at a public meeting held in Gayndah, and I have received the following letter in connection with that meeting:—

* * * * *

“Attached herewith is a copy of several resolutions that were unanimously carried at a well-attended and representative meeting held in Gayndah on Saturday, the 28th instant.

“That this meeting of ratepayers enters an emphatic protest against the present constitution of the Central Burnett Hospitals Board, and urges the Minister responsible to make provision for a more equitable representation.”

There are four representatives of the local authorities on that board—two from Biggenden and two from Mundubbera. The electors of Gayndah have no representatives, because the five Government nominees

Mr. Corser.]

coming from that centre naturally meant that the local authorities in the other two centres would co-operate to secure the election of two representatives each of the remaining four. The effect is that the largest centre has no local authority representative, and no representative of the ratepayers sits on the board from any of the districts. The Act provides that the board shall be constituted of nominees of the Government, the local authorities, and the contributors. When the board had been in operation twelve months and compulsory payments were made there were naturally no contributors, in the sense that the Minister considered contributors to be those who had donated not less than a guinea per year; but surely, if the contributors were entitled to representation, there is also justification for the ratepayers demanding representation, seeing that they contribute £40 of every £100 collected by the board. The Minister should extend the provisions of the Act to bring the ratepayers within the ambit of representation.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Has not the local authority a representative?

Mr. CORSER: One local authority has no representative.

Mr. BRAND: The Australian Labour Party controls the hospital boards.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Rubbish!

Mr. CORSER: In addition to the five Government nominees, there are four local authority representatives to be elected by three shire councils.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Those are the councils within the hospital area.

Mr. CORSER: One of the shire councils has received no representation because that is the centre from which the five Government nominees were drawn. The other local authorities decided that they would each vote for two so that their districts would have at least two of the nine representatives on the board. Whilst that was quite a wise thing to do, the Minister never should have placed the district in that position. That is not the only place where this policy has meant Government control of a board—Government control, not by people who are representative of the various interests of the district but by people of one little centre. I hope the Minister will amend the Acts, so as either to give the people control or else to institute national control, which is the policy of the Labour Party. It is wrong and undemocratic to allow no representation to the ratepayers who contribute 40 per cent. of the funds necessary to run the hospitals, and sooner than perpetuate a system of administration by Government nominees it would be better to come out with a bold policy of nationalisation of hospitals, and the Government find all the money.

Mr. DASH: You are learning.

Mr. CORSER: Your party is receding, because your policy was nationalisation, yet you force people to subscribe and then deny them control.

There is something further in the protest from this public meeting. The second resolution reads—

"That the Government be requested to cease making the farmers the principal victims of the local expenses of hospitals and make the charge truly democratic by

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imposing an equal tax on every male eligible to vote at local authority elections (many of whom are far better able to pay than the farmers)."

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: This is the first time you have opposed the tax.

Mr. CORSER: It is not the first occasion on which we have opposed it in this Chamber. When the Bill was going through the Opposition strenuously opposed the provision that only one section of the people should be called upon to pay. The only people who contribute this tax are the ratepayers in the local authority districts. Why should they be singled out in this way? They are not the only people who enjoy the privileges of attending the hospitals.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Who supported the hospitals under the old system?

Mr. CORSER: Anybody might pay under the old system, but under the Act you compel one section only to pay. Because the land is the instrument from which this individual makes his living, you tax him. You do not tax the man in a bank, who can use the hospital without being compelled to contribute.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He must pay his fees.

Mr. CORSER: So must the farmer. He contributes both ways, and he cannot get out of it, either. If he is not sick he has to pay, and if he is sick he still pays. He is in a most unfortunate position. Take the case of a man who probably has a little seaside resort in another local authority area, or the man who has probably dry country in another local authority area. He may have land in three local authority areas, and he has to pay three different local authority contributions to the hospital.

Mr. LLEWELYN: He can afford to pay.

Mr. CORSER: Not necessarily. He could not afford to pay in the first instance I mentioned. Why should he be called upon to pay three different contributions any more than the carpenter, who uses his tools, or the man who drives a quill? I appeal to the Minister to introduce an amending Bill providing that all those who are in a position to pay shall contribute to our hospitals. There is nothing hard about that. The hon. gentleman should get away from the old idea that the man who owns a bit of land is the man who has always to pay, while the other man gets off scot free.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He contributes through the 60 per cent. found by the Treasurer. You people always say that he pays no taxes.

Mr. CORSER: So does the producer. The producer contributes most of the taxes.

The HOME SECRETARY: You say he never gets enough income to pay any taxes.

Mr. CORSER: Then he has to find the money or be pushed off the land. I have a letter in my pocket now from a man who was pushed off the land because he could not pay his taxes. He is taxed by the Government by way of rent, and he has to pay local authority taxes too. He has to pay all the taxes. I appeal to the Minister to remove this anomaly that exists in the Hospitals Act. We desire the Minister to constitute new hospital districts. I agree that under the old system the position became intolerable, as

country hospitals could not get on with a Government subsidy of £2 for every £1 contributed locally.

I am with the people in the Eidsvold division of my electorate in asking for a board, owing to the conditions which exist there at the present time. It is to be hoped that ere long reason will prevail and the desired amendments will be made in the Act.

MR. LLEWELYN: It has been a great success.

MR. CORSER: It has not been such a great success; but so far as the financing of the hospitals goes, it is a wonderful relief to the committees, as the hospital staffs have been able to depend on having money available to assist them in the care of the sick. The present system has much to recommend it from that point of view; but it is unfair with regard to taxation and representation. If the Minister wants to have a fair system of representation, he should allow the local authorities to appoint their representatives as well as the Government.

MR. BRAND: The local authority members are elected.

MR. CORSER: The local authority representatives are chosen for the board.

THE HOME SECRETARY: What is wrong with that?

MR. CORSER: That is right; but what is wrong is the fact that the ratepayer has no representation on the board.

THE HOME SECRETARY: The local authority representative is a ratepayer.

MR. CORSER: Not necessarily. The members of local authorities are not elected on a ratepayers' vote, but on the universal franchise. As the Minister knows, in the first year one representative of the subscribers is appointed on each board. If the ratepayer is a subscriber, why not give him representation? Why ask for a majority of Government representatives on the hospital boards?

THE HOME SECRETARY: I do not.

MR. CORSER: The hon. gentleman has got it—five against four.

THE HOME SECRETARY: I have not got any in Brisbane.

MR. CORSER: Not in Brisbane, but out in the country the hon. gentleman has it. He has got it in Gympie, Maryborough, Bundaberg, and Rockhampton.

THE HOME SECRETARY: Not where there are any subscribers.

MR. CORSER: Are not the local authority ratepayers subscribers?

THE HOME SECRETARY: They get representation.

MR. CORSER: They do not. The man who has a good job and lives in somebody else's home gets representation.

THE HOME SECRETARY: He pays rent.

MR. CORSER: He does not pay rent. The hon. gentleman might as well say that a man in the city area pays rent in the Burnett district. I have had many protests from conferences of local producers' associations in my district, which have passed resolutions similar to the one I have read. It is a burning question in our country districts, and I hope the Minister will give some attention to it.

MR. BRAND (*Burrum*): This is one of the most important departments we have to consider. The total vote from revenue for this department is £1,529,659. I do not think any hon. member will cavil at the moderate amount of £7,852 put down for the Chief Office. There is an excellent body of officers connected with the Home Secretary's Department, and they deserve every credit for the manner in which they conduct the various institutions under their control. Most of them are charitable institutions in connection with which no revenue is derived.

There are many carrying out a great work of social welfare in Queensland, but I think there is room for still further improvement.

The Home Department covers a [12.30 p.m.] great number of activities, but I do not see any provision being made for widows' pensions, as was promised at the last election. Evidently the Government are not going to keep their promise and give to those who really should have some assistance something by which to enable them to live. I hope that before this Parliament expires the Minister will urge upon his Cabinet the desirableness of fulfilling the promise he made at the last election and establish a widows' pension fund from which women who are left without the support of their breadwinners can receive something from the State to enable them to live in comfort.

Reference has been made, mostly by city members, to glaring headlights on motor cars and the necessity for abolishing them. I can quite understand that, in city constituencies, such headlights are a nuisance and that they are unnecessary, but for country travelling it is essential to have strong lights on motor cars, and I hope that, if the Home Secretary intends to do anything in regard to the question, he will not abolish glaring headlights to the detriment of country motorists, but will apply his regulation only to Brisbane and other centres.

I would like to make a few remarks following on those of the hon. member for Burnett. Of all the matters administered by the Home Department, that which mostly concerns the residents of my electorate is the hospital tax. When the hospitals boards were established it was earnestly believed that the Home Secretary would not introduce political prejudices into the administration of the Act. All citizens who take an active interest in charitable institutions—and they are many—believe that all political feeling should be banished from their management. Before the hospital tax was enforced on the community—in my district at any rate—these institutions were controlled by men and women of various shades of political thought. Every encouragement was given to people with different political views to take an active interest in the management of our hospitals. It was then the desire of the people to elect to the committees the most capable and sympathetic persons who could be secured. In the Bundaberg district the general hospital was controlled by a body of men, the majority of whom were well known to be anti-Labour in politics but that did not prevent them from appointing as chairman of their finance committee a man who is well known in Labour politics and has taken an active part in the Labour movement, Mr. G. W. Martens, now president of the Australian Workers' Union. He was selected as chairman of that committee because of his ability and his qualifications

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for the position. His political beliefs did not count. Now we find a different state of affairs prevailing.

Since the creation of the Bundaberg hospital district the Minister has exercised political prejudice in nominating members to the board. In fact, the nominations to the Bundaberg Hospital Board have not been made by the Minister, but by the Bundaberg branch of the Australian Labour Party. They have even taken plebiscites in Bundaberg to decide who shall be the Government representatives on the board. These names have been submitted to the Minister, who, contrary to his better thoughts I believe, has appointed these men. I take strong exception to the manner in which Government appointments have been made to the board. The district embraces my electorate, and my people are very much concerned about the matter. It has been recognised by most people that there should be continuity of policy in hospital administration. Many of the members who constituted the old board in that district—members not associated with politics—approached the Home Secretary with a desire to maintain continuity of policy on that board. They made certain recommendations to him of which he did not approve. The first board in the Bundaberg district consisted of three local authority representatives, three representatives of the subscribers and various institutions, and three Government nominees. This board held office for three years. Last year a new board was necessary, and, as was to be expected, there were no further subscriptions to the institution, therefore there could be no representatives of subscribers on the board. The Home Secretary decided that the future board should consist of four local authority representatives and five Government nominees, the object being for the Government to secure full control of the board, and use it, I am sorry to say, for political purposes.

Mr. LLEWELYN: That is not true.

Mr. BRAND: It was generally known that the Government nominees to the Bundaberg Hospital Board had to be men who were likely to take part in future plebiscites in connection with the Bundaberg electorate.

Mr. LLEWELYN: There is no objection to Labour people having representation.

Mr. BRAND: I have certainly no objection to Labour people having representation on the board. I say that definitely. Before the Hospitals Act was passed, Labour people had representation on the board, and took a very important part in the conduct of the institution. But I do object to the majority of the members being drawn entirely from a political organisation. If the policy of the present Home Secretary were to be adhered to, any future anti-Labour Government would practically have to decide that no man of Labour thought should be given a seat on any hospital board.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: That is what it amounted to before this Government came into power.

Mr. BRAND: That is not so.

The HOME SECRETARY: Do you say that I would turn a deaf ear to the advice of my officers?

Mr. BRAND: No. It is generally recognised that the Government secure representation on the various boards by the appointment of public servants as Government nominees.

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It was never intended that Government representatives should be appointed for political purposes.

Mr. LLEWELYN: That was always the case in the past.

Mr. BRAND: It was never intended by the Liberal Government. I maintain that the welfare of the hospitals is not being maintained by appointments of this sort.

Mr. WEIR: You will alter them when you get into power.

Mr. BRAND: When our Government reach the Treasury benches they will give consideration to all parties, recognising that charitable institutions should have the support of all the people.

Mr. WEIR: I never knew a Labour man to represent your Government.

Mr. BRAND: Then the hon. member knows very little of the activities of the previous Governments with respect to hospital administration.

Mr. WEIR: Don't forget that I know all about the Government representation on the grammar school trusts.

Mr. BRAND: I can point to many instances in my electorate where the previous Government appointed Labour men to hospital boards.

Mr. WEIR: Give me one instance.

Mr. BRAND: The Childers-Isis hospital.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BRAND: With the hon. member for Burnett, I consider that, as the local authorities are responsible for 40 per cent. of the expenditure of these boards, and as they are the elected representatives of the community they should have greater representation than the Government on these boards. Local authority representatives have to submit themselves triennially for election, and, if the people elect these representatives, they must necessarily be a body of men in whom the people have trust.

Mr. LLEWELYN: Don't you think the welfare of the sick should be the first consideration?

Mr. BRAND: Certainly; but so far as the Bundaberg Hospital Board is concerned, I am satisfied that the Home Secretary does not take that into consideration when making his appointments.

Mr. WEIR: He would if he appointed your crowd.

Mr. BRAND: The first consideration of the Government is whether the Government nominees are members of the political machine. It is absurd that the political machine should first conduct the plebiscite as to who should represent it on the board before the Home Secretary gazettes the nominees. The Home Secretary himself should make the nominations. We know that strong representations were made by the Australian Workers' Union at Bundaberg that the services of Mr. H. A. Cattermull, the chairman of the first Bundaberg hospital board, should be retained when the board was again being constituted; but as a result of a decision at a meeting at which eight were present, the secretary of the Bundaberg branch of the Australian Labour Party recommended to the Government that, in

view of the past political record of Mr. Cattermull, that he be not reappointed, notwithstanding that he gave entire satisfaction to the Minister as chairman. The Minister knows that to be a fact. Mr. Cattermull placed the Bundaberg Hospital Board on a sound administrative basis. What has happened since? There are continuous bickerings on the board because the representatives of the Government and the local authority are at variance in political thought. The board has gone so far as to purchase a motor car and paint it red. They have also painted the exterior of a building red. I suppose their next step will be to paint the interior of the buildings red, to show that they are true representatives of a Labour Government. The Hospitals Act was not brought in for that purpose at all. Since these boards have come under the control of Labour men they have become very extravagant. When Labour comes into control of any government, or semi-government body, the expenditure immediately rises. We were told when the Bundaberg Hospital Board was created that the local authority rate for the maintenance of the hospital in that district would be under 1d. in the £1.

Mr. WEIR: We were told the same.

Mr. BRAND: The rate is now up to 1½d. The department should be most careful, when establishing a hospital district, to inform the people what the cost to them is going to be.

The HOME SECRETARY: Where did you get that figure from?

Mr. BRAND: From the last rate notices that were sent out. The board recognises that the rate this year will be higher. It is going up every year. I am sorry that the Minister did not carry out the desires of responsible men in Bundaberg, who had no political thought in the matter, and insist on the nomination of a man who carried out his duties in the interests of the Bundaberg Hospital Board and of suffering humanity.

Mr. CLAYTON (*Wide Bay*): The position of our hospitals and of the hospitals districts generally is most unjust and unfair. For example, in the Maryborough and Gympie hospital district there is no community of interest in connection with a part of the area which is in the Maryborough district, although situated within 9 miles of the Gympie hospital. That is a position which I am hoping will be altered as a result of the report of the Royal Commission on the boundaries of local authorities. Something certainly should be done to see that people who subscribe to a district hospital are brought into touch with that hospital.

The hon. member for Burrum and the hon. member for Burnett dealt very fully with the representation on the hospital boards. I agree that it is unjust to have a majority of Government representatives on those boards. A truer representation is that of the local authorities, who reflect the opinion of the people in the district. There are men on these hospital boards who are not giving careful consideration to the matter of finance. Some time ago Mr. Chuter visited Gympie to inquire into the formation of a board there. According to "Truth" of 16th September, 1925, he stated that the expenditure of the Gympie hospital, not including the ambulance, for the year 1923-1924 was £6,133. Then in the Gympie "Times" of 12th

November last Councillor Bryan, the representative of the Noosa shire, estimates the expenditure for the next twelve months at £8,468, which represents an increase of £2,335 on the figure for 1923-1924, and is an indication of the tremendous increase in the expenditure necessary for the maintenance of the Gympie hospital. In 1923-1924 the amount estimated to be received from local authorities was £1,232, whereas the estimate for next year is £1,774, and from all sources other than the Government and the local authorities £3,015, and £1,660 from the Government. The local authorities in the Gympie district—the Gympie, Kilkivan, Widgee, and Noosa shire councils—will have to contribute £1,774, which is an increase of £542 as compared with the period when Mr. Chuter visited the district. That amount of £1,774 will be contributed in the following proportions:—

	£
Gympie	191
Kilkivan	639
Widgee	529
Noosa	415

That shows that the municipality of Gympie, where there is a greater population than there is in the shire of Kilkivan, will contribute less than one-third of the amount contributed by Kilkivan. That is an instance of where the man on the land is going to be hit in connection with the health of the community. The settler in the Kilkivan district has just recently suffered very severely owing to drought and poor markets. He is having a very bad spin; he is working long hours, yet the Government are going to compel him to pay a higher rate for the upkeep of the health of the community than a person living in the city.

Now take the number of properties and average value in these two local authorities—

	No.	Average Value.
Gympie Municipality ...	1,933	76
Kilkivan Shire Council	1,049	511

Therefore, on the average, the Kilkivan property-owner has to pay seven times more than the person living in the Gympie area. That shows how unfair the Act is, and I ask the Government seriously to consider an amendment of the Hospitals Act to provide that each person shall contribute to the hospitals on an income basis and not according to the value of the land that he may own. In many cases they do not own the land. They are merely occupiers, and under the Local Authorities Act the occupier has to find the taxation. The present system is very unjust.

When Mr. Chuter came to Maryborough he informed the people at the meeting he addressed there that he estimated the rate in connection with the Maryborough Hospital would be 0.65d. in the £1. But, according to Mr. Demaine, the chairman of the hospital board, this year they will have to increase the rate to 1½d. in the £1. That is a tremendous increase. The people in the country cannot stand such an increase.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Where did you get that statement about Maryborough?

Mr. CLAYTON: I got it from Mr. Demaine's remarks, who has gone fully into the matter, and the statement appears in

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the Maryborough "Chronicle" of 15th November of this year. The article is headed—

"MODERNISING THE HOSPITAL.

"ALDERMAN DEMAINÉ OUTLINES THE PROPOSALS.

"Further Plans to be Prepared.

"Big Increase in Local Authority Rate."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That is for additional hospital accommodation.

Mr. CLAYTON: The increase in rates is in connection with the building of a new hospital, but the people on the land are not in a position to meet this increased taxation.

Take No. 6 division in the Burrum Shire, which is in the Maryborough hospital district area. In that division, on a high valuation, we have a general rate of 6d. in the £1, a health rate of 1½d., a Main Roads Board rate of 2½d., and a Granville bridge rate of 1s. 3d. in the £1. How are these people going to stay on the land and meet that taxation? There are other divisions with similar taxation, and there is also a benefited area rated for the Granville bridge. The country people are now paying what we might term rents in connection with their land instead of rates, as formerly.

I want to deal with the question of the money which has been borrowed for an up-to-date hospital in Maryborough. According to a press report, Mr. Demainé stated—

"In the first place the Government would have paid the £45,000 involved in the Works Department tender without a murmur. The board modified its plans, and the job was to be done by tender for £28,000."

The Department of Public Works estimated that it would cost £45,000 to build a new hospital, doctor's residence, and other things in connection with the scheme. Mr. Demainé called tenders for the construction of the hospital, and afterwards made the statement I have just quoted. He has gone very carefully into the matter. He wants a more up-to-date hospital, and intends to incur a further expenditure of somewhere about £16,000 with which to provide an electric lift, a large kitchen, a hospital laundry, and an ambulance building. The present ambulance building is to be sold, and new board offices are to be established in the main street in Maryborough for the convenience of the secretary of the board. It seems remarkable that the estimate of the Department of Public Works should be so high, and that the work can be done by contract for so much less. Why did the department draw up such elaborate plans, which were not needed?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It is for the hospital committee to say what plans they want—not the Department of Public Works.

Mr. CLAYTON: The committee refused to accept the plans of the department. They then got into touch with a private contractor, who drew up a plan which, if adopted, would have effected a saving of £12,000. The department should give consideration to the matter of getting tenders from contractors, instead of proceeding on the estimates drawn up in various Government departments. The question of the position of shire councils

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arose at the hospital board meeting, and the press report states—

"Councillor Mathison (Woocoo): It is getting a very serious thing for the shires. Our function is to make roads.

"Alderman Demainé: Your function is to see to the people's health also.

"Alderman Demainé went on to say that, when the buildings now being constructed were paid for next year, the local authorities would have to increase their hospital rate by ½d. to cover interest and redemption."

The rate this year, according to Alderman Demainé, is 1d. in the £1, and it is going to be increased by ½d., so that there will be a rate of 1½d. in connection with the upkeep of the Maryborough Hospital.

At 2 p.m.,

Mr. WEIR (*Maryborough*), one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, relieved Mr. Maxwell in the chair.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): I would like to know from the Home Secretary whether sugar-cane farmers are debarred from getting children from the State Children Department. My reason for asking is that a farmer in my electorate—a married man with no children and a very nice home indeed—has made application for one. One could not find a better home for one of these children. It is perhaps 50 yards—certainly within 100 yards—of a railway station on the main line between Mackay and Bowen, 32 miles from Mackay. On five days in the week trains go in and out from Mackay, yet this farmer has been refused on the ground of the difficulty of inspection.

Mr. ROBERTS: How far is it from a school?

Mr. SWAYNE: About a quarter of a mile. I may say that I have heard unofficially that the unions are objecting to these children being allotted to cane farmers.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That is not true.

Mr. SWAYNE: Such a home as I have in my mind would be a very good home for any child; the sugar industry is a very fine industry; and I do not think these children should be debarred from the opportunity of being brought up in that industry.

Another matter to which I wish to draw the attention of the Minister is the heavy charges which are being imposed on ratepayers in connection with health matters. We all realise that public health is a most important matter, and should not be treated in a cheeseparing manner. On the other hand, anything can be overdone—even a good thing—and very heavy taxes and other charges are being imposed on the ratepayers for this purpose. It is really one of the causes leading to the objection which fortified the Premier this morning in his answer to the hon. member for Burnett about unemployment. The Premier pointed out that it was particularly difficult to deal with the number of unemployed in the cities; but one of the reasons for that is that people are being driven off the land, and one of the factors bringing about that result is the heavy charges and taxes which are imposed on ratepayers in the country. The hospital tax is a tax which should be borne by the whole community; most certainly it is most unjust to impose it upon one section only.

There is another form of taxation which falls unequally on different sections of the community. I refer to the cost of health inspectors. Years ago the local authorities appointed their own inspectors. Then, under instructions from the Department of Public Health, they appointed another, and now I understand another has been appointed by the department itself to supervise the inspectors already appointed.

The "Daily Mercury," published in Mackay, in a leading article dealing with a meeting of local authorities at which five shires were represented, three or four from my electorate and one from the Normanby electorate, said—

"It would appear from the discussion that the local bodies have very little to do in the matter but provide the money. Councillor Wright, of the Broadsound shire, pointed out that the expenditure was quite unnecessary in the shire he represented, as the homesteads are miles apart, and for an inspector to do work under such conditions expenditure would be required that would be very severely felt by the ratepayers. In Nebo the expense will be still greater, owing to the longer distances to be traversed away from the railway. Sarina and Mirani shires will suffer in the same way, though not to the same extent, perhaps, and Pioneer will have to pay a substantial amount also."

The last three shires are fairly thickly populated, and the difficulties of travelling would not be so great. The "Daily Mercury" continued—

"The report that appeared in the 'Mercury' yesterday shows how completely the local bodies are tied down by regulations. They succeeded after a long argument in coming to an agreement with the inspector for a trial term of three months, and it will rest with him (the inspector), presumably, to say whether he will continue to work on those terms or insist upon the salary agreed upon, with the full scale of extras for expenses when he travels in the different shires."

It has just come to my mind that in one of these shires the hospital tax absorbed one-third of the total revenue, and when other charges are piled on top of that it becomes almost an unbearable burden. I have already said that I do not for one moment wish to interfere with the efficiency of the institutions. I have also pointed out that the public health has to be safeguarded, but it seems that the matter is being overdone. I have pointed out that there are too many regulations, too much red tape, and a multiplicity of inspectors. It seems that one or two of the three inspectors might be dispensed with. One good man could do the work. It is a rather serious matter to the ratepayers to have these charges accumulating one after the other—nearly every year a new charge. I would like the Minister to give serious attention to reducing the charges, always bearing in mind that there shall be no decrease in efficiency. I would also like him to consider the matter that I first mentioned, and inform the Chamber whether cane farmers are debarred from obtaining children from the State Children Department.

Mr. RIORDAN (*Burke*): I desire particularly to address myself to the cancellation

of a ballot granted to the Wyangarie Shire Council. I understand that the hon. member for Logan dealt with the matter last night and again this morning; but, unfortunately, I was not in the Chamber to hear his remarks, although I was within the precincts of the building. I understand that he quoted some telegrams received by me and my replies thereto. I have no objection to any telegrams sent by me being quoted fully here.

Mr. KING: I quoted only one telegram—the one sent by you to the Wyangarie Shire Council—and I quoted it in full.

Mr. RIORDAN: I am very pleased that the hon. gentleman did quote it in full. I have a decided objection to a shire clerk taking the business of the shire out of the hands of the ratepayers; I personally object to a shire clerk attending a local authority conference without making any representation to the member for the district; and I also object to a shire clerk interviewing under secretaries and assistant under secretaries and inducing them to permit of a postal ballot being taken without any motion giving him the necessary authority being passed by the council.

Mr. KING: His actions were confirmed at the subsequent meeting.

At 2.11 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. RIORDAN: If the hon. member will allow me to continue, I will show when the action of the shire clerk was confirmed. As early as September, 1926, the shire clerk, while in Brisbane, interviewed the Assistant Under Secretary to the Home Department, and discussed some matter with him. On 2nd October he received a letter from the Home Department advising that his application on behalf of the council for permission to conduct the annual elections by postal ballot had been approved. The matter was not again brought up until somewhere about March or April last, when it was found that the shire clerk's underhand method of arranging for a postal ballot was not tolerated, and an appeal was made to me to assist the council to bludgeon its way through in respect to the postal ballot. I wired back informing the council and the shire clerk that, if the application for permission to hold a postal ballot was the result of something done in open council, it would have my support. I also sent a reply to a wire they sent me at that time advising that I could not support their request for a postal ballot. The shire clerk applied to the Assistant Under Secretary for permission to conduct a postal ballot at the annual elections without first obtaining the sanction of his council. The meeting called for February lapsed for the want of a quorum. The council met in March, when the shire clerk read the letter he had received from the Home Department advising the council that an amendment of the Local Authorities Act would be made to allow local authorities to conduct postal ballots in sparsely populated areas, if desired. The question was again brought forward at the April meeting. By this time the Minister had been advised of the irregularity of the action of the clerk. The shire clerk distinctly admitted that he had not asked permission of the council before making a request for a postal ballot because the councillors, by reason of the fact that they were potential candidates, had no

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right to be consulted, and that he, as returning officer, had full power to decide on the most suitable form of election. Could any paid servant of the ratepayers make a statement more ridiculous? The shire clerk ignored the instruction of his chairman and the deputy chairman, because I have here a resolution that was carried at a previous meeting.

Mr. KING: What date was that?

Mr. RIORDAN: I have not the exact date, therefore I cannot give it to the hon. gentleman, but it was prior to August, when the annual conference of the Local Authorities' Association is usually held. Mr. Murray was chairman and Mr. Bruce Carter deputy chairman of the meeting, at which this motion was carried—

"That the conference be asked to place a motion on its agenda paper whereby the postal ballot system be disallowed at council elections."

That motion was moved by the chairman and seconded by the deputy chairman of the council. Does the hon. member think that I am going to support any shire clerk in taking business out of the hands of the council? My wire to the council clearly indicated that, if they wanted a postal ballot, they must conform to the provisions of the Act and decide upon the matter in open council—not allow the shire clerk to take the whole matter into his hands. There is no necessity for me to read the exchange of wires which took place, because the hon. member for Logan has already dealt with them. They prove that my assistance was sought after the council found itself up against a position created by the underhand methods of the shire clerk. A public meeting was afterwards called to protest against the cancellation. That meeting was attended by twenty or thirty members of the progress association, although there were many other ratepayers in the shire deserving of representation on such a matter. The conduct of the ballot does not reflect credit upon the Wyangarie Shire Council. Mr. Murray, who had been chairman for many years, was defeated for the position on an anti-shire clerk vote. It is all very well for the hon. member for Logan to say that the postal ballot was cancelled because of representations by the Australian Workers' Union. The Australian Workers' Union never came into the matter at any stage.

Mr. KING: I corrected myself and said the Australian Labour Party.

Mr. RIORDAN: The Australian Labour Party ran candidates, and was successful in getting three and a-half returned. (Laughter.)

Mr. ROBERTS: Where does the half come in?

Mr. RIORDAN: Because the fourth man was elected on the vote of the returning officer. For weeks following the date of polling the present chairman, Mr. McGovern, could get no results, and no candidate could get any information regarding the poll. I understand protests were made to the Home Department regarding the conduct of the poll. Personally, I did not wish to be involved, because it was largely a domestic question.

Then they tried to use the hon. member for Logan, who, I understand, is the solicitor of the Local Authorities' Association, in order to carry on their campaign here after Mr.

[Mr. Riordan.]

Murray, the chairman, and Mr. Carter, the deputy chairman, had moved a motion for the abolition of the postal ballot. A council which put on the agenda paper a resolution, which was carried, that a postal ballot should not be adopted and then carried a resolution for a postal ballot, would make the whole matter ridiculous. The shire clerk is running the show, and, had the ballot been conducted by post, I am sure that not 10 per cent. of the workers in the district would have had an opportunity of exercising the franchise, for the simple reason that some of these people reside at hotels and others shift from shed to shed, and, having no permanent address, would have no means of getting ballot papers. The ballot paper would be posted to the address on the roll, although probably the elector would not be at that address. Most of these people take an interest in local authority affairs and come into the town of Richmond, and a very heavy vote was polled there on the day of the election. If the Order in Council had not been cancelled at the request of the ratepayers of the Wyangarie Shire Council, there would have been a bigger row in this Chamber over the matter than there is at the present time over the cancellation. I strongly object, and I think every member of this House should object, to any underhand methods or any tampering with the franchise granted by this Government under the Local Authorities Act. Other councils have the decency to carry a motion asking for permission from the Home Secretary to carry out their poll by post, but this man evidently wants to run the council and run the councillors, and has done so for the last three years. I do not know how he is going to get on with the new councillors. In the past he has run the councillors, and he endeavoured to do the same at Surat, and as a result was given the whisper to apply for some other place.

Mr. KING: He was not removed. He applied for and got another job.

Mr. RIORDAN: We all know about people applying for another job. I do not want to deal with him, as I believe in a policy of live and let live; but, if he is going to try to put something over me, I will give the hon. member for Logan a full knowledge of the man who is acting as clerk for the Wyangarie Shire Council.

Mr. KING (Logan): The hon. member has been speaking all the time with his tongue in his cheek. That is my firm belief. He is altogether wrong in assuming that the clerk took this action on his own account. He was acting for the council. Let me recapitulate the facts of the case. In the first place, the clerk was down in Brisbane and saw Mr. Chuter and discussed the matter with him. Mr. Chuter told him to make application. He did make application—not under the direction of the council, but on behalf of the council, as returning officer.

Mr. RIORDAN: He never had any permission from the council.

Mr. KING: He never had any permission, but he made application on behalf of the council. This is the way the letter starts—

"Referring to my conversation with you of recent date, I beg respectfully to make application on behalf of the Wyangarie Shire Council."

Mr. WEIR: He had no authority.

Mr. KING: Never mind about that. That was in September. He got a reply in September, and at the October meeting that letter was discussed by the full council, with the exception of one member, Mr. Llewelyn, who was not present at the opening of the meeting, and did not attend until the afternoon.

The letter from the Home Department was discussed at the council meeting. I will read it—

“I have the honour, by direction, to inform you that His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, with the advice of the Executive Council, has been pleased to direct that when a poll is required to be taken in the shires of Bauhinia, Bungil, and Wyangarie it be taken in the mode prescribed in Rules 46 to 62 of the Third Schedule to the Local Authorities Acts, 1902-1925 (Postal Ballot).”

That was written on 18th September, 1926, and was discussed at the October meeting. It is Mr. Llewelyn who is causing all the trouble now. Later on, at the November meeting, prior to the execution of the minutes, the full details of the minutes were sent to every member of the council, and there was not a single objection. Nothing more was said until March last, when the hon. member for Burke was asked to interfere. By whom was he asked to interfere? The hon. member for Burke took action and saw the Home Secretary, who, acting on the information given him by that hon. member, cancelled the proclamation. He never made inquiries.

The HOME SECRETARY: I made inquiries from the council.

Mr. KING: The Home Secretary did not ask the clerk of the Wyangarie Shire Council whether his action was endorsed by the council or not, but he took it that it was not. He ought to have ascertained whether it was endorsed. It was endorsed at the subsequent meetings in October and November. The shire clerk's action was confirmed by the members of the council with the exception of one.

Mr. RIORDAN: How is it the councillors were surprised in March when the shire clerk read the letter he had received in October.

Mr. KING: I cannot understand that. It must have been the new council.

Mr. RIORDAN: No, it was not.

Mr. KING: If the hon. member consults the minutes, he will see that the letter was discussed, and there could not have been any surprise on the part of the members of the council. The members of the council were so disgusted at the treatment they had received in connection with the postal ballot that they thought it was useless to have it discussed and it might as well be declared off. They looked upon it as a dead letter, and absolutely worthless, and that is why they asked to have it declared off. I happened to be at the conference, and know what took place there.

Mr. RIORDAN (Burke): The only weakness about the argument of the hon. member for Logan is the surprise of the whole of the councillors at the letter read by the shire clerk at the March meeting. They were all astounded. I have not met one

of the old councillors who was in favour of the postal ballot. I know that Mr. Murray, the chairman, was hostile to it. He was surprised when he heard that it was proposed to conduct the ballot by post. He was away at the time. He said the majority of the council were opposed to the election of candidates by postal ballot, as it left itself open to bad practices and defeated the object of the franchise given to the people. The election later by the council was really a vote of censure on the shire clerk. The hon. member tries to gloss it over. The facts are that the

[2.30 p.m.] ratepayers' association held a public meeting, but there was no discussion by members of the council. The ratepayers' association could not get one member returned. Although the Australian Labour Party candidates, in spite of the whole of the criticism and intrigue and efforts to get them squelched for something which it was said they were trying to do “underhand,” polled a majority of the votes in the town, it was weeks before they could get any knowledge of what had taken place in the country districts. The balloting in the country districts was an absolute farce. Even the man who is now chairman was most perturbed and hoped that the ballot would have been cancelled, and I believe that, if anybody had liked to interest himself in the matter and kick up a row and have an inquiry made into the conduct of the election, it would have been declared null and void. In regard to this “pure merino” shire clerk, I am sure that he has not the confidence of the people now on the council, and the reason why the resolution objecting to the postal ballot was sent down to the Local Authorities' Conference is that the council as a whole believe in allowing a man to go to the ballot-box and record his vote at a secret ballot as allowed in other forms of election. I feel sure that, if the Home Secretary investigates the case, he will find that these are the facts.

Mr. KERR (Enoggera): I realise that the Home Secretary has jurisdiction over some of our most important departments. I frankly admit that he uses a great deal of common sense and sympathy in administering his department, but we can go too far in regard to charity, although perhaps the establishment of new activities under the Home Secretary's Department warrants the increase of £50,000 in the expenditure compared with a few years ago. That is exclusive of outdoor relief, which possibly will be discussed at a later stage. It is not generally realised that the Government have taken a good deal of credit for what they term humanitarian legislation, whereas the receipt by the Home Secretary's office of the “Golden Casket” money has more than equalled the total appropriation for all the hospitals, including the base hospitals in Brisbane, Rockhampton, etc., and several other institutions, paying all the salaries of the nurses, and the directors or superintendents in each case, thus relieving the revenue of the State.

Mr. HARTLEY: Don't be silly.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You are rambling.

Mr. KERR: The total net proceeds from the “Golden Casket” in 1926-27 were £215,000, whereas the total appropriation for these charitable institutions amounted

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to £186,778, showing that not a great deal of credit is due to the Government for utilising revenue for hospital purposes. It is not a question of whether I believe in the "Golden Casket" or otherwise. It is just as well for the people to understand that it is not through the generosity of the Treasury that these things are done. The payments have been made out of another fund which in the long run relieves the Government of the payment of a considerable amount of money.

In common with other members of the Opposition, I desire again to voice my objection to the hospital tax. I can hardly conceive that another session of Parliament has passed and no endeavour is made to remove this iniquitous taxation. It is well known that each year the hospitals estimate their receipts and their expenditure—in most cases the expenditure is in excess of the receipts—and the balance is made up by a contribution of 60 per cent. by the Government, and a contribution of 40 per cent. by the local authorities. I cannot understand the adoption in a democratic country, far less by an allegedly democratic party, of a principle providing for the upkeep of hospitals by taxation on land. On the face of it, anyone with knowledge at all will readily realise that the only proper way to maintain our hospitals is by a tax on the incomes of the people. Many people to-day are finding it extremely difficult to pay their rates, and, whether they be poor or rich—a number of them are on the basic wage—they must share in the responsibility of meeting the precept levied on the local authorities. That is a grave injustice not only to the people in the country who make a living from the land, but to the workers in the cities of Queensland. After having the legislation in existence for so long, and after receiving so many protests practically throughout the length and breadth of Queensland, the Government should recognise that something is wrong. The taxation is wrong in principle, and that in itself should be a sufficient reason why the Government should alter the legislation. The municipal rates and the water rates within the metropolitan area are extremely heavy and a burden upon the people. I do not know on what ground the present hospital tax can be justified. It has been argued—it is the only argument that can be advanced—that there are many people who do not possess property but reside in flats, and that this practice is on the increase. It is argued that there are men of wealth who are able to live in comfort without incurring the responsibility of a home, and that they are not paying anything towards the upkeep of the hospitals, notwithstanding the fact that they are permanent residents of Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Who pays the 60 per cent. provided by the Government?

Mr. KERR: In some cases people are subject to a double tax. Why should some people be called upon to make a double payment when others pay nothing at all? It is no argument to say that the 60 per cent. is paid by the people to whom I have referred. The Government should not forget that their best argument is not to say that these people pay the tax, because in many cases these people are subject to a double tax.

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The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Your party in Western Australia imposed a wages tax.

Mr. KERR: I do not care what they did in Western Australia. It is a wrong principle to impose a hospital tax on that section of the people who happen to own their homes. There are up to fifty hotels in Brisbane whose accommodation is taxed by permanent boarders, and it is not fair or reasonable to think that these people should be totally exempt from the payment of this tax.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Where does the hotelkeeper get his money from to pay the tax? I suppose it falls down from the sky?

Mr. KERR: The hon. gentleman is wonderful!

I listened with a good deal of attention to the remarks of the hon. member for Bulimba, who is a Government representative on the Fire Brigades Board. For some years the progress associations at Newmarket, Alderley, Enoggera, and Gaythorne have been agitating for the establishment of a fire station in the district. I am glad to know that their representations have received the favourable consideration of the board. I understand from the hon. member for Bulimba that the Brisbane fire district is being extended to embrace Enoggera and that a sub-station will be established at Alderley. I hope the Brisbane City Council will place no obstacle in the way of having the old council chambers there placed at the disposal of the brigade for housing the sub-station. It is a most suitable spot. A fire station is absolutely essential in that district. It was gratifying to hear that the sub-station is to be controlled by a permanent staff. I hope that the decision of the board will be consummated at an early date.

I wish to bring forward one other matter on this vote. It is in relation to the ferry at Moggill, which provides access between the Brisbane and Ipswich sides of the river. A difference at present exists between the Brisbane and Ipswich city councils over the matter. It is the old story of divided control which the Brisbane City Council has evidently not overcome. I desire to know if the Government have any well-defined policy to meet such cases. It is useless for the two councils to come together, as their viewpoints are diametrically opposed to each other. I would suggest to the Home Secretary that he should call representatives of the two bodies together, hear their views on the question, and then lay down some principle as a solution of the trouble. The Moggill ferry serves a large number of farmers in my electorate, and enables them to take their cream and produce across the river. There is no reason why this ferry should not be made a free ferry. We have our free ferries in the city, but I understand that the Ipswich Council is the stumbling block. That council contends that the people on the Moggill side of the river utilise the ferry to a greater extent than the people on the Ipswich side, and, therefore, the ferry exists mainly in their interests. The dispute should not be allowed to continue from month to month. It is the duty of the councils to face their responsibility, and I hope the Home Secretary will take suitable action to end the dispute.

Mr. LLOYD (*Kelvin Grove*): It is difficult to take seriously one of the statements made by the hon. member for Enoggera. The hon. member stated that a person living in a flat does not pay rates. I have had my rent raised twice while living in a flat and on each occasion was told that the reason was an increase in rates, so that it is most absurd to say that tenants do not pay rates. People who conduct residential do not let rooms or flats on lease except for short periods, and they do not do it as a hobby.

Mr. KERR: Some people that I know of have a twelve-months' lease of a flat at a flat rate.

Mr. LLOYD: The charge for rates must be passed on.

With regard to a certain matter mentioned by the hon. member for Wynnum regarding the death of a child under circumstances which, if the statements outlined are substantiated, point to certain unsatisfactory conditions in the Wattlebrae Hospital and the other hospitals concerned, I do not dispute anything that the hon. gentleman says; in fact, I believe that it was literally correct. In order, however, that there should be no misunderstanding as to the position of the Hospitals Board, I should like to make it clear that it is no fault of the board that that matter was not exhaustively investigated some months ago. I will read from the minutes of the board a statement by the President of the Hospitals Board—

"Mr. Barnes had previously made a complaint to me as chairman of the Hospitals Board by telephone. I immediately drew up a memorandum setting out statements made from the parents of the child, and requested the general medical superintendent to furnish a report. Upon receipt of the report I instructed the manager to send a copy to Mr. Barnes with the intention of also bringing the matter before the board. In the meantime Mr. Barnes saw Mr. Mackay and followed his interview with a request for an inquiry. Mr. Mackay next brought the matter under my notice. After reading Mr. Barnes's request I telephoned him and made the suggestion that he should get a person skilled in taking statements to take a statement from the parents of the child as then there would be something definite upon which to settle the subject matters of inquiry. Mr. Barnes agreed to my suggestion. In the meantime the matter came before the board which decided to defer consideration of the matter until a statement or some communication was received from the department. After several attempts I managed to get Mr. Barnes on the telephone on Wednesday last, when he informed me that the parents would not proceed further with the matter as they were afraid they might cause harm to the nurses. I pointed out to Mr. Barnes it made it impossible for the board to prosecute an inquiry if the complainants were not prepared to proceed with their complaints, with which Mr. Barnes agreed. I propose to submit a copy of this memorandum to the board at its next meeting."

A copy was accordingly submitted and recorded in the transactions of the board. Since then Mr. Barnes has induced the parents to make a complete statement and

the fullest investigation will be made into the matter. I should like to make it clear that I do not for one moment suggest that the hon. member for Wynnum in any way misrepresented the position, but in case an impression should get abroad that the Brisbane and South Coast Hospitals Board treats matters like this lightly, I have made the statement that I have on the matter.

Something has been said concerning the disregard of traffic rules in the streets of the metropolis, and doubtless in other large centres of this State. There is one matter which I have not heard mentioned, and that is the serious inconvenience, and in some cases the danger to pedestrian traffic by pavements in the city being blocked up by enclosures for building purposes. We have an illustration of that at the corner of George and Queen streets, where a good deal of the pavement is enclosed for building purposes. It cannot possibly be necessary that, during the whole process of the erection of a building like that, so much of the pavement should be enclosed. Taking a glance inside one cannot see any reason why the work that is being done within that enclosed space should not be done elsewhere. Certainly there should be some protection of the public against accident by objects falling on them from above. But that could be done by putting a strong roof over the pavement. As for the work of trimming blocks of stone, mixing concrete, and odds and ends like that, that could be done somewhere else. I do not know whether the contractor pays rent for the pavement or not, but even if he does, there are other far more suitable places where that work could be carried on.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The contractor gets permission from the Council.

Mr. LLOYD: He gets permission from the City Council, but the Home Secretary is the Minister who has general control of all these matters, and I think I am not straining the rules of debate too far in drawing attention to this, because the control of traffic has been discussed at some length, and it must be a serious inconvenience to those motorists—there are some motorists who do not wish to run over pedestrians if they can possibly help it—it must be an inconvenience to motorists of that desirable kind to have the rather narrow part of the street which should be reserved for wheel traffic used by pedestrians, and the pavement blocked up. I trust the officials in the Home Department, who are concerned with local government matters will get in touch with the City Council and, if necessary, with other councils throughout the State and find out if there is not some way of avoiding the serious nuisance and serious danger to traffic by forcing pedestrians to go on to the middle of the street.

With regard to the traffic laws, I think we have enough laws at the present time. The question is as to their enforcement. On all sides we find traffic law disregarded, not because of any want of alertness or efficiency on the part of the police, but because there are not enough police to cope with the breaches of the traffic laws. The rules of the road, particularly the rule about keeping to the left side of the track, are being disregarded at every corner except where a uniformed policeman is on duty. They are even disregarded at the entrance to Parliament House. The other night I barely

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escaped being run over by a car coming through the entrance on the right-hand side. It was only by springing on to a flower bed that I spared the State the expense and inconvenience of a by-election.

The matter of push bikes has been mentioned. As long as push bikes keep on the part of the road reserved for wheel traffic I do not know that they are of very much danger to people other than their riders. But the practice is becoming general to ride push bikes along the pavements, and the Commonwealth Government is amongst the greatest offenders in this matter, because we see telegraph boys riding on push bikes across the pavements in the heart of the city. In other parts of the city where the population does not warrant the whole of the pavement being asphalted, the council asphalt half of it, and that portion is so frequently used by cyclists in order to get a smooth track that young children who are walking along and sometimes playing on the asphalted part are constantly in danger. If one reports the matter to the police it will receive attention, but the police have so many things in hand that it is impossible for them to attend to all cases of breach of traffic laws. However, it is no use issuing fresh instructions on the matter, as there are plenty of instructions given already. Every person who is driving or travelling in a wheeled vehicle knows that the rule of the road is to keep to the left. Everyone knows that unless there is a uniformed policeman in the middle of the street the driver keeps to the nearest corner irrespective of whether that corner is the right or the left. The remedy for the present position is to strengthen the police force. Of course, we all know the difficulty, but it is said—I do not know with what correctness—that certain Government departments have labour which might be dispensed with. If so, it would be a good idea to try to ascertain whether there are young men of good physique and intelligence in some of the other departments who might be transferred into the police force. The standard of qualification required might be relaxed in regard, say, to chest measurement where there were other compensating qualifications. If there are departments which need deflating, I think something might be done in that direction. The police force at the present time is undermined, and if that state of things continues we may get into a very serious position indeed in Queensland. My own electorate is particularly unfortunate in that respect. It has as big a population as many country towns which have, perhaps, three or four policemen available, but my electorate has got only one policeman. He is an exceptionally capable man, but he is only human. And some day something will happen at one end of the district while the policeman is at the other end. I am not suggesting that my electorate is worse than some other places. It takes me all my time to attend to my own electorate, and I have not time to "stickybeak" into other places, but I know perfectly well that the man who is there is doing singlehanded work that ought to be done by three men.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Nanango*): I would like to refer to the unfairness of the Hospitals Act. We know how unjustly the incidence of this Act falls upon the ratepayers, who are first of all asked to pay 40 per cent. of the upkeep of the hospitals through the

local authorities, and then, on the top of that, have to pay their share of the other 60 per cent., while, on the other hand, many salaried men who possibly have larger incomes than the ratepayers themselves, get out of paying anything at all for the upkeep of the hospitals. I hope the time when that will be altered is not far distant.

[3 p.m.]

There are worse features in the administration of the Hospitals Act than appear on the surface. I had occasion to introduce to the Secretary for Public Works, when he was in the Nanango district some time ago opening a butter factory, a deputation, who pointed out to him the difficulties the Nanango hospital was labouring under. It was definitely shown to the Minister on that occasion that 80 per cent. of the patients who use the Nanango hospital come from territory where the ratepayers help to pay for the upkeep of the Toowoomba hospital. I do not know what the Minister did in the matter, but he made a general promise that he would put it before the Home Department. In a case like that I think it is absolutely unjust to ask the Nanango hospital committee to carry on its work. Some alteration should be made in the boundaries when 80 per cent. of the patients come from a district which is taxed for the upkeep of another hospital miles away and in a different district altogether. A similar condition of things obtains at the other end of the Southern Burnett. Many of the people who are paying for the upkeep of the Gympie hospital under the operations of the Hospitals Act are using the Wondai hospital. They do not go to the Gympie hospital at all. These two instances show how unjustly the Act is working out. If all hospitals were under the Act, I suppose these difficulties could be adjusted so that there would be less injustice than at present; but, while some of the hospitals remain outside and are managed by committees who provide for their upkeep—and they do make very big efforts to see that the hospitals in the country districts are well equipped—the people who use them and help to pay for them should not be taxed for the upkeep of district hospitals under the Act. Why it should be so year after year is beyond me. The Government should take the matter in hand immediately and try to bring about some alteration.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It is a question of altering shire boundaries.

Mr. EDWARDS: I am told that it requires the alteration of only three words in the Act, and, if that is so, I think it should be done at once. I am sure the Secretary for Public Works, when he received that deputation, was particularly struck by the difficulties the Nanango people are labouring under. He could not be otherwise. The hospital boundary was only a few miles from where he was sitting at the time. If the people beyond that boundary did not go to the Nanango hospital, they would come to the Brisbane hospital or the Ipswich hospital, or to a hospital in some district nearer Brisbane. It seems that little care and attention has been given to defining the boundaries, and in the interests of country hospitals, I hope the Home Secretary will go into the matter immediately, with a view to trying to relieve the people of this injustice. He must know that the upkeep

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of many of our country hospitals is a big strain on the people, seeing that they have to contribute to the upkeep of one hospital from which they receive no benefit whatever, and are also subscribers to the hospital they are using. That seems to be altogether unfair.

I wish to make some comment on our traffic by-laws and the control of traffic within the city area. I think that the whole of our difficulty is created by 2 per cent. or a little more of the drivers of motor vehicles. Very often young lads are in charge of heavy motor lorries, and they are not prepared to give an ordinary motor driver his share of the road, to which he is justly entitled. I have seen accidents averted by just a hair's breadth. It seems to be the pastime of these heavy motor lorry drivers to see how near they can shave a lighter vehicle without striking it. One can also witness such practices in the city of Brisbane. If these erratic drivers were rudely awakened to the necessity for common sense, and it was impressed upon them that they must keep to their proper side of the road and take no risks, we would remedy a lot of our traffic difficulties. Anyone who is observant will notice motor cars traversing a street corner as if their one object was to shave the people on the footpath as closely as possible. That is a most dangerous practice, and it is a wonder that more accidents have not occurred on these corners. I am sure that the close approach of the vehicles to the footpaths is not due to inability to drive, but is in defiance of the law, and done with a view to showing how near they can approach to the pedestrians and the lighter vehicles. I hope that every effort will be made by the police to see that these reckless drivers—they are only a very small percentage—keep to their proper position in the road, particularly in heavy traffic.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL (*Toombul*): As a metropolitan member there are one or two matters that appeal to me, and on which I feel that I should express my opinion. Dealing first of all with traffic problems it must be admitted that the duties of the police are becoming more exacting year by year as motor traffic grows. It must be admitted that, with the scanty force at their disposal, the Police Department is doing very well. I would suggest, for the safety of pedestrians, that in large centres of population, particularly in Brisbane, the regulations regarding stopping places might be altered considerably. The system adopted pertaining to the tramways in Brisbane is that in Queen street, for example, trams stop only at the beginning and end of the section, and also at the Post Office. Those are compulsory stopping places. In view of the increasing motor traffic and the danger to pedestrians, it would be wise to insist on further stopping places in streets like Queen street to enable the traffic policeman to direct the vehicular and pedestrian traffic more easily. The policeman on traffic duty in Queen street does his best to hold the traffic for a moment for the convenience of the pedestrians; but the latter are in fear of their lives because great numbers of motor drivers disregard the policeman and a good deal of misunderstanding arises in consequence. It is no good them arguing after the event.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: A good deal of the trouble is caused because pedestrians will not watch the traffic.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: There is a growing custom with pedestrians to cross the streets at the corners; but such corners as the intersections of Queen and Creek streets, Queen and Edward streets, and Queen and Wharf streets are very bad corners. The policemen at those points have very great difficulty in controlling the traffic. The pedestrians endeavour as far as possible to conform to the traffic regulations. I admit there are exceptions, and that a good deal more education is required to prevent pedestrians from "jay walking." I would suggest that compulsory stopping places in busy thoroughfares be marked by bands of white cement in the concrete or bitumen roads, such as we see in the larger cities of the world. That is a fixture, and, being white, does not wear off like paint and is easily discernible. While the "silent cop" serves a useful purpose it is, nevertheless, a great menace to the life of pedestrians. One such "cop" is to be found at the corner of Elizabeth and Creek streets, and, while it serves to direct traffic into certain channels, nevertheless the pedestrian crossing the street there is at times faced with traffic coming four ways. In my opinion, the "cop" there accentuates the trouble. It will be necessary at these busy corners to supply further traffic policemen who, after all, are the best guarantee for the safety of the pedestrian. The "silent cop" can be utilised at corners where the pedestrian traffic is less dense than at the corners I have enumerated.

The regulation concerning the switch of the tail light is quite right. The driver in order to protect himself now has only to switch off his tail light immediately; but I see no necessity why the tail light should be transferred from the rear of the mudguard to the centre of the back of the car. It is not convenient for a great number of the cars to adopt this alteration. Very often it will be found that certain types of cars have elaborate gear at the back to hold the spare wheel which is fastened to the frame of the car. The regulations have been altered too many times and the people have become somewhat exasperated at the frequent changes.

I see no reason why any owner of a car should be compelled to shift his tail light and his number plate from the rear of the mudguard to the middle of the back of the car. I would suggest that where it would involve extensive structural alterations the owners of cars which have tail lights and number plates affixed at the rear of the mudguard should be allowed to retain them in that position, as it will not hinder the traffic police to allow that to continue for the present.

In regard to the point raised by the hon. member for Toowong, the Minister was rather brief in his reply. Whether the hon. gentleman prefers to wait the result of the examination by experts we do not know, but the fact remains that the public is very uneasy regarding the alleged pollution of the river at Luggage Point. We are indebted to the Commissioner of Public Health for calling the attention of the community to what he considers is a menace. I gather from his report that he is rather

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inclined to think that this continued pollution will become a menace to the public health. The matter has been referred to the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board, which says that it will appoint a body of experts to examine the position.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That board has appointed a committee which is now inquiring into the matter.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: Within one mile of Luggage Point there is certain contamination that is undesirable for the fishing in those waters. Under the scheme adopted four years ago, when treatment works were erected at Luggage Point, the idea was that the sewage should be so treated that the effluent would be innocuous and practically colourless. Great diversity of opinion existed as to what system should be followed in the disposal of the sewage, one section of opinion favouring the treatment at sewage farms, whilst another section was of opinion that it should be disposed of in a similar manner to what is operating to-day. A large section of the public was somewhat alarmed when it was learned that it had been decided to discharge the effluent at Luggage Point, great hostility being displayed to the idea. It was felt—and rightly so I think—that it would be unwise to discharge the effluent into the river at all; that it should be carried away, and, if possible, discharged in deep water. On the assurance that the effluent would be innocuous and practically colourless after it had been treated by the activated sludge process, the board found that to operate a scheme having a maximum capacity of 5,000,000 gallons a day would cost £48,000 per annum. It was decided, therefore, on the advice of Colonel Longley, who was then attached to the Commonwealth Department of Health, not to proceed with the original project on the score of economy, but to treat the sewage in the manner in which it is being treated to-day.

Instead of the activated sludge process being carried out as was primarily designed, sedimentation tanks are being used, with the result that the escaping effluent is passed into the river—not colourless and not innocuous. In fact, it has been stated quite recently that the effluent is practically raw sewage. Public attention has been called to this nuisance, but the board seems to be sceptical, and it is of the opinion that it is not necessary to go to such a large expense in making the effluent innocuous. The board may be right. I hope so. At any rate, the situation demands the fullest inquiry, because our main consideration must be the preservation of the public health. If it had been thought in the first instance that our river was going to be polluted with a noxious and dark fluid, I venture to say that the present sewerage scheme would not have been adopted. We never thought for one moment that we were going to have at the very entrance to the city this noxious effluent being discharged into the river. It is no advertisement to the city, and it must be a great nuisance to the people living in the neighbourhood.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Where do other cities discharge their sewage?

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: The great cities of the world do not discharge their sewage at their front door.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: In America they run it into the big lakes right alongside the city.

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A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Lakes from which they get their water.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: The lakes of America are of considerable size.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: So is Moreton Bay.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: Many of the fresh water lakes in America are many times larger than Moreton Bay. The position is exemplified by a letter which appears in this morning's "Daily Mail." The opinion is offered there that the present conditions at Luggage Point are sufficient to render innocuous in its effects all the effluent for many years to come by the process of enormous dilution and oxidation. I think I voice the opinion of those who live in the neighbourhood, and particularly of the people who live at Cribb Island, Nudgee Beach, and probably Sandgate, when I say that by the continuous discharge of this effluent at Luggage Point the foreshores of these sea-side resorts will be contaminated. We cannot afford to run any risk whatever, and, if there is the slightest doubt about this effluent being innocuous, it is the bounden duty of the board to rectify the danger, and the Government must see to it that the treatment works are operated in accordance with the original idea and the effluent discharged into the river and made absolutely innocuous and colourless. But if on expert examination it is found that our fears are groundless, then no one desires to saddle the board with further expenditure, because already it has a pretty hard row to hoe. It is at its wits' end to make ends meet, and no one is desirous of increasing the burden at present on the shoulders of the ratepayers. The hon. member for Wynnum stated that, in his opinion, the foreshores of Wynnum, which is carrying a very large population to-day, also would probably be affected by this effluent. It stands to reason that as the city grows in population, and as our sewerage system extends to all the suburbs, before many years are over the treatment works will be called upon to deal with a maximum quantity of 5,000,000 gallons a day, and, if that effluent is allowed to escape into the river without proper treatment, it must cause considerable damage to the foreshores I have mentioned.

Mr. HANLON (Ithaca): I have a suggestion to make to the Minister to which I hope he will be able to give some consideration—that is with regard to the issuing and renewing of motor-driving licenses. At the beginning of the year there is a great deal of inconvenience caused to drivers through the crush at the traffic office to get their licenses renewed. The Minister might well arrange for renewal licenses to be given at police stations in the different police districts in which motor-driving license holders live. Whilst it is quite necessary for a person, when he first applies for a license, to attend at the traffic office and be tested as to his knowledge of driving by-laws and regulations and the control of his machine, that is not necessary for the driver who already holds a license. A great deal of the congestion and inconvenience to the public caused by having to renew licenses at the beginning of the year at the traffic office in Brisbane could be obviated by having the licenses renewed at the various police stations around Brisbane. I hope the Minister will be able to arrange for this to be done.

There has been considerable criticism of the traffic regulations in Brisbane, and I want to draw attention to what I consider the very dangerous state of affairs which exists in connection with motor drivers who are in the habit of speeding up in order to pass trams immediately before they stop. That is particularly noticeable. It obtains at all tram stopping places, and in many cases it is a big danger in the suburbs. You frequently see motor cars endeavouring to pass trams when people are going home from work in the afternoon. They go quickly down George street and endeavour to pass the tram at the stop at the corner of George and Tank streets. The streets are congested, as there are a lot of vehicles parked alongside the road, and people standing waiting for a tram cannot see a motor vehicle coming which is driving between the trams and the parked motor cars. I have repeatedly seen motor cars attempt to overtake a tram before the tram ceases to run. The idea seems to exist in the minds of a lot of motor drivers that so long as they get past a tramcar before it ceases to move they are doing all that is required by the traffic by-laws. Whether that is legally correct or not I cannot say; but it is the intention of the by-laws to protect the lives of the people boarding and leaving tramcars; and motorists who speed up at these stopping places do so with considerable risk to the lives of passengers. We know that long stoppages are not permissible for the trams, which have to discharge and take up passengers as quickly as possible. People who wait at these stopping places for trams cannot see the motor cars coming unless they have a good view of the road and keep a keen lookout for these scorching "road hogs," and they attempt to get into the tram immediately it slows up. I hope the department will make some effort to prevent this sort of thing at the various stopping places in town. I was recently standing at the corner of Adelaide and Albert streets in the evening. A tramcar pulled up and a number of people attempted to board it. The tram had already stopped when a motor car came along at a very fast rate of speed and with a frantically tooting horn rushed through the people, several of whom, including an old lady, fell over in their effort to gain the footpath. Fortunately, no one was seriously injured, but the credit of that was certainly due to Providence and not to the motorist. I suggest that a special detachment of traffic police be given a roving commission in the city to watch certain stopping places in order to prevent such breaches of the traffic by-laws, particularly in the evening.

[3.30 p.m.]

During the daytime the traffic policemen on duty at the street intersections have some deterrent influence on reckless motorists, but in the evening, when there are fewer policemen in the streets on traffic duty, and when also in some cases motorists are suffering from a certain amount of exuberance, the risks taken are really a bit too much for the public, and I trust that efforts will be made to make the motorists of the city behave themselves better than they have been doing in the past.

While I am on this subject I want to say in answer to the hon. member for Nanango—who stated that one of the causes of danger is the lack of consideration dis-

played by drivers of heavy vehicles for other traffic—that I have been driving motors for eleven or twelve years, and I have always found that the driver of the heavy vehicle is the most considerate person on the road. I remember that the Vacuum Oil Company used to have a sign behind their lorries, "Blow your horn. Our drivers are instructed to give you the courtesy of the road." It only lasted a short time, because even the Vacuum Oil Company realised that, good as the advertisement was, it was unnecessary, because the average heavy vehicle driver shows the courtesy of the road to the other driver.

Mr. EDWARDS: I did not say that.

Mr. HANLON: I understood the hon. member to say that one of the causes of danger was the lack of consideration shown by the drivers of heavy vehicles to other vehicles.

Mr. EDWARDS: I said it was a very small percentage.

Mr. HANLON: At all events, that has not been my experience of the heavy vehicle driver. There is this to be remembered with regard to heavy vehicles—that people who do not know much of motors and cannot judge pace are always inclined to exaggerate the speed at which they travel. A light car can travel along the road at 30 to 35 miles an hour, and, although some people will say that is a fast speed, it attracts no attention. But, if a heavy lorry, particularly with solid tyres and chains rattling, passes at 20 miles, bumping over the ruts and holes in the road, people will say that it is travelling faster than the light car. Time after time I have seen people turn to gaze at a heavy vehicle travelling in that fashion without taking any notice at all of the way in which light cars fly through the streets.

Headlights have also been mentioned, and I believe that the regulations controlling them are being altered to make them conform to reasonable requirements. If the headlights are of reasonable power and are correctly deflected so that the light will not shine in the eyes of approaching motorists, very little danger can be done. But the use of spotlights around Brisbane should be strictly prohibited. There is justification for the use of spotlights when driving along country roads, but there is no justification for a car using it on a road 3 or 4 miles away from here. That is absurd—I do not care how bad the road is. If the road is as bad as that, it is unfit for traffic and would not be used by any intelligent motorist. You will sometimes see a car on the crest of a ridge with a spotlight shining in your face a couple of miles away, and until you get below the ridge you can see nothing of the road at all.

I hope the Commissioner will pay attention to these few requests. It is said that many owners of cars think they should not be made to alter their headlights since they bought the cars with the lights in that condition; but there is no more reason for considering them than for considering the man who says that he should not alter his tail light for the same reason. People who bought cars with their tail-light switches on the dashboard had to have them altered; and, in the interests of motorists, pedestrians, and the travelling public generally, people

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should be made to alter their headlights to something like the correct condition.

There is one other matter I would like to mention, and that is the provision made for people suffering from an incurable disease. We have a very fine institution at the present time in the Diamantina hospital, which is doing very fine work; but there is one fault, and that is that it cannot cope with the number of people who are clamouring for admission. If it is impossible to extend or enlarge the institution in its present situation, then it is the duty of the Government to provide another home in some other part of Southern Queensland. I made inquiries some little time back about the admission of a patient to the Diamantina hospital, and I was told that there was a long list of people waiting for admission, and that only the most urgent cases—cases which they thought might possibly receive some improvement in their health from medical attention—could be taken in. I take it that a home for incurables is one in which any person who is unable to look after himself, unable to get the attention, care, and nursing which an invalid needs, should be admitted. If it is necessary that more money should be spent in this connection, I think there are other ways in which money can be saved rather than by cutting down the vote for this necessary institution.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*): Most hon. members who have spoken have made reference to the traffic problem, which seems to evidence the general feeling of insecurity that attaches to motor traffic to-day. Really it would strike one that nearly every member of Parliament or someone belonging to him has been nearly killed, or has come pretty near to it. I know I have had more than one fairly close shave. On one occasion not very long ago a man who nearly ran me down thought I was the fool in the matter. Naturally I thought he was the fool. The trouble is that the regulations are not half as severe as they should be. One of the greatest evils has just been referred to by the hon. member for Ithaca, and that is the general rush of motor car drivers to pass a tramcar just before it stops. That was my trouble. This is going on pretty well every day, and it seems that one or two things are necessary in order to deal effectively with the matter. It is not customary for a tramcar to stop at every street corner, and I believe that the practice that obtains in the South is very much better than our having to sound the bell to cause a tram to stop. The stopping-places should be fixed by regulation, and the tramcar should stop at those points, whether anybody desires to alight from or board the car or not. In those circumstances there could be no possible excuse for a motor car driver putting on extra speed in order to pass just ahead of a tramcar. On how many occasions have we watched our chance to board a tramcar because a string of motor cars was travelling by at 30 to 40 miles an hour? In those circumstances, if you attempt to reach a tramcar, you are a doomed man. This can be witnessed over and over again. Only the other night in George street, just outside this building, I, with others, stood aghast and open-mouthed at the speed that two young fellows were travelling on motor cycles. I remarked to a bystander, "That man is travelling at 40 miles an hour," but

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he retorted, "More like 50 miles an hour." That kind of thing should not be allowed. Those young fellows might have been indulging only in a short spurt, but there should be some regulations controlling the matter. These men are a grave menace, and, unless you have eyes behind you as well as in front, you are almost a doomed man. We want very much stricter regulations than exist at present in respect to the conduct of motor traffic. I have also noticed the great pace that motorists make when proceeding along the Clayfield road. It is marvellous what speed some men can work up. Occasionally the authorities are on the alert, but it seems to be only now and again, and then the vigilance is relaxed once more, probably because of the insufficiency of officers to carry out the work constantly. There is ample room for examples to be made in the direction mentioned by the hon. member for Ithaca and other hon. members who spoke before him. While the drivers of motor lorries are more considerate, nevertheless, you have both classes of drivers among them. Motor lorries heavily laden will be found travelling at a fearful speed through the streets in South Brisbane. Some regulation should be framed setting out the speed at which motor lorries may travel, as is done with other vehicles. How many of our people escape serious accident is a wonder to me.

A good deal has been said about the powerful headlights on motor cars. We want to strike the happy medium. It is difficult to know what to do in this respect on many occasions. I have been in an extremely awkward fix on the Sandgate road after having turned down the headlights in order to pass a motor car with the headlights full on. To me it seems that motorists in the city can do with a less strong headlight than is necessary in the country districts.

The vote we are dealing with covers the very life pulse of our community. The vote of the Home Department certainly seems to vibrate the heart feelings of the community in various directions. The various officers in connection with the working of this department are to be congratulated on the reports covering their operations and on the work accomplished. I sometimes have feelings of intense sympathy for the officers and the Minister who have to do with this department, because they are brought into contact with people who have committed crimes, people who require special help, and so on. A man requires to be physically, mentally, and specially strong to meet the various demands made in these directions.

I sympathise with those who have the conduct of these branches of community life. Seeing that they come through the many demands made upon them so successfully, they are deserving of our highest commendation. As members of Parliament we are perhaps brought more closely in touch with their activities than the average man, so that we are probably better able to appreciate the wide range of service provided by the Home Department with its hospitals, clinics, sanatoria, etc.

There are certain phases of the report of the Commissioner of Public Health to which

I wish to refer. If we make a comparison between 1925 and 1926, we find this result—

	1925.	1926.
Crude birth rate (per 1,000) ..	23·82	22·58
Death rate (per 1,000) ..	8·86	9·33
Infantile mortality (per 1,000) ..	45·4	50·4

It will be seen that our birth rate is declining. The following reference from the report in that connection is well worth quoting, because it leads to further thought—

“The crude birth rate maintains a fair standard as compared with the other countries shown in the table, but the death rate as well as the infantile mortality rate could be better.

“In connection with the increase in infantile mortality, on inquiry from the Registrar-General, I ascertained that the deaths of children under one year were due principally to enteritis (thirty-one cases) and early infancy (twenty cases). This calls for early and urgent attention by the Child Welfare Centre. It was also pointed out to me that of the increase of 5 per cent. nearly half has occurred in the area of the city of Brisbane, the exact figures being 2·3 per cent., leaving 2·7 per cent. for the remainder of the State. The increased rate is also accounted for from the fact that there has been a decrease of 517 in the births, and the deaths of infants increased by 77.”

I am wondering why, with all the effort put forward, especially by the baby clinics, that has to be recorded, because I am here to state that anything that may be done with regard to baby clinics and the wonderful work they are doing should meet with high appreciation.

Only a few weeks ago it was my privilege to be escorted over the baby clinic in the Valley, and I was amazed at what I saw. I am not sure that all hon. members have taken the trouble to acquaint themselves with what is going on in that direction, but, if they get into touch with those who are conducting that clinic, they will be as persuaded as I am that we are on the right track and that the people in control are doing their best and are in full sympathy with their job—and that is everything in these days. I saw photographs there of poor emaciated children who were nothing but skin and bone, and also the transformation that had taken place. Now they are as fine children as one would wish to see. When you see humanitarian work of that kind, then we must feel that the State is doing its duty in that regard. I trust for the sake of ordinary love for the helpless that those hon. members who have not taken an interest in these matters will get into touch with what is going on in that way. I am not sure whether it is generally known, but in Victoria they have been doing more than we are doing in that direction. Of course it is an older State, and probably it has gradually developed these things. Victoria has adopted the idea of a kind of travelling baby clinic—baby clinic in a train. I do not know that it is quite necessary, but it may serve a very good purpose. The train is attached to a “Better Farm Train,” and the clinic

portion is a long bogey compartment capable of receiving some eighty-five mothers, and it is interesting to know that no less than 20,000 mothers have attended since the inception of this system and have received instruction. However, good work is being done in Queensland, and I am hoping that further developments in that direction will take place.

On the same occasion I paid a visit to the Brisbane General Hospital, and I was amazed to note the frightful congestion of the hospital. I could just imagine what a growl there would be if I was permitted to see such congestion in Warwick. You could scarcely walk through the hospital on account of the patients being so close together and the aisles and passages filled up with men. The evidence is that in the Brisbane hospital the space is altogether inadequate for the comfort and welfare of the patients and others there. I am glad to know that a very big scheme has been launched, and I think the new hospital reception building will shortly be completed. I was also privileged to see the laundry. It was wonderful to see the way in which the washing, ironing, and laundry work is done. The general get-up of the establishment, the light and air available, and the splendid equipment, are worthy of all praise, and will meet with the commendation of everyone who is privileged to go through the Brisbane hospital.

Mr. BEDFORD (Warrego): The hon. member for Warwick alluded to the fact that the Estimates of this department covered all periods and conditions of life, but he did not mention that there is no dividend in connection with the work of this department, except very indirectly. This dividend should be made more easily apparent if one service did not exist side by side with the fostering of the cause for the necessity of the service. The whole system of the treatment of children and the treatment of criminals is generally regulated by the necessities which produce both sick children and criminals, because the world has been a little too meaty-mouthed—society has been too hypocritical—to follow the cause of this matter to the root. The world continually goes on encouraging conditions of disease and mental disability which will sooner or later threaten the civilisation which has produced it. Everyone will remember the case of the Jukes family, which is recognised in America and throughout the world as the star example of family degeneracy. The Jukes family first came on the books of the poor law guardians of Massachusetts early in the eighteenth century. Since then they have increased by thousands, and they have cost the United States millions of dollars either in detecting, convicting, and keeping the criminals of that family, or in providing hospitals to cope with the disease which that family has spread. In a lesser way we have the same thing here. The whole position has been brought into the light really by the arguments for and against migration. The other day in England—I referred to this during the migration debate, but have forgotten the name of the man at the moment—a very highly-placed medical man—stated it as his opinion that, if Europe, Japan, and Britain or any of the over-crowded countries of the world found they were overcrowded and subject to the large amount of disease, unemployment, and crime which had been

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made patent to them, and wished to insist on filling empty countries like Australia and Canada, in another fifty years they would be back again in the same old trouble of congested populations, unemployables, criminals, and diseased people; and he suggested what

[4 p.m.] people in every part of the world should have had the courage to suggest long ago—that is, the scientific application of eugenics in the control of health.

We open hospitals for the purpose of treating disease, and at the same time we permit all kinds of quacks and charlatans to batten in the most cruel way on the sufferings of the community. Because he was respectable and he had a church—which should have been ashamed of itself—behind him, recently a man—Hickson—was allowed to come here and batten on the credulity of the people who, if they were only functionally diseased, might have some reason to believe that the faith cure had done them some good. There was one particular case which came under my notice—a woman suffering from cancer, then operable. She refused to be operated upon because Hickson was then on the water, and she believed that he would cure her. She waited three months, by which time the cancer had become inoperable, and she died. We have a press which says that its best desire is to help the Government in making this a saner and a healthier country, why does not this press refuse to publish the advertisements that these quacks and charlatans pay for? It is only necessary in many cases for the worst kind of quack to quote a line of Scripture immediately to become sacrosanct. One of this breed who has recently been taking the people down in South Brisbane advertised, "Where will you spend eternity?" Well, you can search me. (Laughter.) In any case his query, "Where will you spend eternity?" was only used to give sufficient attraction to his other statement that he could cure all diseases, including cancer. The reply of the authorities to his question in his own case should have been that he would be required to spend a considerable portion of his life in Boggo Road. (Laughter.)

The condition of State children and of children generally who are never likely to be healthy is bound up with the continuation of the shocking habit we have of not plainly forbidding the marriage of incurably sick people. Let me quote this press paragraph on the subject—

"In an address delivered at the first meeting of the Section of Paediatrics of the New South Wales branch of the British Medical Association, Sir Charles Clubbe quoted Tredgold as saying, 'So long as we are content to raise no voice against the marriage of the diseased, the degenerate, the criminal, and the pauper, and are willing to educate, feed, and clothe, and ultimately pension as many offspring as these persons see fit to produce . . . then so long will these classes (and these qualities) continue to be perpetuated and their numerical ascendance is simply a question of time.'

"Dr. Clubbe further stated in his address that, 'When we legislate here on this matter let us drop sentimentalism; let us face these disagreeable facts as they are and, looking to the future, legislate on practical lines.'

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Now, considering the fecundity of the unfit—the reproductive quality is relatively as strong in the lazy, weak, and hopelessly diseased as it is in anybody else—it is only a question of time before any civilisation will consist more of the sick than of the well. It is an absolute fact that to-day really perfect health is abnormal, if not almost unknown. Most people off colour one or two days in the week, and then from that condition you go by progression to the fact that there are people utterly unfit for the production of their kind who are producing them, to the great suffering, misery, and discontent of the world.

The State Children Department does a great work, but it is handicapped in a way which I shall indicate. I have here certain tables showing the conditions surrounding twenty-five typical cases in which the children came within the influence of the department. In the first case assistance was first granted on 20th March, 1909. The father then was a chronic consumptive, an inmate of the Diamantina hospital. They then had three children. Subsequently he was discharged and lived with his wife. Since then there have been children born in 1910, 1912, 1914, 1916, 1919, 1921, and 1923. The total assistance has increased in this particular case, and in many others that I will quote.

No. 2 case was a man partially blind, also very deaf, an invalid pensioner, employed by the Blind, Deaf, and Dumb Institution. When the State commenced to give him assistance in 1917 when he was laid aside, he had one child; but two more children have been born—in 1918 and 1922—and two more children are now on the books of the State. Here is another case. In 1915 there were two children receiving assistance, these two children being the children of an inmate of Goodna. He was discharged from that institution, and now there are three children receiving assistance. There are other cases of general diseases which are really not so bad, as the mental taint might go longer than the more physical taint. There are cases of blind men, men with heart disease, rheumatics, and so on. In each case they receive relief for four children, who come along to claim the assistance of the country. Then there is the case of a man suffering from Bright's disease and cancer, who had three children. He was discharged from the hospital as incurable in 1926, when three children were given assistance, and now there are four. In case No. 5 there were three children at the time of admission to an institution in 1923, suffering from chest and lung trouble, and now there are three on the State. In case No. 6 there were five children, and there are still five children on the State. In case No. 7, there were two children at the time of permanent injury, and now there are five, all on the State. An inmate of the Dalby Sanatorium had two children when he first received assistance, but now there are three children on the State. There is the case of an invalid pensioner who had two children in 1916 when he first received assistance from the State, but now there are four children receiving assistance from the State. There is the case of an invalid pensioner who had one child when he received assistance from the State, and now there are two. Of course, it does not follow that just because there is poverty there should not be children produced. Some of the finest children of the world have come

out of the poorest houses; but they have come out of homes which, although there were large families, were the homes of sound people, the homes of hard workers, and not the homes of people who were laid aside because they were unable to earn their own living. The geniuses who have come from the people have come from the poorest homes, but certainly there is no possibility of anything but a big crop of misery and illness coming out of such cases as I have stated. There is another case where the father at the time of receiving assistance was stricken with paralysis. At that time there was one child, but now there are five. The next case is the case of a man with continued incurable illness who had three children in 1923 on the State, and now there are four. The next case is a man suffering with heart trouble; in 1918 he had five children on the State, and now there are six. In the next case there were three children on the State in 1919, and there are still three children. The next case is that of a consumptive, an inmate of the Dalby Sanatorium, who had four children on the State, but now there are only two. The next case is the case of an inmate of the mental hospital at Goodna, who had four children at the time of his admission in 1918, and now there are five. The next case is one where a man had three children on the State in 1923, and now there are four. In the next case there were three children on the State in 1916, and there are still three.

In another case where four were receiving relief in 1921 there are now five. In another case five children of a parent suffering from tuberculosis were receiving relief in 1921, and there are now six. In still another case—that of a man who is in and out of prison—where there were three children receiving relief there are now four. A further case where six children were receiving relief is now entirely off the books of the State. In the case of a parent suffering from acute asthmatical consumption, three of his children were receiving relief in 1924, and there are now four. In another case five children receiving relief since 1922 have now been reduced to four. A paralytic with eight children on the State in 1925 has now seven. The other cases are four in 1924, and now three; five in 1924, and now six; and five in 1925, and now seven.

The remedy does not appear to be immediate. Apparently the poor and sick must be always with us, but they should be a disappearing quantity. Medical science has increased so much and so greatly that the death rate has been lowered, but at the same time the general health of the people has not been bettered, even though the expectation of life is longer. We have a general invitation repeated here to take this matter in hand and see if, with the help of eugenics, something cannot be done to make disease a disappearing quantity.

Mr. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): This is one of the largest and most important departments we are called upon to deal with. The Home Secretary is to be congratulated on the administration of his department. He distributes £1,529,659 among the various institutions under his control. He has a very big duty to perform. During the past year, in spite of the financial stringency, he has as far as possible met all claims generously in the interests of those for whom the money

has been voted. I agree with the hon. member for Warwick that this department touches nearly all walks of life from infancy to old age.

The department is to be congratulated on the administration of the hospitals. I cannot agree with hon. members opposite in their objection to the incidence of the hospital tax. A tax on property for the upkeep of hospitals is the correct method of financing hospitals. As time goes on it will become a lesser burden on the community, and the responsibility will be acknowledged to be equally distributed.

I was glad to hear from the Home Secretary that it is his intention to expedite as far as possible the building of the maternity hospital at Rockhampton. I know that to some extent the old hospital committee was blamable for its laxity in not pushing that project more energetically; but I hope that, in spite of that, the Home Secretary will give effect to the promise he made some time ago, and that before long the construction of the hospital will be under way. That matter is important to us in another direction, because once the building is completed it will open the way to the establishment of a home for incurables something on the lines of Dunwich, that is so badly needed in the Central district. At the present time, as the Home Secretary admitted, it would be preferable if a number of our incurable cases in the hospitals and benevolent asylums were transferred to an incurable hospital in the Central district.

The hospitals in the Southern division are taxed in every respect for accommodation, and there is no doubt that the time has arrived when further additions will require to be made to the hospitals in the Central and Northern divisions to cater for the aged and incurable persons for whom there is no room at Dunwich benevolent asylum and the Diamantina hospital.

With regard to the administration of the Traffic Act, I congratulate the police on the way in which they have controlled traffic. They have done the best they could with the force at their disposal; but I agree with hon. members on both sides of the Chamber that a great deal more still remains to be done. Much more drastic action is necessary if the public are to be protected against the inconsiderate motor owner and driver. Nothing is too harsh and no penalty is too heavy for people who drive motor vehicles regardless of the welfare of the pedestrians. Whilst I know that the Royal Automobile Club of Queensland is doing its best to have the traffic regulations observed so that the comfort and safety of pedestrians may be ensured, it has not been able in many instances to stop men who show no consideration for others. It is time that the State took action to bring these culprits to book and to punish them heavily. At the present time the unsatisfactory features of the Act are apparent when a case gets into court. I do not blame the presiding magistrate; he is not too lenient; but he has not the power. The time has arrived when the legislation should be so amended that the magistrates dealing with traffic offences should be given power to deal more drastically with offenders. There is not the slightest doubt that there is a big number of motorists—not the men plying for hire or the owners of motor lorries, but the motor hog who owns his own vehicle and is so

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proud and pleased with it that he is never satisfied unless he has his engine running at a speed of from 30 to 50 miles an hour.

Mr. PETERSON: In California they imprison the car.

Mr. HARTLEY: I would imprison the man. I recommend to the Minister that all Acts dealing with the imposition of penalties for breaches of traffic regulations should be amended. Not only should magistrates have power to confiscate the car for a number of months, but, when a man is found to be driving a car whilst in an intoxicated condition and is therefore incapable of looking after his car, thereby endangering the safety of the public—not his own safety, because, if he got hurt one would not mind so much—then he should be dealt with drastically and imprisoned. In nine cases out of ten that class of person causes injury to some other motorist who is observing the regulations or some innocent pedestrian, who is probably an old man or woman who has reached the age when he or she has not the necessary agility to get out of the way. Of the large number of motor accidents which have taken place twenty-seven have been fatal; but I am not aware of any case where a motorist responsible for the death of another person has been successfully convicted in the courts. That shows that there is something wrong in the prosecution of those cases, or else the Acts do not permit the police to secure convictions. Although most of them have been brought up for manslaughter, I do not remember that a conviction has been secured, which shows an absolutely blameable, condemnable attitude of leniency on the part of some individual. Nothing is too hard to put on those chaps who, when a tramcar is almost at a standstill, will rush past at top speed in order to get through ahead of the crowd which is just leaving the footpath to board the tramcar. I have seen that happen time and time again, and at times I have felt so wild that, if I could have reached in and got the chap at the wheel, I would have hauled him out. I deliberately tried to stop a motor car the other day on the Toowong line. I do not remember the name of the particular section. The motor car was a good 60 yards behind the tramcar when it was drawing level with the people in front, and the motor car came at top speed and the driver came full rip, and naturally the people who had got halfway across to the tramcar went back, but, being agile and not too much afraid of being run over, I tried to stop that fellow, and I just had time to get clear when he rushed past me and, although he had the brakes on and they were squealing like a pig under a gate, he must have been going at least 10 miles an hour then. I have seen that happen time and time again owing to no policeman being present. There are no policemen controlling the outside sections of the city, and that is where most of the breaches of the traffic regulations occur, and I would recommend the Home Secretary to mount a number of his police on motor bicycles and allow them to patrol the outside sections of the city in order to catch fellows like that.

Mr. PETERSON: Ipswich road is a regular speedway.

Mr. HARTLEY: I think every road that the council has been foolish enough to lay

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down as a racing path is treated as a racing path by a number of car drivers. You cannot single out any one in particular, but I think the greatest danger is the motor bicycle, particularly at night when it has one of those very bright lights—I do not know exactly what class of light it is called—but a spot light is nothing to some of the motor bike lights now carried. The traffic regulations should be strictly carried out.

I notice, too, that in a number of traffic cases when the police have taken action, the £20 bail is forfeited and there is no appearance of the defendant. I think the magistrate should compel the defendant to come forward. If he is not there, instead of forfeiting his bail, he should issue a warrant for his arrest and have him brought up, no matter who he may be. I notice the press sometimes publish the names of those charged with breaches of the Traffic Act, but on other occasions they do not. Evidently it is some well-to-do man about the city when they do not.

Another question that I want to bring up is this: At one time there was a white line drawn across the streets 3 or 4 yards clear of the tramcar stopping places, and motor cars had to stop behind that line in order to allow foot passengers an opportunity to board cars. Go to any stopping place for trams now, and you will find that line is practically erased. I hope the Home Secretary will see that whoever is responsible for keeping that line very much in evidence will have it done.

I have seen the traffic policemen doing their very best to keep the way clear for both passengers and trams, and it is often very difficult; but the fault is due to the Act and its administration. You will see a tramcar pull up at the corner of Edward and Queen streets, and before the passengers can get out a motor car will come up and block the rear exit of the tramcar. Another tramcar will come along and pull up behind it, and a line of motor cars will come up alongside so that people have to squeeze their way between the mudguard of one car and the petrol tank of another car in order to get off the tram. That ought to be prevented, and every effort taken to safeguard the public in that direction. The Home Secretary has a big department to handle, and I know that the traffic police are doing splendid work, but their numbers are inadequate and the provisions of the Act are not drastic enough. Imprisonment and confiscation of the car would go a long way to teach some of these people who drive cars regardless of the welfare of others that they are not going to be allowed to do it.

I want now to refer to the treatment of cancer. I cannot agree with the hon. member for Warrego in his condemnation of quacks. Perhaps if there had been an Act prohibiting cranks and quacks with regard to men entering this Chamber, the hon. member for Warrego and many more might not be here. (Laughter.) What one man calls a quack another man calls a benefactor. I congratulate the Home Secretary on the attitude he took up when he met the British Medical Association delegates and the Cancer Research Committee and refused to prohibit what were called quacks from treating cancer. As the hon. gentleman said, there are numbers of laymen who have not been able to get the necessary diplomas through various reasons—probably financial reasons—who are

just as capable and have made just as exhaustive a study as qualified medical practitioners—if you go by results, probably a much more exhaustive study than a number of those who put M.D. or M.B. after their name. My opinion in this matter is founded on practical experience. I am not going to allow men to be labelled as criminals and quacks when I know that a number of them confer a benefit on the community. When there is malpractice the law is there to deal with it, just the same as in the case of a properly certificated medical man who may be found guilty of malpractice. My experience has been—and I think there are other hon. members who can say the same—that, when medical men have not been able to treat a patient to advantage, that patient has often been treated successfully by a man whom the hon. member for Warrego calls a quack.

At 4.30 p.m.,

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

Mr. HARTLEY: I venture to give this as an unsolicited testimonial. I do not worry whether it goes into pamphlet form or not. For about eight years I suffered from bad health. It does not matter what the trouble was, but I spent any amount of money on some of the best doctors, who gave me a lot of attention, including x-ray examinations, but I was getting so little benefit that I began to think of the time when I should want my little wooden overcoat. (Laughter.) I was quite satisfied that, if what they wanted to do was done, I would want that little coat, and, if something else was not done, I would still want it just the same; and, when you get into that frame of mind, you will chance anything. I consulted a herbalist about twelve months ago, and I want to say that, instead of going about in pain and misery and thinking of that little wooden coat 6 feet down in the ground, where I did not want to go—particularly when I want to have a slap now and again at the Opposition—(laughter)—I have not had that pain again. That is an unsolicited testimonial to what some people would call quackery, and I may just as well give the man's name—Mr. Howard Robbins and his brother, of the Botanic Institute in the Valley. I am not going to have these men labelled frauds and quacks when they can do that. Other men may have had experience, but that is mine, and I have heard of other cases; and, when that is so, such men must not be debarred from conferring a benefit on the community. I do not say that by keeping me here they conferred a benefit on you chaps over there—(laughter)—although they may have conferred a benefit on the community; but I think that silly twaddle like that of the hon. member for Warrego should be stopped, and that what is applied to a qualified medical man should be applied to what we call herbalists, but what others mistakenly call quacks.

Mr. BARBER (*Bundaberg*): I just want to supplement the remarks of various speakers during this debate regarding the careless way in which some motorists navigate their cars. It is said that most of the danger exists in the city area—that is, in Queen street and George street and other crowded streets; but even in some of the

suburban areas, according to my observation, there are just as big dangers as exist in the city. For instance, take Sylvan road, Toowong, where I live—and I must take the opportunity of complimenting the hon. member for Toowong upon having gone to live there. (Laughter.) It is one of the roads over which they "rattle his bones" to the cemetery. (Renewed laughter.) It seems to me that most of the young fellows who own motor bikes and "scorch" with them use that road more or less as a parade ground. Just imagine how you would feel if you lived there, as I do, within 60 yards of the road, and after being here for fifteen or twenty hours a day, day after day, perhaps night after night, you went home and were safe in the arms of sweet Morphew—(laughter)—only be awakened by these motor bikes coming along at an enormous rate! There is no doubt this is one of the things that the traffic police need to sit up and take notice of.

The same thing applies to North Quay. There is no doubt that the traffic there in some cases is too fast altogether. I have not time to reply to the magistrate in London who dealt with traffic matters, but it does seem a difficult matter for a constable to be able to judge what speed these men are cutting out. There are no marks by which a constable can estimate the speed, except by timing the rider from one point to another. Why, the other day I was nearly run over within 200 yards of this building, and the irony of the matter was that the vehicle was a brewer's lorry. Just imagine an old "wowser" like me being run over by a brewer's lorry! (Laughter.) It would have been an awful calamity. I wish to draw the attention of the Minister, as permanent head of the department which attends to these matters, that the police might occasionally pay a visit to Sylvan road and North Quay.

Some reference has been made to the splendid work being carried out by baby clinics. It is very interesting and encouraging to know that they are appreciated, although when the institutions were first established they were looked upon with a considerable measure of suspicion, not only by the medical fraternity but by the general public. Dr. Turner in his report points out the way in which the number of children treated has increased year by year, and the report is very instructive indeed. When I visit the districts in which these institutions are situated I always make it my business to view the splendid work performed and become acquainted with the admirable way in which the sisters are carrying out their nursing duties and giving advice. In the report there is a comparative statement showing the infant life mortality for the years 1925 and 1926. I do not know that that table is as clear as it might be and shows the actual position. Anybody knows that it is safer to strike an average in thickly-populated countries and in old countries than in a new country like Queensland, where often there are annual epidemics. Let me instance the use of these baby clinics. I think it was last year that a severe epidemic of gastro-enteritis broke out in Rockhampton. One of the reasons why baby clinics were established was to enable mothers to visit these institutions and secure advice on the feeding of their children. Although a considerable number of infants died during that epidemic, I am

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quite safe in saying that not one child who died had attended the baby clinic; but, on the other hand, not one child who had been treated by the clinic died during that epidemic. That shows the wonderful benefit of these splendid institutions.

Mr. BRAND: There is a nice little institution at Bundaberg.

Mr. BARBER: They are all nice. I make it my business to visit the various clinics in the different districts, where the sisters in charge give of their very best. There is no doubt that their salaries are not over-high, but their life is just as self-sacrificing as the life of the average nurse in a big general hospital, where you cannot estimate the value of the services of these women in terms of mere money.

If I had the time, I would like to support the hon. member for Warrego regarding crime and allowing people who are diseased either mentally or physically to marry. No doubt, as the world grows wise in its old age, it will sit up and take notice of this matter, and carry into effect the principles enunciated by Lawrence Grönlund in his book, "The Co-operative Commonwealth." Tens of thousands of pounds are spent annually in the sustenance of children who are mentally and physically affected and have no chance whatever of recovering. We know from the study of vital statistics in different parts of the world, especially in Great Britain, that that expenditure runs into millions of pounds annually. Some means should be adopted whereby a large amount of that expenditure could be saved. As I say, some day the world will wake up and become wise. These young people are allowed to grow up, and, although mentally affected, are allowed to marry, with the result mentioned by the hon. member for Warrego. The case of the family mentioned by him has been known for the last quarter or half a century. In a few years not only the medical world but those who are in charge of affairs will deal with this matter in a more drastic way than it is dealt with at the present time.

Mr. BRUCE (*Kennedy*): I would like to have something to say on the traffic question alluded to by previous speakers. I cannot speak from the point of view of a motorist, because I do not own a car, and will probably not own one until Henry Ford's time-payment system comes into operation. I speak from the point of view of the user of the trams. It is a daily occurrence—and to me it is a wonder the police do not pay more strict attention to the matter—to see motor cars passing stationary trams. They are not supposed to do so. That is a grave danger to passengers alighting from and boarding the tram-cars. On the other hand, at nearly every tram stop in Queen street, cars are parked for hours. I have seen a motor car parked for two to three hours between a tram stop and the footpath, and it has resulted in great inconvenience to people travelling by the trams. The motor people are getting far more concessions than they are entitled to, and they are not being handled in the way they should be handled. Men in charge of cars while under the influence of liquor are a danger to everybody, and possibly will kill some person or a number of persons. If a person is apprehended for being in charge of a car while under the influence of

liquor, he should never be allowed to take charge of a car again.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BRUCE: When he is apprehended, he is fined a small amount of money, and after a lapse of a few months he is allowed to take charge of a car again, to get drunk again, and run the risk of killing his fellow-citizens.

When speaking on the question of baby clinics and maternity homes, the hon. member for Warrego spoke of extreme cases; but there are numbers of thoroughly healthy children treated at the clinics. They may catch a cold, or be suffering from diphtheria or some other trouble, but by good, sound advice they are able to grow into sound, healthy children—not of necessity one of the children that the hon. member for Warrego referred to. As everyone knows, infants are liable to contract diseases, which are handled in a capable manner at clinics. I think every hon. member realises—as those members of the public who reside in the vicinity of clinics and particularly the womenfolk realise—the immense benefits of the baby clinics.

This can also be said of the maternity homes. From the early pioneering days until comparatively recent times, the matter of bringing children into the world had to be done in homes where in many cases there were only earthen floors, resulting in great danger of septicæmia following the birth. Since the introduction of maternity homes the women folk are much better provided for, and they do not leave these homes until they are restored to their ordinary health. I think that in the past many women suffered from troubles following maternity because of a lack of proper treatment, and in many cases they never recovered from those troubles. They were largely the women who helped to pioneer the State.

I do not know whether the question has been raised during the debate, but there is one link missing in the chain of institutions governed by the Home Secretary—an institution for sub-normal people. We have the definitely insane in our lunatic asylums, and we have the definitely criminal in our gaols; but there are many people in a sub-normal condition who are not fit subjects for either of these institutions. Under certain circumstances they may be sent to Dunwich, but perhaps they get to be a nuisance there and have to leave, with the result that they are thrown out into the world to mix with the general community and ultimately finish up in the lunatic asylums or in the gaols, for neither of which institutions they are fit subjects. I favour the establishment by the Government of an intermediate institution to cover these sub-normal cases. I know of quite a number of good workers whose labour could be turned to good use if an institution of that kind were established.

Dealing with the question of quacks, I agree with the hon. member for Fitzroy that there are people classified as "quacks" who have done quite a lot of good to the health of the community. I know of a definite case where a man in Brisbane was told by a medical practitioner that he had consumption in an incurable stage. That man received the Abrams treatment, and, although the cure was effected some years ago, he is fit and well to-day. There is

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no hearsay about that case, because I know the man, who lives quite close to me.

When the cancer research campaign was initiated, some eminent men sought to deal with the matter something in the same manner as the mountain gave birth to a mouse. The principal thing they asked for was further protection for the British Medical Association. With other hon. members, I congratulate the Home Secretary on the sane and sensible stand he adopted in not accepting that proposal.

Another question that is sometimes noticeable in small country towns, and for which no legislation is in existence so far, is the practice of prostitution by one or two women. A man may have a home with a family, and one or two women may come to reside close to his home for the purpose of practising prostitution. The law as it stands to-day cannot prevent that. The Home Secretary asks the councils to do it, and the councils put it back on the Home Department. I certainly think something should be done in regard to that matter. Not only does it mean that these people establish themselves near young children growing up, but it also means the dissemination of disease, because where they are congregated in large numbers they can be properly examined by medical officers and disease kept under control; but in small country centres they are a danger, and, whether people like it or not, these matters should be brought under the notice of the department which controls these things. It is a matter of serious danger to young families growing up. If they are within a house or two, youngsters may go in. Generally speaking, these women are not bad-hearted. Very often they give the youngsters lollies and treat them well, but incidentally the youngsters may get to know what is going on and may be morally affected. It is too late this session, but the Home Secretary should get his officers to draft a Bill to deal with this phase of our social life and see that an end is put to it during the next session.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): I am prepared to assist the Home Secretary to administer his department a little better than it has been administered. I admit the hon. gentleman has done a good deal of good, but he could do a lot better if he shifted across to this side.

There is one thing where he is wrong, and I think we are quite justified in protesting every year against the hospital tax. Nobody minds contributing to the hospitals in a fair way, but to cast the whole cost of the upkeep upon the ratepayers is not fair to the rural districts. It may operate all right in the town, but we know very well that there is no comparison between the value of the business done on a small township area and the value produced on a similar area of farm land. To tax the owner of property is not a fair way of collecting the revenue at all, and I hope that in the near future we shall get a little consideration for the man on the land in regard to this tax. It is not a simple matter, but one that he feels very much. Take the district of Toowoomba. It has been shown by members of the Hospital Board that the people in the shire of Millmerran contribute more per head than the people in Toowoomba, although there is no comparison between the benefits

received by the people residing in the shire of Millmerran and the benefits received by the people of Toowoomba.

Some reference was made this morning to the Government representatives on the hospital boards. It is essential that the men who are appointed to the board, whether Government representatives or not, should be men who will look after the interests of the hospitals. A man's politics should not be considered at all in relation to this matter. Once a man goes on a hospital board he should not allow his political opinions to weigh with him at all in performing his duty. The Home Secretary is not justified in deliberately selecting Government representatives on the boards merely on account of their politics. The interests of the people who have to go into the hospitals to be treated should be the sole consideration. It is no use putting a man on a hospital board because he is a supporter of the Labour Party if he is not suitable for hospital work. The main thing to be considered is the administration of the hospitals, and the Government who put a man on a hospital board on account of his politics are not acting in the interests of the State.

The HOME SECRETARY: Would you put a man on the board if he is not in favour of the Act?

Mr. DEACON: I would put any good man on the board. All we have to consider is whether he will do his duty to the hospital. The hon. gentleman knows that, if we put decent men on the boards, they will consider solely the welfare of the people who have to be treated in the hospitals.

The HOME SECRETARY: When the Nationalists have a majority on the shire councils they do not put a proportion of Labour men on the hospital boards.

Mr. DEACON: If they do not put a Labour man on a board as a subscribers' representative, it is because the man is not fitted for the work. The Government, however, put men on the board who are not fit for the position. There are many anti-Labour men whom I would not put on the hospital boards, because they are not fit for the position, and there are also many nominees of the Government who are not fit for the position.

I do not see that we are getting the increase in the number of police which is necessary. We all know that an insufficient number of policemen are appointed each year, considering the extension of the work they have been given to do. The Commissioner has been reducing the number of stations because he is short of men, men having been taken away from some stations to supply a shortage in other places.

[5 p.m.]

Mr. FRY: There were plenty of police about this building the other day.

Mr. DEACON: The Government have certainly been doing their best during the last couple of days, and apparently there has been an increase in the police force. The Estimates provide for an increase of thirty-one this year, but last year there was no increase at all, and the year before there was an increase of twenty-nine.

One thing I want to refer to is the gambling that goes on at sports in South Brisbane. I always look upon gambling as

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being altogether wrong. It is a bad business. We stop it in other sports, and, if it is wrong for one, it is wrong for the lot. If it is wrong at tin hare racing, it is wrong at other sports. Why not go the whole hog and stop gambling altogether?

Mr. COSTELLO: Are you advocating that?

Mr. DEACON: Of course I am. Stop gambling at other places. Why should we not stop it at Albion Park and all the other racecourses? What is the difference between gambling in one place and gambling at another place?

Mr. HARTLEY: If you would not allow betting on tin hares, would you allow gambling on tinned rabbit?

Mr. DEACON: I would not allow the hon. member to bet on anything because I do not think he should lose his money. I have not sufficient confidence in his judgment. (Laughter.) Why not cut out the "Golden Casket" and all these gambling institutions? One is as bad as the other. I cannot see any difference. Why not go on with the business and clean up the lot, even if it did get rid of some jobs?

One matter which the Government ought to consider is the request which the Country Women's Association has brought before them on several occasions. I have also heard hon. members opposite speak about it. I refer to the need for a home for people who are not capable of taking care of themselves and who have nobody to take care of them. It is not right to send them to a lunatic asylum, because they are not lunatics, and they only want taking care of. The Government should seriously consider the establishment of a home to which such people can be sent.

Another matter I want to speak about is the administration of the State Children Department. I have nothing against the administration of the department except that when somebody in the country wants a boy or girl the department at once wants to know the distance the place is away from the railway, and, if it is too far away, the application is refused. The idea is to keep all the children in places where the inspectors can see them at a minimum expense. As a result of that policy, in very many cases the children are kept in the towns, when they should get out into the country, where it would be better for them. In every case where it can be shown that life in the country would be better for a child, I think that child should be sent into the country. Of course, it is not always best to send them out into the country. They may not be suitable for the life in the country, but in every case where it is possible I think that course should be followed. On an average, these children have a better chance when they are sent to the country.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The majority of them are sent to the country.

Mr. DEACON: I do not think they are actually sent to the country. You might as well have them in Brisbane as have them in small country towns. The department keeps the children within handy distance so that they can be inspected with very little difficulty. The first thing one is asked on making application for a boy or girl is whether the applicant is within reach of a railway line, and how long it will take an inspector to reach the place.

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The vote for "Relief of Aborigines" has been reduced by nearly £4,000 this year. I take it that there is about the same number of aborigines to attend to, so that we are economising at their expense. I do not think that is a fair thing.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That is not so.

Mr. DEACON: There is a shrinkage in the vote.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: If the hon. gentleman will examine the Estimates, he will find that the decrease is mostly in "Contingencies."

Mr. DEACON: There is a reduction in the vote.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The aborigines are better treated in Queensland than they are in any other part of the Commonwealth.

Mr. DEACON: That does not matter. The hon. gentleman says so, but he does not know any more about it than I do.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The Protector of Aborigines in Western Australia said so the other day.

Mr. DEACON: In Queensland we are reducing the vote. We have taken the country from these people, and now we are reducing the vote. It is not fair that we should be mean at their expense. It is no use saying that we are doing more than any other State; we are not doing enough.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The transfer of the aborigines from the Taroom station has resulted in a saving to the department.

Mr. BRAND: Not much.

Mr. DEACON: There might be a saving in money, but is the transfer for the benefit of the aborigines?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: All their requirements have been catered for in this vote.

Mr. DEACON: I want straightout information. The hon. gentleman says that all their requirements have been catered for, but has the transfer of the settlement been a benefit to the aborigines?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: We had to transfer the station because of the construction of the Castle Creek irrigation scheme.

Mr. DEACON: We take their country from them, and we cut down their money. I think it is a mistake. I do not think we should treat them in a mean way. They should have the full benefit of the money, even though it is impossible to effect a saving.

Mr. LLEWELYN (Toowoomba): At the outset I would like to express my appreciation at the remarks made by the hon. member for Warwick. I am absolutely in accord with what he said. He referred to the activities of the Home Department in its regard for the infant, the indigent, the aged, and the care of the sick and suffering.

The only criticism I have heard on this vote has been in reference to the Hospital Acts. The Toowoomba hospital was the first hospital in the State to make application to the Government to be districted. I say without hesitation that the application of the Act to the Toowoomba hospital has

resulted in the institution being placed on a very much sounder and more efficient basis than previously.

Mr. BRAND: Has the ambulance been taken over by the hospital?

Mr. LLEWELYN: No. It will not be necessary for the hospitals to take over the work of the ambulance brigades, provided they are financed as they are at the present time. I am hoping that the people of Queensland will continue to appreciate the work of such a wonderful institution as the ambulance, and that it will not be necessary for it to come under the Act.

Mr. CLAYTON: Why did they interfere with the ambulance at Maryborough?

Mr. LLEWELYN: There may be local conditions there which are not applicable to Toowoomba.

Mr. CLAYTON: No; they were in a good financial position and rendering good service.

Mr. LLEWELYN: I do not know anything about ambulance affairs at Maryborough, but in other centres the affairs of the ambulance are managed economically, and at the same time give a maximum of efficiency to the public. That being so, I cannot conceive of any reason why the ambulance should be brought under the Hospitals Act.

The districting of the Toowoomba hospital was a very different matter. Some time prior to the hospital being districted it was in a very difficult position and was unable to collect sufficient funds to finance the work from month to month. The committee at various times was hard put to it to find the wherewithal to carry on the work. Someone had to suffer thereby, and, when the proper care of the sick was endangered in this manner, the only remedy was to district the institution. I am partly in accord with some of the sentiments expressed by hon. members opposite. I believe there are certain men financially sound who are in a position to contribute their quota to the upkeep of a hospital who do not do so, and it is necessary that they should be compelled to pay their quota.

Mr. BRAND: We are all in accord with the general principle, provided the tax is spread over the whole community.

Mr. LLEWELYN: I have in my hand an interesting table showing the local authorities embraced in the Toowoomba hospitals district, together with the number of property owners involved, the precept struck, and the average amount paid per property owner in each local authority district. It reads—

Local Authority.	No. of Property Owners.	Hospital Precept. 1927-28.	Average per Property Owner.
		£	s. d.
Toowoomba	5,520	1,602	5 9
Cambooya	586	455	15 6
Clifton	931	737	15 10
Crow's Nest	773	431	11 2
Drayton	653	244	7 6
Highfields	661	313	9 6
Jondaryan	1,448	1,206	16 8
Millmerran	722	591	16 4
Pittsworth	1,085	619	11 5
Rosalie	2,200	917	8 4
Tarampa	1,298	465	7 2
	15,877	£7,580	9 7

This is equal to a rate over the whole district of 0.369d. in the £1.

Mr. CLAYTON: Do you say that is all the tax they pay?

Mr. LLEWELYN: Yes.

Mr. CLAYTON: That is only the direct tax, but they also pay an indirect tax.

Mr. LLEWELYN: In the Toowoomba hospital area there are 15,877 property owners, whose total precept is £7,580, or an average of 9s. 7d. each. Surely there is not much to cavil at in that?

Mr. BRAND: Do you say the farmers pay only that amount?

Mr. LLEWELYN: I do. I have given you each shire with the number of property owners and the amount of precept, and I have also given the average.

Mr. EDWARDS: That is only in respect of small allotments.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Rubbish!

Mr. LLEWELYN: Does the hon. member think that the charge falls only on the man working outside the township and not also on the man in the town working on the basic wage? I can disabuse his mind on that score. If hon. members will divest their minds of prejudice and look on the matter in a perfectly fair way, they will admit that a comparison of the conditions obtaining in the Toowoomba hospital to-day with those which prevailed prior to the legislation of this Government shows the cost to the local authority to be a mere bagatelle in comparison with the interests of the sick in the community. Their interests are, or should be, the concern of everybody.

Hon. members opposite have made reference to the representation on the hospital boards. In my own case, before I recommended any person for appointment to the Toowoomba hospital board I submitted the matter to the Toowoomba branch of the Australian Labour Party, which made the selection by plebiscite. I see nothing wrong in that.

Mr. BRAND: Why should they be consulted in the matter?

Mr. LLEWELYN: The recommendations are made by the parliamentary representative, who, in turn, puts the onus on the local branch of the Australian Labour Party. That is a fair and democratic way of conducting the business. Men from the Labour ranks give their time free. They are possessed of the same high standard of intelligence as men on the other side, and I am quite sure that the Labour members on the Toowoomba Hospitals Board are above the average. They go there Sunday after Sunday and attend to various matters, and I resent the cheap sneer of members opposite at the selection of Labour representatives.

Mr. CORSER: No personal matter was brought in at all. It was the principle that we attacked.

Mr. LLEWELYN: As a principle I do not see very much wrong with it. The Hospitals Act has been a boon to the community, and it does not impose a hardship on anyone. When I was connected with the ambulance brigade it was my duty to go to people and ask them to support that institution, and some of the wealthiest men in the community never subscribed a penny piece. The same thing applies to the hospitals.

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What is the position to-day? The property-owners, whether they like it or not, have to subscribe.

MR. BRAND: Why only the property-owners?

MR. LLEWELYN: Great Britain also had a voluntary system, and that voluntary system has failed. We have to look after the sick and the afflicted, and we cannot depend on the vagaries of human nature. We must admit that the sick and afflicted should be the first care of the community, and the best way of financing the hospitals is that provided by the Act, although it may not be perfect.

MR. BRAND: What is wrong with nationalisation?

MR. LLEWELYN: There is nothing wrong with nationalisation.

During this debate considerable reference has been made to the traffic regulations, and I desire to refer more particularly to the regulation regarding the tail lights of motor vehicles. It would appear that that regulation provides that the tail light shall continue to burn at the rear of the car during the whole time the car is moving; but it does not require a great knowledge of electricity to know that it would be possible for anyone with a criminal bent to arrange for the tail light to be controlled from the driver's seat. This is a matter to which the attention of the traffic authorities should be drawn.

I desire also to make some reference to our Westbrook Home. Several hon. members, particularly on the Government side, have referred to our subnormal and abnormal children. Possibly an abnormal boy will learn something at a picture show that he should not, and I am glad that the Director of State Children made some drastic comments in this regard in his report. Those concerned should take this matter into consideration and see whether it is not possible so to regulate the pictures shown that they will not influence our children in the direction indicated by the Director of State Children.

At 5.25 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

MR. LLEWELYN: I desire to pay a tribute to the superintendent of the Boys' Home at Westbrook. The superintendent has over ninety boys under his care at present. I suppose the highest tribute that could be paid to the home is that the boys who have left the institution and gone out into life have made good as the result of the care exercised by the superintendent in the moulding of their characters. These boys have written at different times to the superintendent telling him how they are getting on, and thanking him for the great interest he manifested in them while they were inmates of the institution. At Christmas and other periods of the year they send donations in money and in kind. They have made good as members of the community, and have a kindly thought for the boys who are inmates at the present time, and send along gifts as a token of appreciation of the treatment they themselves received. Every provision is made for the physical wellbeing of the boys at the home. They are taught cricket, tennis, football, and all the sports which lead to physical development, and their moral train-

ing and educational welfare are not lost sight of. It behoves me as a member for a district close to the institution to speak a kindly word in favour of the work of the superintendent and his staff.

MR. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): I wish to deal with the vote for the "Chief Office," but, first of all, I desire to deal with the statements made by the hon. member for Toowoomba in connection with the apportionment of the hospital tax. It was very nice to hear the hon. member say that the average for the city of Toowoomba is 5s. 9d., but he was kind enough to point out what has been said on this side of the Chamber all day—the inequality of the tax as it falls upon the man on country land—and he has proved it. I will show how futile his argument is, and the inequality of the tax in regard to the country districts. He says their average ranges from 15s. 10d. to 16s. 4d. a year. It is not a question of the average tax, but what is the individual tax.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: What about the relative ability to pay?

MR. ROBERTS: The average tax is the tax spread over the property owners in the city of Toowoomba, but the man in the country has to pay land tax in addition to the hospital tax. I say that is unfair. If a man has only 100 acres of agricultural land, for instance, he will have to pay something.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It is less than ½d. in the £1.

MR. ROBERTS: Broadly speaking, he would pay £2 a year. This tax is going to increase. The hon. gentleman knows equally with myself that so far we are only in the experimental stage. Let the hon.

[5.30 p.m.] member look at the new hospital buildings in Toowoomba. I have no fault to find with them, but we know that the cost has yet to be put on the people in the Toowoomba hospital area. What is it going to be? I say quite definitely this afternoon that the hon. member's statement is not worth the effort he put into it. The tax is not an equitable tax at all.

I am not concerned as to appointments to hospital committees. I know that it is the policy of the Government to make their appointments, and while they are the Government I, like the hon. member for Burke, bow to their will. (Laughter.) I know that the hon. member for Toowoomba finds considerable difficulty in satisfying his people in the matter of getting these appointments, and I sympathise with him under the circumstances.

In this country of ours there is an estimable body of women known as the Country Women's Association. They have asked the Home Secretary to appoint one of their nominees to the committee of the Toowoomba hospital, but the Home Secretary has said that it cannot be done—that the Act would have to be amended. I want to give the lie to that. It could be done if the Minister were willing to flout the recommendation of the Australian Labour Party at Toowoomba and appoint one of these women. There is nothing to prevent him doing it, but he must bow to the majority of his party at Toowoomba and take their appointees, although otherwise he could quite easily have accepted two of their nominations and appointed the

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nominee of the Country Women's Association. All this moonshine is no good. We want to be up and doing things. We want to look facts fairly and squarely in the face.

Mr. HARTLEY: Do you know that the Country Women's Association is a political body?

Mr. ROBERTS: I deny that quite definitely. The Country Women's Association is not political, but I do not want in any way to bring it into the question in that way.

Mr. HARTLEY: You have done it.

Mr. ROBERTS: The association is doing a very great work for the women of this State.

Now I want to deal with two or three matters affecting the chief vote of this department, because I am somewhat different to many hon. members who have spoken to-day. I am not altogether satisfied with this department. I recognise that the officers have a great amount of work to do. In fact, they are called upon to do much more than they are able to do capably. I am not making that as a charge against the Home Secretary or his officers. I recognise that possibly the Government are calling on the department to do more than it is able to do, but I say that things are not being done as efficiently and promptly as they should be done in a department of the public service.

Take the Darling Downs Pest Destruction Board. We know that, unfortunately, somebody in the Home Secretary's office blundered. It could be found out where the blunder occurred, because someone must have blundered at the start. The Pest Destruction Board at Toowoomba was anxious to get certain privileges and conditions, and suggested to the Home Secretary that certain powers should be given to it. Why it wanted some of them I do not know. I have told some of the members—and there is no reason why I should not repeat it here—that they were only looking for trouble in asking for these privileges. They wanted to take over the fruit fly work and other pest work pertaining to the fruit industry in the Toowoomba district—a very good task, but impossible for them. This Parliament has shown that to be so by passing a special Act in 1918, which Act, however, the Government have never been game to administer. The Bill, when introduced, provided for a charge on the fruitgrower.

The then Leader of the Government, Mr. Theodore, said that it would be a mistake to pass the Bill in that form, and it was amended. Unfortunately, this board came along with the suggestion that a by-law should be approved enabling it to call upon the fruitgrowers in that district—a very large district—to pay from 5s. for every tree from one to twenty-five, and other graduated amounts up to £2. The Home Department should have consulted with the Department of Agriculture, when it would have concluded that it was inadvisable to promulgate such a by-law. At any rate, the by-law was approved, and it was then discovered by the Crown Law Office that the board had no standing. The board had appointed officers, called upon people to make their returns, and collected fees. Quite a number of people refused to pay the fees, but others, rather than run the risk of the police court prosecution which was threatened, contributed to

the fund, and £700 odd was collected. I understand that the board is still waiting to see if it is possible for the Home Department to validate the by-law, so that the money can be utilised. When the Water Act was being discussed in the country this matter came up for discussion also. The men engaged in the fruit industry did not object to paying a reasonable amount for the eradication of the pests affecting their industry, but they contend—and they should know—they are the men in the business—that these pests cannot be dealt with in one district, and, unless the board is made State-wide, very little can be done. They object to being made a buffer area for some other locality. They say that down the range in the Tarampa district the pests breed in millions, so they cannot be eradicated in the Toowoomba area. They say that such an idea is unthinkable, and for that reason they object. I am voicing their objection to-day, and I am definitely accusing the Home Department of having blundered. The board has no power. Someone went wrong in this matter and caused this board a lot of inconvenience. It has become an object of ridicule, and no action has been taken with the money beyond its investment at the present moment. The Home Department should give a decision promptly, so that the board may know just exactly where it stands.

Some time ago I presented a petition from the people of Willowburn asking for the construction of a certain road to meet the convenience of the asylum. It was pointed out that this road could be constructed at very little expense, provided the department approved. I have not heard a word since about the petition. It shows there must be something wrong somewhere.

Then there is the case of St. Vincent's hospital. That institution secured a very valuable grant from the Home Department. I was asked to interest myself in the matter, and presumably the same request was made to the hon. member for Toowoomba, because, when people are in need, they use every opportunity to secure representation. There should be some courteous relation between the Minister and the departmental officers and members of Parliament. It should not be necessary for members of Parliament to visit the department to ask definitely whether certain things have been done. I afterwards ascertained—not through the department—that the Government had decided to grant £500 to St. Vincent's hospital. That has placed that wonderful institution in a very unfortunate position.

They have their private wards, but they do a large amount of public work for the sick of the district, and, rightly or wrongly, assume that they have to take in public patients. They find now that their vote is £500 only, and this will place them in an unfortunate position.

These matters are of public importance and show me that something is slipping in connection with this department, and, if so, it is my duty to voice my opinion. I propose to take occasion to discuss the various votes affecting matters concerning my own electorate or the interests of the State.

The city council of Toowoomba is giving very definite evidence of a desire to do something for the health of the people. This week they are holding a special health week. I am pleased to know that the progress

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associations and the Country Women's Association are co-operating with the city council and attempting to do all that is possible to try and influence the minds of the public on how necessary it is to give their first attention to matters concerning health. This week addresses on health are being delivered by medical men and officers of the council to all the schools in and around the Toowoomba district. I am pleased to pay this compliment to them.

While sitting in this Chamber I have scrutinised some figures that are included in the report of the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum. On page 13 I find there is a statement giving the gross and net expenditure and the cost per head of the inmates. I am always anxious to know as nearly as possible the amount of money we obtain from the Commonwealth Government for the inmates of Dunwich who receive the old-age pension. I do not know how many instances similar to the one I am about to refer to could be found if we went through the whole of the reports of the sub-departments, but I found that this statement does not balance. In one instance it is £410 out and in another instance £90 out. That shows me that the work is not being done as it should be. If this is evidence of the general run of sub-departments, then there is not much in it. To me it is a most important matter. A public document should be correct, and printers' errors should not occur. I have not the time nor do I desire to go through these reports to see if they are correct. When I read them, I assume that they are reliable and authentic. This shows that someone is not doing his job. If the officers in this department have more than they can do, it is up to us to see that they are assisted. I do not want to complain, but I have reason to believe that the department is overworked. I say that definitely. The Home Secretary's Department is called upon to administer more than it is able to deal with. That is what I have been attempting to illustrate this afternoon. It is a department that comes in contact with every person in the community at some time or other, either at birth, marriage, or death. It has linked up with the whole system of this community. I appreciate the job which the department has to undertake, and for this reason I want to have reliable and authentic information placed before us. The matter of the correspondence which I mentioned, together with this incorrect table and other matters, satisfies me that officers of the department are overworked. If not, then someone is not doing his job.

Mr. LLEWELYN (*Toowoomba*): The hon. member for East Toowoomba has referred to the question of Government assistance to St. Vincent's hospital, Toowoomba. I know that the hon. gentleman, like myself, has interested himself in the welfare of that institution, and I desire to give him full credit for it. As the result of our joint representations, the Home Secretary's Department has granted an additional £250, which, considering the many demands made upon the "Golden Casket" funds, is a very generous donation.

I should like to refer to the work of the Country Women's Association. I do not for one moment regard that as a political body, because in my experience—and I have had a considerable amount—its activities

are in no way political, and I feel it my duty to give utterance to that fact to-day.

Mr. DASH (*Mundingburra*): I am pleased to note increased allocations for many of the institutions covered by this vote.

Reference has been made to the work of the officers of the Home Secretary's Department, and, as one who has had a good deal to do with the department, I wish to accord my meed of praise to the officers from the Under Secretary down to the messenger. No matter how much trouble they may be put to, these officers are at all times only too anxious to find out the true facts of a case and to afford all the information that it is in their power to convey.

Speaking for my own electors, I can say that in the present Home Secretary we have one of the most sympathetic Ministers who have controlled that department. It is said that a former Home Secretary, in the person of the hon. member for Albert, was also most considerate, but, of course, that gentleman's occupancy of the position was before my time, and I speak only of facts within my knowledge.

In Mr. Gall, the Under Secretary, we have an officer well fitted to discharge the duties which he is called upon to undertake; and every officer from Mr. Chuter, the Assistant Under Secretary, to the messenger, Mr. Mulcahy, is of the most courteous disposition.

I think one of the best institutions we have in Queensland to-day is the baby clinic, whose operations I am hopeful will be extended still further. That the work of the clinics is of service cannot be denied; the tributes paid by mothers who have taken advantage of their services is proof of that. A point which is sometimes lost sight of is that these clinics are established not to treat children when they are sick but to give advice which may prevent children from contracting various forms of illness. The babies are well cared for and the nurses employed are very highly skilled. The department, in establishing maternity wards, arranged for certain nurses who held double certificates to come along and get experience in child welfare; and they were afterwards able to conduct the clinics in other towns. I would like to see baby clinics established, with trained nurses in charge, visiting the back country and giving the mothers tuition the same as is done in the cities. I think that is the intention of the Home Secretary, and, if they are established under somewhat similar conditions to the domestic science carriages good work will be done and the money will be well spent.

Some criticism has taken place in connection with the "Golden Casket" and to the fact that the funds received in this way are used to assist charitable institutions. A good deal of revenue comes from that source, and, if it had not been for the holding of the "Golden Casket," that money would have been sent to Hobart and utilised there. The closing up of the "Golden Casket" in Queensland would not stop people from securing tickets in Tattersalls' sweep. They have agents all over Queensland, and even at the present time a large amount of money leaves this State and goes to Hobart. If the Government can keep that money in Queensland, it will be a good thing. The fact that money received through the "Golden Casket" is used to assist in the

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upkeep of our hospitals has saved the consolidated revenue a large amount of money.

I notice that the vote for "Outdoor Relief" has been increased. No doubt the department realises that in the near future several industries now operating will be closing down owing to drought and other conditions, and, as a result, a large number of men will be thrown out of employment. Despite the fact that some of them will receive relief from the Unemployment Insurance Fund, they can only receive a certain amount, according to the amount paid into the insurance fund, and the Home Office has been alive to the situation and has placed this extra money on the vote for "Outdoor Relief" for the purpose of relieving distress, particularly in cases where there are big families.

The hon. member for Cunningham referred to the vote for "Relief of Aborigines." I was one of those who had the opportunity of visiting the Barambah settlement with the Home Secretary, and it was quite a surprise to me to see the fine work done there in connection with aborigines. One realises what the Labour Government have done for the Australian native when we compare the present treatment with that meted out to the aborigines by previous Governments. In those days, about the month of May in each year, the aboriginal was handed a blanket and a tomahawk, and he was compelled to go round to the people in the district and chop wood in order to get food to live or else chase kangaroos and wallabies in the scrub. The condition of the aborigines at Barambah speaks well for the work the Government are doing. The children are being well educated. Recently in Townsville I met two aborigines who had been educated at the Barambah settlement. They had purchased a boat, and they explained intelligently to me the conditions of the agreement for purchase. They pointed out that they were going fishing on the Barrier Reef, what they could earn per week, and the amount of money they anticipated they would be able to save by the end of the year. The aborigines at Barambah were building their own homes, which were well kept; and they had their own hospital. The young aboriginal females were learning the art of domestic science. It was interesting to see these aborigines at work making baskets and clothes, patching up the old men's trousers for the young fellows, and the different kinds of work they were doing. The aboriginal boys were making toys and learning mechanics' work in the way of house-building, carpentering, joinery and various kinds of woodwork. We went to the kitchen, and saw the aborigines preparing the food, which was second to none in comparison with most of the establishments in any part of the State. They cooked an excellent dinner for the visitors, and the waiting at the table was first-class. Some of the men were in charge of a sawmill, and others were doing farm work. The place seemed to be almost self-supporting. There were no complaints from the aborigines. They had their own brass band. I noticed there was great jealousy between the brass band players and the aborigines who wanted a corroboree to show that they were ahead of the "brass-bandites."

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: Were you there for the races? (Laughter.)

Mr. DASH: I was there when the races were on. There was no holding-up there, and no cause for criticism by "Harvester" or other sporting writers. (Laughter.) They were all out from the word "go." The man on the grey happened to score on both occasions—he won the double, if I recollect rightly.

I want now to refer to fire brigades. I have a report from the Townsville fire brigade board, which shows that they are doing good work in the controlling of fires there. There is a paragraph in the report, copied from a journal published in the United States, to this effect—

"Every citizen should take to heart the message issued by Herbert Hoover, Secretary, Department of Commerce, Washington, U.S.A.—

The annual fire loss suffered increasingly throughout the nation is a matter of the gravest national import, and one that demands the concerted action of all citizens.

Let no one think that he who suffers no fire suffers no loss. The wastage of national resources places a tax on every citizen. No nation is so wealthy that it can consign to the flames property worth such vast amounts without the loss being felt throughout the entire economic structure. No insurance system can be devised that will not reflect this loss in the costs of production, for which every citizen must pay. No business can be conducted, no commodities offered to the public, without taking into consideration the costs of fire insurance."

[7 p.m.]

Then we have another paragraph—

"A matter that is more important than fire-extinguishing is fire-prevention. This is a subject to which every business man and every citizen should pay serious attention. The term 'fire-prevention' is often misunderstood and misapplied. It should not be confounded with fire-combating or extinguishing. The fact of having an efficient fire staff and machinery must not be considered as being well protected. Sound fire protection is based on fire-prevention, just as it is better to have healthy surroundings by studying hygiene, sanitation, etc., than to neglect these and pride ourselves on having good doctors to cure the ills that might have been avoided. Under fire-prevention should be classed all preventive measures, including the education of the public. This education might, and has in some parts, taken the form of practical stories, introduced into the elementary readers in the schools, displacing the meaningless fables of the old order."

That is a paragraph taken from the annual report of the Townsville Fire Brigade, and there is no doubt that it should commend itself to people not only in Townsville but also in other parts of the State. It points out that "prevention is better than cure."

Mr. CARTER (*Port Curtis*): I wish to preface my remarks on this vote by complimenting the Minister on his efficient and humane administration of his department. The hon. gentleman has, if not one of the

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most important departments of the Government, at least one which covers very many important activities. It is a department which calls for all the kindly consideration and sympathetic treatment which can be given to it, and amongst the many successful Ministers who have been in charge of this department the hon. member for Mount Morgan ranks with the late Mr. Foxton and the hon. member for Albert. There is no doubt that we have a very capable man in the Minister, although, like other hon. members, I deplore the fact that he has much less money to handle than is needed to administer the affairs of his department. Unfortunately, it may be said of the whole world that much more money could be spent by every Government than is spent to-day. But we have to realise in Queensland, as they are realising in other States of the Commonwealth, that some economy will have to be practised, and, unfortunately, a department such as that administered by the Home Secretary feels the drawing in of the purse strings particularly. Like many other hon. members on the other side, I could speak about needs that have not been met, but I know that the Minister has to cut his coat according to his cloth, and I am not one to ask him to do the impossible. You cannot get more than 20s. out of the sovereign; and the Minister is doing the best he can with the money at his disposal. I regret that he cannot do more; but that is not possible under the circumstances, and I am satisfied that he is doing his best.

I was particularly struck during the discussion by some of the remarks which fell from the hon. member for Warrego. He touched upon a very important matter—the necessity for care in introducing people into the world and the methods by which it should be done. I am satisfied that we are much less careful of humanity than we are of our horses, our sheep, our pigs, our goats, or our fowls. When we set about breeding horses great care is taken to select the very best dams and sires. But, when it comes to humanity, we deal with the matter in a haphazard way; and, if a person is mentally deficient, or deficient in other ways, we take no notice of it.

Mr. MOORE: You would not like anybody to pick out something wrong with you.

Mr. CARTER: I am not concerned so much about myself as about hon. members sitting on the other side. (Laughter.) A great deal more could be done in connection with eugenics than is being done to-day. In an age like this, when we are going deeply into research, this is one of the questions that could be taken up.

The hon. member for Warrego pointed out quite a number of cases where bread-winners had been placed in an asylum as mentally unfit, and during some period when they were not sufficiently demented to be retained in the institution they were released, but immediately that was done a new start was made with the family. That has taken place in many cases that I have had under observation. Very great care should be taken with persons found to be mentally deficient. They should be regarded by the community as unfit to be the fathers or mothers of the children of the future. That applies to our herds, and, if it applies to our herds, surely we should be just as particular in the rearing of the human race! We have sufficient mentally deficient persons

introduced from overseas without introducing others into the world through the natural channels.

With regard to general scientific research for medical and other purposes, I agree with the hon. member for Warrego that we should choose those who are fit for that particular purpose. Whilst I would not restrict the practice of medicine entirely to men skilled in surgery and medicine, I would suggest that considerable oversight be exercised over those who practise as herbalists, etc. The hon. member for Fitzroy has stated that some herbalists have been successful in restoring men to good health, but that does not justify every herbalist in practising medicine. Whilst the herbalist may be permitted to some extent to practice medicine as a chemist, still I think great care should be taken in the selection of people to carry out scientific research. If the people of the community desired to have some person engaged in cancer research they would not choose a fishmonger or a well-sinker, but would desire the person placed in charge of that work to be chosen from those skilled in surgery and practical medicine, and with a thorough knowledge of chemistry. The men selected to carry out these particular duties can be secured only from the proper school where the store of knowledge of surgery and medicine is imparted to them.

The PREMIER: What about the Abrams treatment?

Mr. CARTER: If the Abrams treatment is thoroughly scientific, then I am prepared to allow those people who believe in it to have it practised upon themselves. The community have a perfect right to come together and secure a machine to carry out the Abrams treatment.

The PREMIER: Something like the tin hares? (Laughter.)

Mr. CARTER: Yes. They should be permitted to obtain such an instrument and practise upon those who are desirous of being practised upon; but I would like to see the greatest care exercised by those in charge in the selection of the very best people for scientific research, and I know of no people better fitted than those skilled in medicine, anatomy, and surgery.

Most of our past and recent discoveries in medicine have been made by highly-trained men like Pasteur and Mechnikov. They were wonderful men, who did a great deal for medicine. We do not hear of men who accidentally appeared in the community without any knowledge of medicine giving us anything valuable from a scientific point of view. Therefore I believe, with the hon. member for Warrego, that we should be very careful in a selection of people for the carrying on of research of this kind, and, whilst not debarring from practising medicine all except those trained in a medical school, I would see that care was exercised in the selection of men for medical research.

Some mention has been made of quacks practising medicine, but I am quite sure that, if a person wanted any advice on a matter of law, he would go to a trained lawyer, or if he wanted advice in a matter of geology, he would go to a trained geologist. If a man wanted a loaf of bread, he would not go to a fishmonger for it.

Mr. MOORE: If a man wants to sink a well he usually gets the assistance of a water diviner.

[Mr. Carter.]

Mr. CARTER: That is so. He would get a trained water diviner; but I have seen some water diviners who could not find water when they went to look for it.

Mr. MOORE: So have I.

Mr. CARTER: Several hon. members on both sides of the Committee have touched on the subject of financing hospitals. I want to voice my opinion on this matter. I would sooner have the present system of hospital boards, with all its defects, and the present method of finance than revert to the old voluntary system. It is possible that the present system of raising money by a precept on the local authorities is not an entirely equitable one. I would prefer to see the money raised out of the common revenue. I agree with the hon. member for Nanango that a farmer does not always receive the basic wage. I am satisfied that there are plenty of farmers in my district who are paying rates for the upkeep of hospitals and at the same time do not receive the basic wage. I also agree with hon. members representing farming districts who state that there are plenty of farmers not earning the basic wage even with the assistance of their families. I realise that my suggestion means the entire Government control of hospitals.

A good many hon. members have touched upon our traffic problems. The motor car, the motor bus, and the motor lorry are invaluable aids to meet modern conditions. I cannot imagine the condition of a city like Sydney if it had to resort to the old horse traffic. There is no doubt that some control of motors should be exercised. It is all too common, as has been pointed out by one hon. member, for these motors to travel at a much greater speed in our streets than they need do. Motorists should adopt a little more care in passing stationary tramcars. Only to-night I left a tramcar at the corner of George and Queen streets, and alongside the car was a long string of motor vehicles, one jammed behind the other, which greatly increased the difficulties of the people getting out of the car. Some little time back an illustration was given showing the position of the foremost motor car in relation to a stationary tram, and emphasising that no motor car must overtake a stationary tram. Motor cars should not attempt to block or pass a tram car while it is stationary. That regulation should be enforced.

In this connection I am not finding fault with the police, whom I regard as being as efficient a body of men as will be found in Australasia. Speaking as one who has travelled extensively in the other States, I believe that, with the exception perhaps of traffic control, they are the equal of any police force. Traffic is much better controlled in Melbourne than here, but that is largely a matter of more experience on the part of the Southern people.

Mr. MOORE: There are safety zones there.

Mr. CARTER: Yes, and there are other things.

A very pernicious practice which is gaining ground in this State is in connection with motor and vehicular traffic waiting to cross streets drawing right across the footway during the time that a right-of-way is given to traffic in the main street. For example, traffic in Queen street is given the right-of-way, and vehicles in George street draw right across the footway to the danger of

pedestrians. Such a practice is not permitted in the main streets in Sydney, where the offending car or vehicle is compelled to go back under penalty of a fine. Some such system should be introduced here, and I commend the suggestion to the Home Secretary; the lives of pedestrians should not be endangered because a few irresponsible people do that sort of thing.

Another matter to which I draw attention is the congestion of a thoroughfare like Queen street by the parking of cars. For a city like Brisbane that street is far too narrow; yet cars are parked in it, and business people like Finney, Isles, and Company are stupid enough to believe that two or three cars in front of their business premises will lead to business. If cars were compelled to park outside of Queen street—I do not care where so long as the main streets are kept free—it would assist those in control of the traffic and add considerably to the comfort of pedestrians and shoppers.

Speaking on the matter of the Greater Brisbane Council, I was one of those who were enthusiastic at the time that scheme was put into operation. I fully anticipated that every activity within the Greater Brisbane area would come within the ambit of the council. In New Zealand there is not a city in which the municipality does not control public utilities like water, sewerage, trams, and in many cases both electricity and gas. I am satisfied that in Brisbane not only should the trams be put under the council's control, but also the Water Board's activities. There is no greater tragedy in Queensland than the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board, which has been a calamity since its inception. It is as great a calamity as the trams were under Mr. Badger. Reading the "Courier" recently I was struck by a remark made by the deputy mayor of Brisbane, Alderman Watson, having reference to the trams, with which I entirely agree. Having lived in this city for over a quarter of a century, I have had the opportunity of closely observing the tramway service. There were no more deplorably-run trams than during Mr. Badger's regime, because I do not think there was a wheel on a tram that had not flat places on its surface, and there was never enough power to run all the cars needed for the service.

Against his will he was compelled to stop his trams before crossing the street, when he used to go full speed across. I will admit that the passengers on the trams, like those in the present trams, at least received courtesy from the conductors. Though some may find fault, my experience of the employees on the trams is that they are amongst the most courteous and capable officials I have ever met. Despite the fact that I have seen the trams crowded to the limit, I have seen these employees in the best of good temper push through and collect the fares. Many of us would be very angry if we had to do that work, and I must admit that I myself would be quite unfitted for it. They exercise the greatest care and patience, and I am sure they look well after the interests of both the council they are employed by and the travelling public, and though there may be an odd one or two with whom fault could be found, speaking of them as a body they do their work faithfully and well. To-day, under the management of the council, the trams are more efficient, more useful, and more pleasant to

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ride in than were the trams under Mr. Badger. They are a vast improvement on the old trams, and to-day there are no better trams in any part of Australia than the trams functioning in Brisbane.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. member will now discuss the vote.

Mr. CARTER: There has been a good deal of latitude allowed in this discussion. It appears to me that a good deal of the discussion has been entirely out of order.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is taking both latitude and longitude. (Laughter.)

Mr. CARTER: I was carried away by the interjections of the members of the Opposition.

I would like to say a word of commendation on the activities of the Commission which was appointed to inquire into local authority boundaries. Though I have not read its report—

Mr. MOORE: It has not been presented yet. (Laughter.)

Mr. CARTER: I know some of their activities, and I am quite in accord with a great deal of that which they have in view.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: No one knows what they are doing.

Mr. CARTER: I have inquired very closely, and know something of what they are doing. In my district we have a number of local authorities, and two of these local authorities could well be amalgamated. What occurs there occurs in many other places, and a good deal of money could be saved by creating greater local authority areas. Two or three local authorities could be combined and put under one shire clerk and one engineer. A great deal of good could be done in that way, and I am in sympathy with what the Commission is doing. I have discussed the matter with members of the Commission and know something of what they are inquiring into and something of that which they will report on. Therefore I am in accord with their work and with the prospective report that they will bring in.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, *Mount Morgan*): Before the vote goes through, although I have replied earlier in the day to many of the suggestions made, I would like to refer briefly to some of the statements made since I spoke this morning. Although the vote is for only £7,852, about sixteen hours have been occupied in discussing the pros and cons of the whole of the ramifications of the Home Office, and I think it is a tribute to the officers of that department that so few complaints have been levelled against the administration. The complaint of the hon. member for East Toowoomba regarding the overwork of the staff is one that the Home Office staff are quite prepared to reply to, because they are doing congenial work and are doing it under congenial circumstances. They are endeavouring in every possible way to meet the wishes of the many callers at the Home Office. Members of Parliament who call at the office can expect that courtesy which they always meet with when they come to that office.

The hon. member complains of a by-law which was passed through the Home Office

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but which was invalidated. The Home Office is not a legal office, nor does it offer legal advice. The experience of the officers, which is always available to local authorities, is invaluable at times and represents a considerable amount of saving to certain local authorities, but the Home Office does not profess to be a legal authority. The by-law referred to gave to a Darling Downs Pest Destruction Board certain powers under the Local Authorities Act by regulating the imposition of a specified tax. The by-law was drafted by the Local Authorities' Association's solicitor, and submitted to the Home Office, which in turn submitted it to the Crown Law Office. It was O.K.'ed in that office, and went through the ordinary form. The by-law afterwards proved to be invalid, and to-day we are endeavouring by conferring with the Department of Agriculture to find some way out of the difficulty and to gain their consent to some joint method to solve the problem.

I wish to refer to a petition presented, I understand, by the hon. member for East Toowoomba to the Home Office some time in July, to which the hon. member for East Toowoomba says he received no reply. I do not know whether he personally presented the petition at the Home Office or to me at Parliament House. I have had the records searched, and the petition is there, but there is nothing to show who presented it. There is no accompanying letter. If the petition was presented to me at Parliament House, no doubt I might have taken it to the office as an act of courtesy without knowing whom I received it from, believing that the ordinary business method had been pursued, and that there would be some identification marks to show who gave it to me. The fact is that it was found in my office as coming from Toowoomba. It is a hardy old annual which we have been dealing with for some years in the shape of a request to the department to make a road through a reserve near our institution, which would not serve us at all, and which has been repeatedly turned down. I was in Toowoomba when Mr. Justice Brennan represented the electorate, and I met a deputation on the subject. I stated that the department could not entertain the request that we should expend money in making a road for people not in any way connected with our institution. We have always agreed to make our portion of roads within our own grounds. As a matter of fact, we have for some time seriously considered taking in the reserve where this road is wanted and adding the ground to the institution and closing the road. I have the petition here, and there is no accompanying letter with it; there are only the names of the petitioners to go on. It was found in my office without any mark of identification on it, and I do not accept any responsibility for its having gone astray. There is a proper course to adopt in approaching the department, and any hon. member who adopts that course will always receive a reply. Mr. Gall informed me that he had a personal interview with Mr. Llewellyn, the hon. member for Toowoomba, and informed him that this matter had been dealt with previously, and that he contemplated going to Toowoomba to investigate the matter with a view to adding the reserve to the ground of the institution.

The hon. member for East Toowoomba also discovered a slight error in the report presented by the Under Secretary. It was a

printer's typographical error, one to which the hon. member could easily have drawn the attention of the Under Secretary. It merely placed some figures in the wrong column, but did not alter the total.

[7.30 p.m.]

Another matter to which the hon. member referred is St. Vincent's hospital. Everybody must recognise that, in common with other hospitals, it is doing excellent work. The hon. member for East Toowoomba, with the hon. member for Toowoomba, has repeatedly urged me to give financial assistance to this institution. I have been most generous to it. When visiting Toowoomba I have seen this magnificent building, and wondered who advised the sisters to place such a building in a town like Toowoomba, the population of which does not justify it. The hospital may do good work, as the hon. member says, but to all intents and purposes it is a private institution. The Government have no check upon its expenditure; no investigation of its accounts. I have helped it at times when it was in a critical financial position; but I have always pointed out to the reverend mother in charge the position that the hospital occupies; and I did it because, although I recognised that it was doing a good work, it did not scrutinise the financial position of its patients, and it would have to recognise, just as every other hospital has to recognise, that each year a definite programme of work is set by this Government, for which the "Golden Casket" funds are called upon. Every hospital committee or board in the State has to recognise that the money we are able to give them as a grant from the fund must come from the surplus that we have left after we have carried out our building programme. As I said previously to-day, we have now entered upon the building of some of the largest maternity wards or hospitals in Queensland, embracing the large centres of population. The hon. member for East Toowoomba, with the hon. member for Toowoomba, acquainted me with the fact that a deputation from this institution was coming to see me. I met the deputation and placed the whole position before them. They left me perfectly satisfied that I had treated them in a very generous manner, particularly the reverend mother from Melbourne, who is a keen business lady and recognised that my attitude had been most sympathetic. I explained that the attitude I was taking towards that hospital was not different from the attitude I was forced to take towards other institutions which had a direct claim on my department, and I felt that she left perfectly satisfied.

In the course of this debate numerous suggestions—some of them valuable—have been made with regard to the question of traffic control. I think it will be recognised that, if I were to attempt to give effect to every suggestion embracing additional police services, the vote would not be sufficient to see me through. What hon. members have to remember is that the present cost to the Government of the traffic work in the metropolitan area represents something like £15,000 a year, and, when they get up and tell us what is done in Melbourne or elsewhere, they must remember that in Victoria the Government are compensated for their outlay by the local authorities of the State. Traffic control is the function of local authorities, and, although the State is supervising the traffic in Brisbane through the

police, there are many aspects of traffic regulation which might be undertaken by local authorities.

Take, for instance, the parking of the cars in Queen street. The policemen to-day are a very expensive item in the civil side of our life. Hon. members have complained that there is a shortage in the number of police. If the local authorities assisted in the control of traffic, then we would have sufficient police to meet the requirements of other services that the police should be performing.

The hon. member for Normanby stated that in connection with the crossing of a street at a certain point I had blamed the women and children. That was altogether wrong. In dealing with that complaint I stated that at that particular point pedestrians were anxious to cross the road, and would not observe the ordinary rule of traffic—that is, remain on the side of the road on which they alight until the tram has moved on, and then cross at the proper crossing. Motorists have certain responsibilities, but pedestrians also have responsibilities. I am satisfied that when the new regulations are printed and brought into existence and the suggestions made during this debate are presented to the traffic department, we may look for an improvement in some of the things that have been mentioned.

The hon. member for Burnett spoke at length to-day, charging me as Home Secretary controlling the hospitals with selecting men of one political shade of opinion when appointing Government representatives to hospital boards. I do not know how he supports the argument that in administering the Act and deputing certain powers to representatives I should select to represent me on the board men who are hostile to the very legislation that I would be asking them to administer. The thing would be unthinkable. I look upon the Government representatives on hospital boards as persons to give effect to the policy of the Government they represent, and whom better could I ask to recommend suitable men in an electorate of which I have little knowledge than the Labour representative in Parliament, and, failing the Labour representative of the electorate, the organisation that is carrying out the work of the political party that I represent in this Chamber?

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The HOME SECRETARY: That is the policy I have adopted. The Hospitals Act is based upon sound principles of representation. If the local authorities desired to select a candidate, would they select a person who did not support their party? They might do so in isolated cases; but in most cases they would select a man who would give effect to the policy of the people selecting him. The hon. member for East Toowoomba suggested that I should place a representative of the Country Women's Association on the Toowoomba Hospital Board. I ask the hon. member why the local authority does not place one of these ladies on the board.

Mr. ROBERTS: The local authority has the right to appoint only one representative.

The HOME SECRETARY: The local authorities have the right to appoint three

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representatives. There is no more responsibility on me to give effect to that proposition than there is on the hon. member for East Toowoomba to carry out what I suggest. If there are subscribers in the district, then they have the right to elect three representatives. The subscribers in Rockhampton elected two ladies to the hospital board. I do not know whether they are on the board still, but I know they were there for a while, and no doubt they did excellent work.

The hon. member for Burrum in referring to the Hospitals Act mentioned the fact that the hospital rate in the Bundaberg district this year was 1½d. in the £1. That may be quite correct, for that is the worst district from a hospital point of view in the whole of the State. I say that for this reason: The hospital district of Bundaberg is the most over-hospitalised district we have in the State. There are too many hospitals in it, and the cost of maintenance under the present system is enormous. When the hospital board was created the condition was such that the principal hospital in Bundaberg was practically bankrupt. In that large institution they had six pairs of pyjamas only for eighteen patients, while there was a corresponding shortage in the hospital equipment. That meant that the board had to shoulder the policy of extravagance initiated in the early days of that district, and until the board gives effect to its policy of co-ordinating the hospital services under one roof, and by this method reducing the managerial expenses, the district will have to continue to carry the burden. It is recognised by hospital authorities that five beds per 1,000 of population is reasonable provision to make in a hospital; but at Bundaberg the provision is 8.5 beds per 1,000, and the institutions are scattered in different parts of the district, with different controls and different overhead expenses. That all means that added expenditure is necessary.

Take the Childers hospital, in which the hon. member for Burrum is interested. To-day, owing to a provision of the Hospitals Act which gives security of finance and enables a hospital board to embark upon a policy of construction with a certain degree of financial stability, the little town of Childers is building an up-to-date hospital costing £9,600. The repayment of that money is based on similar terms to a loan obtained by a local authority undertaking loan work. The repayments will be spread over a sufficient number of years so that those who enjoy the benefit of the asset will carry the burden by repaying the interest and principal represented in that asset. That is a sound financial policy.

Mr. MOORE: Very sound.

The HOME SECRETARY: What opportunity would the Childers people have had under the old system of raising one-third of that sum before they could start to put a stump in the ground to give effect to their hospital policy?

I recognise that the ex-chairman of the Bundaberg Hospital Board, Mr. Cattermull, did excellent work. He was a man of independent means, who gave a considerable amount of his time to the institution. As a result he was able to do a vast amount of work at the most critical period in the history of the board. He was on the board as a subscribers' representative. I regret that there was not a sufficient number of

subscribers to enable him to retain his seat, because in the matter of continuity of policy I personally believe that Mr. Cattermull would have played a most important part. The new board is tackling its task, and it has a big task ahead of it. It has to bring its institutions into one common hospital ground. The cost of one of these institutions is very high. When that hospital can be removed and placed under the control of the general hospital, much of that expense will disappear. I received from the Bundaberg Hospital Board an estimate of its expenditure, and seeing that the precept was being increased, I detailed an officer of my department to go to Bundaberg and investigate the reasons why this increase was necessary.

I have his report, which states that the board is fully seized with its responsibilities, and goes on to say—

“Apart from the above (which refers to a motor car) I feel that the members are conscientiously endeavouring to carry out their duties in the interests of the hospitals, and the Government are carefully watching expenditure.”

During the period that Mr. Cattermull was president of the board, the estimated expenditure was exceeded by £3,421 in order to meet urgent commitments incurred in bringing the hospital to a state of efficiency. The consequence was that the new board was met with a deficit; yet the complaint has been made that the new board is extravagant. That board had to increase its salary bill by over £1,000 for the year 1926, due to the 44-hour week and new hospitals award generally. The report proceeds—

“The average daily number of patients is steadily increasing.”

Then follows a table showing that the Bundaberg hospital is faced with a heavy expenditure to meet the increased cost, common to every institution in the State by reason of the 44-hour week and the new award conditions. It must be remembered that those increases would require to have been met whether the board system had been in operation or not.

The hon. member for Wide Bay spoke about a lack of community of interest in connection with the Maryborough hospital, but the fault lies with the boundaries of the local authorities, because invariably the community of interest of the hospitals is a reflex of the community interests if the local authority boundaries are properly drawn. I hope that the Local Authorities Boundaries Commission will remove much of this ground for complaint.

The hon. member for Wide Bay also stated that the precept for Maryborough was 1½d. in the £1. That rather alarmed me, because I looked upon the Maryborough Hospital Board as one of the most careful of its kind in the State. I immediately communicated with the secretary of that board by telephone, and I am informed that the rate required to meet this precept for the current financial year is .94d. in the £1, and that the councils have struck a rate of 1d. The figures for the Maryborough hospital are interesting. The Government have to take the responsibility for the 44-hour week, and the Board of Trade and Arbitration must accept responsibility for its award. No one can argue that the awards for nurses and domestic servants employed in hospitals should

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not keep pace with the awards for other industries and activities in the State.

Mr. WEIR: Does the figure of .94d. include £20,000 capital expenditure?

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes—that is to say, it includes the interest and redemption charge for this year in respect of that capital expenditure. Before the board became a district one, the sum of £3,950 was the quota which had to be raised locally by subscriptions, etc. Since the board took over the quota of the local authorities was £3,997 in the first year. In the second year the amount decreased to £3,053, because the amount had been over-estimated in the first year and there was a surplus in addition to a fixed deposit which was falling due that year. The third year represented an amount of £4,419, out of which the sum of £686 had to be provided for interest and redemption on the loan which the board received in order to provide decent accommodation for nurses and for other improvements.

I venture to say that if anyone with a knowledge of the hospital districts, prior to the passage of the Act, takes the trouble to go, as the hon. member for Warwick did, to the Brisbane hospital—in the wealthiest part of the State—and sees the conditions that exist there as a result of no fixed policy of finance—sees a hospital which is capable of holding 298 patients asked to hold 460 patients—he will have some conception of the difficulties of those who are charged with the problem of finding hospital accommodation for all sections of the community.

There is one aspect of the hospital boards that is not taken notice of. The boards are facing their problem at the most critical period now because they have to make up the deficiency of work over a period of years. They are co-ordinating their services, as they are in Brisbane, where they have expended, as the hon. member for Warwick mentioned, something in the vicinity of £25,000 on an up-to-date laundry, which is turning out articles at 1d. a piece, and where, by the expenditure of money, they are cheapening the cost of the management of the hospital to such an extent that the saving meets interest and redemption on their loan, and where they are developing a community system or intermediate system of hospital where anyone may go and get up-to-date hospital accommodation, the best equipment possible, make their own arrangements with their doctors, and pay the hospital for the accommodation and the nurses just the same as in a hotel. Those are sides of the Hospitals Act that are not very often mentioned. Mention is always made of the tax, although no one comes forward with any suggestion as to a method of taxing on a more equitable basis than the one provided in the Act.

There are other matters that have been mentioned in the debate, but they are too numerous for me to touch on to-day.

The question of mental defects has been mentioned. I am one of those who believe that although as a Parliament we have not the courage to tackle the cause, we should at least shoulder our responsibilities and provide for the effect. Queensland is sadly in need of another institution midway between Dunwich and Goodna, because there is a section of patients who are unfitted to go to Goodna and who have to go to Dunwich, where they constitute themselves not a dan-

ger but a nuisance to the inhabitants of what should be a home of rest for the old people of this State. I do not want to labour that question. I hope it may be my pleasure at an early date, if funds are made available, to see established in the State an institution that will serve a long-felt want.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): I wish to deal with one or two matters that the Minister was courteous enough to reply to concerning myself. Let me take the Darling Downs Pest Destruction Board first. I accept the hon. gentleman's statement, but I would point out that there is an Act of Parliament on the statute-book and the Government have not put it into effect. The hon. gentleman states that the Home Department is not a legal office. I assume that, when it is applied to for instructions and information and it submits questions to the Crown Law Department and intimates to the councils in the various districts that they are doing it, when the decision comes it should be looked upon as one that will stand the test of the courts, and will be in order. The difficulty is that the Home Secretary has been too long in giving the matter consideration. He says now that his department is conferring with the Department of Agriculture on this matter. That should have been done at the first, and that is what I blame the department for.

With regard to St. Vincent's hospital, I am glad that the Home Secretary has satisfied himself as to the correctness of the representations of the hon. member for Toowoomba and myself, and has made a further grant to the institution.

I want particularly to deal with the matter of the petition which has been referred to. The Minister said the petition was found in his office, and that inquiries were made from the hon. member for Toowoomba, but nothing was ascertained as to how the petition got into the office. I delivered the petition myself to the Home Secretary in his office. There was no covering letter with it. If I had posted it from Toowoomba, I should have sent it under cover of a letter. I have yet to learn that it is necessary to send an accompanying letter if I hand in a petition. I want to know now why, as the representative of East Toowoomba, in which Willowburn is situated and where those who sent that petition were employed, I was not asked if I knew anything about the matter. I visit the Home Office every week. I again repeat that I personally handed the petition to the Home Secretary in his own office. At a later date I asked him what had become of it. It is all right to say that it is merely about making a road through a reserve. The petition sets out that the reserve is not used by the general public and that the road would be a considerable convenience to the institution at Willowburn. It would enable the officials to get from Toowoomba to the institution and expedite the work of the institution. It was shown in the petition that the cost to the department would be very small because there was sufficient material on the ground to do the work. It was assumed that some of the inmates of the institution could carry out the undertaking.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member has exhausted his time.

Mr. Roberts.]

Mr. CLAYTON (*Wide Bay*): I spoke this afternoon in connection with the Maryborough hospital and quoted from the "Maryborough Chronicle" of the 12th instant, in which Mr. Demaine, the chairman of the Maryborough hospital board, stated that the hospital rate was 1d. in the £1. Since then the Home Secretary has telephoned to the secretary of the board and ascertained that it is .94d. At the last meeting of the board Mr. Demaine stated that it was intended to borrow a further sum of something like £16,000 for the further equipment of the Maryborough hospital, and he told the local authority representatives that it would be necessary to increase the rate by ½d., thus bringing the hospital rate to 1½d. in the £1. I wish to make it clear that I was quoting from the remarks of Mr. Demaine, as quoted in the "Maryborough Chronicle," at the last Maryborough hospital district board meeting.

[8 p.m.]

Item (Chief Office) agreed to.

RELIEF OF ABORIGINALS.

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

"That £62,585 be granted for 'Relief of Aborigines.'"

Mr. MOORE (*Lubigny*): I look upon this vote as rather important. We have taken this country from the aborigines, and it is therefore up to the Government to see that they get a fair "go" and are not penalised or victimised in any way whatever. We have a Chief Protector of Aborigines, who does his work well so far as he can with the means at his disposal, but a state of affairs has arisen in North Queensland of which there is very direct evidence, to which I wish to draw attention. There are incidents at other places of which I have pretty direct evidence, but which I do not want to introduce because I want to rely on the evidence in the case on which there has been an inquiry. This is in regard to a case at Wrotham Park Station, where aborigines who did not want to sign on were terrorised by a police constable who went out there, assaulted them, and locked one of them up in handcuffs in a poison house all night and generally terrorised them, threatening that, if they did not sign on, he would send them to Barambah. An audit inspector went up there and found that these men have been short paid to the extent of £199 13s., which so far has not been paid up to them. The report came down—I dare say hon. members saw something of the case in "Truth"—and Inspector Mann was sent up to make a thorough inquiry into the whole thing. Six charges were made, viz.:—

"1. Misconduct on or about the 11th day of January, 1927, in ill-treating and unlawfully assaulting an aboriginal native of Queensland, named Jerry Croydon, at Wrotham Park Station.

"2. On or about the 5th August, 1926, misconduct in unlawfully supplying liquor to three female aboriginal natives of Queensland named Gracie Docherty, Katie Tiger, and Charlotte Docherty, at Wrotham Park Station, such supply not being for bona fide medical purposes.

"3. Misconduct between the 5th and 12th day of January, 1927, at Wrotham Park Station in having used threatening words to aborigines Sambo Pluto, Jerry

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Croydon, Tommy Tiger, Monty Docherty, Alick, Dick Callighan, Billy Charcoal, and Brickery, to the effect that he would send them to Barambah Mission if they did not enter into an agreement to work at Wrotham Park Station.

"4. On or about the 4th day of August, 1926, neglect of duty at Wrotham Park Station in failing to take any action or to report to the Inspector of Police, Cairns, his superior officer, the fact that Ronald Mackay, bookkeeper at Wrotham Park Station, whilst travelling with him and two aboriginal natives of the State of Queensland named Nancy Brickey and Katie Tiger, by motor car, between Wrotham Park and Monkey Flat, did supply such aborigines with rum whilst the car was stationary on the road, such liquor not being for bona fide medical purposes."

No. 5 is a charge of misconduct of the same sort, and No. 6 is rather important, because this was the only one which was found to be satisfactorily proved—

"6. Violation of duty in furnishing the Inspector of Police, Cairns, his superior officer, with false and misleading duty returns for the months of September, 1926, and January, 1927, such returns not showing that he was at Wrotham Park Station at any time during the months mentioned."

Inspector Mann took evidence on oath. He had all the blacks in the witness-box, and his cross-examination was very severe, and, after taking evidence, he found—

"To my mind it is a very singular thing that these aborigines (if they are concocting the story in this charge, and also the other charges, as alleged by the defence), who have no idea of dates, could pick on a time when Constable Doyle was at Wrotham Park Station, and did not deny that he was there. I am of the opinion that these unfortunate aborigines have not the intelligence to concoct such stories and pick times when Constable Doyle was at the station and had the opportunity of committing the offences, as they have no idea of dates, but are quite all right on any incidents occurring."

"The handy witness, Mr. Lawrence, comes into the picture again in this case, and is available to swear testimony to relieve the situation for Constable Doyle.

"From the evidence given by Constable Doyle and Mr. Lawrence in previous charges, I cannot accept their evidence as carrying any weight in this charge, and I therefore am of the opinion that Constable Doyle committed the assault on Tommy Tiger as set out in the charge preferred against him."

This is an extract from the report by Inspector J. Mann, dated 27th April, 1927, in connection with the charge of threatening various aborigines that they would be transferred to Barambah if they refused to work on Wrotham Park Station—

"In consequence of such glaring contradictions in Constable Doyle's evidence in this regard, I am quite satisfied that he did threaten Jerry with the Mission, and as he threatened Jerry, there is no doubt in my mind that he threatened

the others as well. What strengthens my views further in this matter is that Lawrence endeavoured to get all the boys to sign on again and they refused, and that he brought Constable Doyle to Wrotham Park Station for the specific purpose of getting those boys to sign, and, therefore, Doyle must have had to use some force or some threats to get them to do so, as some of them say they would not have signed on only for being frightened of Constable Doyle sending them to the Mission, and further all the boys who signed on are quite positive that they signed on on Wednesday, the 12th January last, the morning after Jerry was locked up.

"I don't believe the evidence of Constable Doyle and Mr. Lawrence in this matter, and I am of the opinion that Constable Doyle is guilty of the charge as preferred against him."

Inspector Mann said that he did not agree with the decision of the Commissioner. This is an extract from the report by Inspector Mann on the charge of assaulting Jerry Croydon—

"After having the opportunity of watching the demeanour of the witnesses in the box, and considering the circumstances, I do not believe the evidence for the defence in this matter as regards Jerry causing a riot. I think had any riot been contemplated by the blacks that night, that Constable Doyle's actions were the very thing that might have brought it about, and only for the good sense and timidity displayed by the aborigines, under most aggravated circumstances, a serious disturbance may have occurred when they knew that Jerry had been locked up—a boy that they all look up to.

"Jerry is a quiet, intelligent boy, and, in my opinion, the reason for his arrest and detention was to frighten the aborigines who had refused to sign on, and the effect of Jerry's arrest was that they all signed on next morning.

"As the essential facts of the unlawful assault and ill-treatment of the boy Jerry are admitted by Constable Doyle and Mr. Lawrence, and that Constable Doyle had no justification for the action he took, I cannot come to any other opinion but that he is guilty of the charge as laid against him."

The Protector of Aborigines made certain recommendations. This is what he reports—

"As Protector of Aborigines and a member of the police force, I think Constable Doyle's conduct was disgraceful, and I therefore recommend for your consideration the dismissal of this constable from the service. This recommendation is not altogether made in view of his conduct in this charge, but after considering his conduct in connection with which he was charged on other breaches of Police Rules."

This is an extract from the report of Inspector Mann on the charge of failure to report the supplying of liquor to aborigines—

"On the evidence I am of the opinion that Constable Doyle, No. 2645, of Maytown, is guilty of the charges preferred against him, and that the evidence for the defence is most untruthful and unreliable."

These are extracts from the report by the Chief Protector of Aborigines, dated 1st August, 1927, in connection with charges against Constable Doyle—

"I think Inspector Mann's finding was in accordance with the real facts, although it rested almost entirely on aboriginal evidence which would have failed against the combined evidence of the three Europeans, only that the inspector was clever enough to prove, by the evidence of Lawrence's own station hands, that he was perjuring himself, presumably to shield Doyle, and by the conflicting evidence of Doyle and Mackay that they were doing likewise.

"The following questions might be considered:—

(a) Should any action be taken against Lawrence and the others for perjury—they were giving evidence on oath?

(b) Should not the aborigines be taken away from the station and future permits refused, as long as Mackay and Lawrence (or Mackay at least) is left there?"

This is a minute by the Under Secretary, Home Department, dated 12th August, 1927, in connection with the charge of assaulting Jerry Croydon—

"I think that Inspector Mann was quite correct in his summing-up in this case. Doyle and Lawrence admitted the essential facts. There is no doubt that Jerry was handcuffed and locked up and the position is made worse by Doyle's admission that Jerry had done so little to him that if he had had to bring him before a court he did not know what he could have charged him with.

"In addition to that he threatened to send all the boys to the Mission, meaning Barambah. No doubt all the display of force was used to terrorise the boys to sign on at the station.

"The letter from Doyle himself to Acting Sergeant Galligan is sufficient to indicate the class of man Doyle is. Amongst other things, in this letter he says with regard to Jerry—

He appears to know a bit more than the average abo., so I have let him go from my protectorate.

He is under the impression that he is going to the Mission, so give him a chat before you sign him on to Bolwarra.

Put the 'breeze up' this boy Jerry as I fancy he talks too much. I would have gave him something only for a few of the 'white blacks' that hang around the station here."

If these blacks are to be employed on various stations, then they are entitled to every protection, and the people in whose charge they are placed should not exploit them or victimise them in any way. If they are not to be slaves, they should have the opportunity of choosing where they are going to work. They should not be terrorised, locked up, and assaulted because they decline to sign on at the particular station they were on. Judging from the charges that have been made, these boys—or two of them at any rate—had ample

Mr. Moore.]

excuse for any disturbance they may have made, and they would have had ample excuse even if they had assaulted the constable, because the treatment they received not only from him but from the overseer of the station was disgraceful. This was pointed out by Inspector Mann in his report, and then by the Commissioner. The Commissioner in his finding, which goes a long way to bear out the charges, stated—

“On Charges 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, Constable Doyle is given the benefit of a grave doubt. His action in treating aboriginals familiarly is not commendable.”

I do not know whether the Commissioner calls it “familiar” to terrorise, assault, and lock up aboriginals. He continues—

“and he is warned to be more guarded in his conduct with such people in future. On Charge 6 he is fined 10s. He is leniently treated, but he showed honesty in not claiming travelling allowance on such a doubtful patrol. This leniency should prove a good lesson to him in future, whilst he remains in the Police Force.”

Considering that his duty sheets did not show that he went there at all and that he did not admit that he was there until the inquiry was held, it is hardly likely that he would charge for travelling allowances. I do not see that the benefit of a doubt in such a serious case is such an extraordinarily good factor in his favour.

The point I want to make is this—that there are apparently certain places in North Queensland where the aboriginals are not receiving the treatment they should, and the Chief Protector of Aboriginals should be backed up to the very limit if he considers that the station which treated boys in this manner should not receive permits. The Government should see that no permits for aboriginals are given to this station. I recognise that it is a good thing to have these aboriginals working; and, if they are treated fairly and decently, they do good work. Under such circumstances they have a right to be employed, and, when they sign on and complete their term, they should not be terrorised and victimised if they do not desire to sign on to work on the station again. The evidence in this case is pretty complete. The Minister courteously allowed me to go through the whole of the papers. The evidence proves the complaints that were sent to me and the signed statements received from aboriginals complaining that they were not getting fair treatment. I considered that those complaints and statements should be submitted to the Minister. I took them to the Home Office, and the inquiry was instituted. The result is not satisfactory, because I do not think these boys have been fairly treated. They have been compelled to stop on the place and sign on when they did not want to stop. When it has been found that these aboriginals have been £199 short paid, the inquiry should go a little further. The fact that the Commissioner gave the constable the benefit of a grave doubt in five charges preferred against him and convicted him on a minor charge, especially when those charges related to offences against men whom it was his duty to protect, does not finish the matter. The matter should go a little further, and these boys should receive the money that is owing to them.

Mr. WEIR: Where is the constable now?

[Mr. Moore.

Mr. MOORE: I do not know whether he has been transferred. He was at Molloy.

Mr. WEIR: Has he been promoted?

Mr. MOORE: I do not know. Inspector Mann was specially detailed to conduct the first inquiry. He is a good officer, and went there, conducted the inquiry, saw the demeanour of the witnesses on oath, and in his report states specifically that, watching their demeanour, he was perfectly satisfied that the examination did not break down the evidence of the aboriginals, and that all the charges made by them were true. It does seem rather extraordinary that the Commissioner should go up there and, in spite of the report by Inspector Mann, should hold another inquiry and give the benefit of the doubt to the constable. The behaviour of the constable was characterised as disgraceful. The position is not as satisfactory as it should be, and it is up to the Home Department to back up the recommendation of the Chief Protector of Aboriginals, who has made a close study of the whole case—he suggests that two men should be prosecuted for perjury, and that permits for aboriginal labour for the station should be withheld.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Nanango*): In supporting the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition concerning the treatment of certain aboriginals in the North, I think it is a great pity that in this age of civilisation such a position should arise, and I sincerely hope that early attention will be given by the Home Department to clearing up the whole matter.

Speaking particularly of Barambah, it would appear that everything is proceeding satisfactorily, and the Minister is to be congratulated on the interest which he has at all times exhibited in connection with the settlement. I am afraid that the hon. gentleman's task will not be an easy one in time to come, because, with the liberal educational facilities which are being extended to the aboriginals, some attention will have to be paid to their useful and profitable employment when they leave school. Many of them are particularly skilled in certain trades and handicrafts, and consideration might be given to a scheme whereby a market will be found for their manufactures. These people should not be left to find employment only at cutting scrub or bullock-driving, but should be considered under some such scheme as I mention, because in that way the State would receive some repayment for the services which are being rendered and at the same time the position of the aboriginal would be considerably improved.

The Home Secretary has visited Barambah on several occasions, and he may appreciate my suggestion that, when the opportunity offers, some irrigation work might be undertaken at Barambah Creek. Even if they were only to irrigate 5 or 6 acres, it would create a wonderful amount of employment. If the aboriginals interested in that work were picked out, and a pump put on the bank of the creek, where there is a fairly good supply of water, it would go a long way towards making the station self-supporting, and possibly make the living conditions better than they are at the present time. There is a large area of land attached to the station which could be cleaned up much better than it is at the present time. Ringbarking could be carried out, and there

should be a general clean up of the whole place. There is sufficient labour at Barambah to make it a model station if the labour available were used judiciously. They have made a wonderful improvement in recent years in connection with the buildings, the school, and so forth. The station should be made a model place, so that people who visit there could see exactly what the aborigines are doing. It should be wiser to carry out such a plan than to allow the aborigines to be scattered over the different stations in Queensland, as happens at the present time. I hope the department will go into these matters very carefully, because, as the Leader of the Opposition said, it will not do the aborigines any harm whatever to ask them to do a reasonable amount of work. It would keep them in better health, and the labour is there to carry out the work I have suggested. I do not think they should be sweated; but, in the interests of the State and in their own interests, they should be kept together as much as possible so that the station may be made self-supporting.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, *Mount Morgan*): The statements made by the Leader of the Opposition to-night are not pleasant reading. The Government and the Chief Protector, by their attitude towards the aborigines, have proved that they recognise their responsibility towards the natives of Australia. Taking the general conduct of the aborigines in this State, the efforts made to alleviate the conditions of sufferers amongst the natives and the promotion of discipline amongst those who are physically well will compare favourably with the treatment of aborigines in any other State in Australia.

In the handling of a large body of men like the police it is to be quite expected that there may be occasions when men do things not worthy of the force to which they belong. The statements raised by the Leader of the Opposition have been before me, and the facts have been correctly stated by the hon. gentleman. I regret very much that an officer of the Police Department should have been responsible for the circumstances disclosed in the accusations which have been levelled against the force. When the matter was brought before me it was too late, as the Leader of the Opposition knows, to take action on some of the charges. Through the Under Secretary I instructed the Commissioner of Police to make inquiries, not meaning that he should hold a police inquiry, but that he should make an ordinary inquiry into the accusations against the force. He appointed Inspector Mann, who, after inquiry, made a certain report. The Commissioner of Police, acting in his capacity as head of the police force—a position which I have no desire to interfere with and which I have never done—gave the benefit of the doubt to the officer concerned on the evidence of the two white men, whom he chose to believe as against the native witnesses. I personally perused the papers, and submitted them to the Chief Protector for his opinion. Dealing with the aborigines as he does, I look upon him as a responsible authority. The Chief Protector was not satisfied, and asked me for my opinion. I gave him the right to prosecute the constable in the ordinary course. The matter was referred to the Crown Law Office for action. They have returned the papers, stating that it would be an indictable charge,

and the proper authorities to take action are the police. As Minister in charge of the department, I have given the Chief Protector a free hand to take whatever course is necessary for the protection of the aborigines, and, if necessary, to prevent that station from having native labour for all time or for whatever period he in his official capacity may decide.

Regarding the remarks of the hon. member for Nanango, I certainly desire to do everything I possibly can to further the interests of the aboriginal settlements. Hon. members who have had the opportunity of visiting the settlements must agree that the aborigines are showing by their industry that they appreciate what has been done for them.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*): This is a very interesting report, and reflects great credit on the department and the Chief Protector of Aborigines; but we should have a little more information regarding the large amount of £230,764 15s. 11d. which stands to the credit of the Trust Account.

The HOME SECRETARY: That is the total amount of the various trust accounts throughout the State. The money is held in trust by the Chief Protector of Aborigines, and is drawn upon as occasion requires.

[8.30 p.m.]

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I suppose that the amount is available to them if they require it?

The HOME SECRETARY: The Chief Protector is at liberty to use it if he thinks he is promoting their interests in the settlements or other places.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The report says—

“The total wages banked exceeds last year's figures by over £8,000. As the workers draw from 25 per cent. to 75 per cent. in pocket money, it might be said that this only represents, say, 60 per cent. of their actual earnings. As the subsequent expenditure, under supervision, for clothing, maintenance of dependents, amusement, etc., came to 92.5 per cent. of the money banked, it will be seen that they are learning to understand and benefit from the system.”

That seems to indicate that they are conscious of the fact that their savings are available to them in the event of application being made.

There are other passages in the report which are extremely interesting, and it is good to know that, although we have taken their land, nevertheless they are being cared for in accordance with humanitarian ideas. With regard to education the report says—

“Satisfactory progress has been made, but it is felt that a periodical visit by qualified school inspectors would act as a spur to both teachers and scholars. The instruction is varied and kept as interesting as possible. The girls are taught housewifery accomplishments, and the boys are given simple manual instruction.

“It is remarked that, whilst usually the arithmetic is below the usual standard of white schools, in the handwriting and such arts as needlework the native scholar often displays an equal, if not higher, gift for painstaking neatness.”

Mr. G. P. Barnes.]

Evidently the children are receiving proper education and are benefiting thereby. The report generally indicates that useful employment for their energies is found in various directions, and it is pleasing to know that their services are appreciated.

Item (Relief of Aborigines) agreed to.

CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS AND GRANTS.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. T. Wilson, *Fortitude Valley*): I beg to move—

‘That £107,237 be granted for ‘Charitable Institutions and Grants.’”

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): I want to take the opportunity of dealing with the third matter in question between the Home Secretary and myself. The hon. gentleman said that the least I could have done was to see the Under Secretary. Later in the week I shall probably avail myself of that opportunity, but, as I stated in the remarks I made earlier in the day, evidently from the state of these reports either the care was not given to them which I thought was warranted or else the men were overworked. I have no complaints to make against the officers, but I am justified in expressing my own opinion notwithstanding the statement of the Home Secretary. I do think that is evidence of the office being short-staffed, and I was using that point as evidence in support of my argument. Possibly the report was prepared in a hurry, sufficient time not being given to it. Whilst I would at any time draw the attention of the officers to a mistake when it comes before me, as it did this afternoon, still I would take the opportunity of using the illustration in support of my argument. I am justified in doing it. It was more than a simple printer's error, as the Home Secretary called it. It is an error all through the piece. It is not as though the printer dropped one figure. The whole column is wrong; the additions are wrong; the subtractions are wrong. It is a remarkable thing that the printer made all these mistakes in one tabulated statement. It is unique indeed, and I am not prepared to accept the statement that the printer made the error. I am mentioning it now for what it is worth, and, so far as I am concerned, the matter is closed.

I have in mind the report presented to this Chamber last year by the officer in charge of Dunwich—a gentleman who, I regret to say, has since died. In that report he referred to some of the inmates of Dunwich as “the scrapings of hell,” showing the variety of people congregated there. I endeavoured to ascertain who was responsible for the compilation of the present report on Dunwich. I naturally expected to ascertain that from the report, but I was unable to gain that knowledge; but on looking at the front page I am inclined to come to the conclusion that these reports are compiled by the Under Secretary. I would like to see the reports prepared by the various officers in charge of the institutions, and to get the reports first-hand from the officers concerned, showing the exact position and describing the work of the institutions under their charge. That is the least we can expect in this Parliament, and we should receive them, particularly in connection with a place like Dunwich. We should have the information from the officer in charge.

[*Mr. G. P. Barnes,*

The PREMIER: Would you like to have information from every auditor in the Auditor-General's department?

Mr. ROBERTS: No.

The PREMIER: That is something similar.

Mr. ROBERTS: In that case that auditor's certificate would be sufficient; but, if he cared to furnish a report, I would take the trouble to read it.

Mr. MOORE: I would like one report.

Mr. ROBERTS: This paragraph appears in the report of the Dunwich benevolent asylum—

“It is becoming more and more difficult, especially in the hospital wards, to keep the inmates staff up to 250, and it seems likely this will increase. This is owing to the older inmates, who were willing to work, dying off, to those coming in being of a far less robust kind, and to the increased pension now being £1 per week—sufficient for little comforts which otherwise would have been worked for or causing them to request discharge.”

The hon. member for Warrego this afternoon stated that at the rate we were going the race would gradually deteriorate. We know that people leave the institution on attaining the age of sixty years in the case of women and sixty-five years in the case of men, when they are able to get their old-age pensions. We also know that they are not admitted to Dunwich in ordinary circumstances if they are liable for a pension until they have made application for a pension and it is likely to be granted. I have remarked on that phase of the matter before.

The other matter is somewhat sad, but it indicates to me that it is a forerunner to a request for paid officers to be appointed to draft these reports. We realise that the sick and the afflicted have to be attended to, but the information brought to my notice is an indication that further expenditure is required.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): Before this vote goes through, I desire to make some remarks in connection with several institutions that are receiving grants from the Government to enable them to carry on their operations.

The first one I would like to mention is the Alexandra Home at Coorparoo. This institution receives a grant of £200 a year from the Government, and is controlled and managed by a committee of ladies. It has a splendid building, situated on very fine grounds, and is well managed, well controlled, and well directed in every way. At the present time there are somewhere between 100 and 120 children in the institution between the ages of three and fourteen years. It is one of those institutions which save the Government quite a large expenditure of money in other directions in caring for the children who come within the scope of its operations. The Government, in framing the Estimates next year, might very well consider the advisability of giving this institution a little more financial assistance. At the present time it is absolutely out of debt. The ladies manage it very well. They do a tremendous amount of needlework and sewing and this saves a lot of expenditure in that direction. In every way they spare no effort, and I believe it is a model institution and deserves well of the Government.

Another institution which is not mentioned in the report and which receives no grant from the Government was opened about three years ago. I refer now to the Margaret Marr home at Wynnum. The land and buildings comprised in this home were practically a donation by Mr. J. F. Marr, a resident of Brisbane, in memory of his wife, to the same committee of ladies who carry on the Alexandra Home. There are between sixty and seventy lads in this institution. It is doing splendid work for the community. I would like to see the Government encourage the ladies in this work by granting this home a certain grant next year. I do not know whether the Home Secretary or any of his officers has ever visited either of these institutions. If they do, they will find them just as I have described—real homes for these boys and girls, who unfortunately have no parents or whose parents have deserted them, and who have no money. They are carrying out this work just to assist these children to become good citizens in the future.

Another institution I have visited is the Magdalen Asylum, Lutwyche. This institution has been doing splendid work for many years. The grant it receives from the Government might very well be increased for the splendid work they are doing. A creche is established in connection with the institution. I had the pleasure once of visiting this institution and seeing the character of the work done. On completing my visit I was asked what I thought of the institution. I said, "There is only one way in which I can describe it. If ever the work of Christ was being carried on, it is being carried on here." The children of these unfortunate girls are cared for by the sisters in the daytime, and in the evening are placed under the care of their mothers. Splendid work is being carried on. There are eleven or twelve of these institutions in the city of Brisbane, and they are all doing magnificent work in every possible direction. I hope that the financial position during the year will improve so that the Government will be able to assist these very deserving institutions and organisations by increasing their grants, because their magnificent work to the State warrants that action.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): As president of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty, Toowoomba, I thank the Minister for the grant of £50 to the institution, which places us on an equal footing with the Rockhampton and Townsville branches of the organisation. That amount, augmented by other moneys, will enable the society to conduct its activities in certain country districts where it has been reported that acts of cruelty to animals are being perpetrated.

I would like the Minister to advise me of the reason for the reduction in the vote for the Epileptic Home, Willowburn. I cannot quite understand the position from the figures shown.

Mr. WRIGHT (*Bulimba*): I was pleased to hear the Minister's remarks concerning the unsuitability of Dunwich as an institution for inebriates. A necessity exists for the removal of these people at the earliest possible moment. Speaking on this matter last year, I stressed the hopeless task of attempting to rehabilitate inebriates at a place like Dunwich, because a drink addict is not likely to reform if any facilities exist for supplying him with the drink which is

his curse. The report on the operations of that institution reveals the fact that there were fourteen males and one female remaining on the 31st December, 1925; that twenty-one males and three females were admitted during 1926, and that nineteen males were readmitted in that year. That supports my argument as to the unsuitability of Dunwich for the cure of inebriates. Many of these people can get drink in various ways, and, after a short spell from the institution, have to be readmitted. That will operate in a large number of cases until the institution is removed from Dunwich, because everyone knows that it is deemed necessary to supply the old inmates of Dunwich with a certain quantity of grog, and I am quite satisfied that all the grog handed out to persons entitled to it does not go down the throats of the persons who receive it in the first instance.

Mr. MOORE: I do not think the inebriates get much of it.

Mr. WRIGHT: I am quite satisfied that the inebriates get some of it. Without stretching the long bow, I have seen inebriates on the island absolutely "full." I do not say they got all the grog from inmates at Dunwich. They get it through other means. The department is quite satisfied that methods are employed whereby these unfortunate individuals on Stradbroke Island are able to get the stuff that is doing them so much injury. I know the Minister has very definite views on this question, and he has spoken on it on every occasion that the vote has been before the Chamber in recent years. I know his idea is to establish an inland prison where these men can be profitably employed, together with first offenders. That would be the most successful way in which you could expect to achieve success in dealing with these unfortunate individuals.

I notice with regret that the institution has lost the services of Mr. Agnew. That gentleman has given excellent service to the institution and he has devoted a good deal of his spare time to the welfare of the patients in the institution. It is only right and proper that his work should be recognised by members of this Committee, as I am sure it is recognised and appreciated by the Home Department.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Queenton*): I wish to endorse what has been said by the hon. member for Windsor in reference to some of the institutions that come under the heading of "Grants, etc. (Subdivision)." I am quite confident that quite a number of them, although the grants received from the Government are small, are doing exceptionally good work for the community. They handle quite a number of children and young people who otherwise would be left practically to run wild, and they are producing what by-and-by will be good citizens when otherwise they would be very indifferent citizens.

I should also like to say a word in reference to the William Powell Institution, situated at Kuraby. It was my privilege recently to read a report from the gentleman who conducts that institution, and what he said about the work of the institution during the last twelve months was very interesting. Everyone knows that, as a general rule, people do

Mr. Winstanley.]

not have much time or concern for discharged prisoners. Everybody knows that, when once a man has been in a place like Boggo Road, even though it may be for a first offence, he finds it rather a difficult task to regain his place in society; and any organisation or institution that undertakes, when a man is released from gaol, to provide him with a home, something to eat, and work to occupy his time and attention for the immediate present, a suit of clothes to make him presentable, and then in a great many instances get him a job, is doing exceptionally good service for the community.

It has been said that he is a benefactor to his kind who makes two blades of grass grow where only one grew before; and he is certainly a benefactor to his kind who makes two honest citizens of two individuals who were previously dishonest. Perhaps the most remarkable and encouraging feature is that the majority of those who go to the home for a little while and experience the kind treatment exercised there become impressed with the belief that they can redeem their past and recover a footing in society and thus make good. The number who fail after they have been through the home and are placed in positions is very small indeed. The work at the home is worthy of help from the department, and those responsible appreciate the grant now made. Many men who are honest and industrious and have never broken the laws of the land often find it difficult to retain their footing in society; but how much more difficult is it for these people to do so? The inmates of the home come under the influence of those who can inspire them to exercise their will-power and so enable them to redeem the past. This institution, as well as others participating in the vote, is doing a good work for the community, and they are all to be commended for the good work they do.

Item (Charitable Institutions and Grants) agreed to.

HEALTH.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. T. Wilson, *Fortitude Valley*): I beg to move—

‘That £27,667 be granted for ‘Health.’”

Mr. WRIGHT (*Bulimba*): I do not wish to delay the vote, but I want to refer to a portion of the report of the Commissioner for Public Health dealing with the system known as “paint spraying.” This is a system which has lately come into vogue, particularly in connection with motor painting. It is a most dangerous occupation from a health point of view.

Mr. MOORE: The men wear masks.

Mr. WRIGHT: In reply to the hon. member’s interjection I might say that the employers in the motor industry, even before the Health Department took action, demanded that certain action should be taken to provide masks for the employees, recognising the dangerous position they were placed in. Unless the strictest safeguards are applied, the health of the operator is very quickly and seriously affected.

At 9 p.m.,

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

[Mr. Winstanley.

Mr. WRIGHT: In the report of the Commissioner of Public Health we read—

“At the third conference on industrial hygiene, held in Melbourne in May last, the question of painting by means of the spray gun was discussed, and a resolution as follows recorded:—

This conference, after consideration of the recommendations made by the special committee to the Australian Commonwealth Engineering Standards Association, approved of the principles contained therein, and recommended them to the departments concerned.

“The special committee above referred to (paint and varnish sectional committee) submitted, *inter alia*, the following recommendations relating to spray painting:—

(a) Lead paint should not be used in interior painting. The use of lead paints in spray-painting under any circumstances must be regarded as dangerous, and the use of non-lead paints should always receive consideration.

(b) Commercial spray painting in interiors should be done in properly constructed booths, provided with efficient mechanical exhaust ventilation. The exhaust systems should be so constructed and installed as to operate effectively, independent of weather and adjacent building conditions.

(c) The booths act as extraction-dust ventilating units, and the spray operator should not be exposed to dust and fumes drawn past him to the exhaust fan.

(d) The exhaust system should produce a satisfactory uniform air movement at the booth face under working conditions.

“It is recommended also that employees engaged in spray-painting should—

(a) Not spray at right angles to a flat surface, so causing the spray to roll back;

(b) Not spray too large objects, and thus get out of range of the exhaust;

(c) Not spray promiscuously about the room in testing the sprayer.

“In the matter of safeguards regarding volatile solvents, etc., the special committee recommended that paints, etc., containing benzol should not be used nor should benzol as such be added to any paint material.

“Where penetrating stains and removers containing benzol are used, as many men as practicable should be employed to minimise the period of exposure to the injurious effects of benzol.”

This matter has been engaging the attention of the representatives of the employees in the coachmaking industry in this State for some considerable time, and, in company with the secretary of the Coachbuilders’ Union, of which I happen to be a member, I have visited several motor body-building factories, and I think that in some cases they have provided the best safeguards to conserve the health of the employees. No

doubt some of the firms manufacturing motor bodies here are in quite a large way of business, and they have the most efficient plant for spray-painting; but there are other business motor shops where the methods adopted to safeguard the health of the employees in this regard is anything but efficient, and, in order to safeguard the health of these men, the Department of Labour and Industry might well work in co-operation with the Department of Public Health to see that wherever manufacturers have installed this method of painting the very best safeguards should also be installed for the benefit of the workers. I notice that the Railway Department has given a trial to this method of painting in the case of some of its rolling-stock. I had the opportunity only recently of seeing some of the rolling-stock which had been painted by this process. I claim to have some knowledge of mechanical work, and, in my opinion, the painting of our rolling-stock is not going to be nearly so satisfactory by this new method as by hand-painting. A job which was turned out some time ago was to my mind far from satisfactory, and I believe that where the work is likely to be subject to all conditions of weather, night and day, heat and cold, and so on, it will be found that it will not last nearly so long as a hand-painted job. So far as the Railway Department is concerned, the process is merely being tested, but I do not think it will prove nearly so effective or so economical as the hand-painted job.

Mr. FLPHINSTONE: Does that not apply with equal force to motor cars?

Mr. WRIGHT: No. The motor cars, particularly the high-class cars, are housed much oftener than the rolling-stock of the Railway Department. Motor cars are placed in garages, and, apart from being on the street for a couple of hours in the day, they are probably under cover all the time. The average motor car is not subjected to the same atmospheric conditions as the rolling-stock of the Railway Department; consequently, I do not think that this method of painting, with all the attendant dangers, will prove efficient or economical in the Railway Department.

However, that is quite apart from the question of public health. I know the Commissioner for Health is fully alive to the dangers to which the employees in this industry are subjected, and I hope that the necessary action will be taken to compel the employers engaged in the industry to provide the necessary safeguard for the men doing this particular work.

Item (Health) agreed to.

HOSPITALS.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. T. Wilson, *Fortitude Valley*): I beg to move—

“That £187,253 be granted for ‘Hospitals.’”

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): When speaking a few minutes ago the Home Secretary made a statement with which I cannot agree in any way whatever. He endeavoured to put forward a case in this Chamber in support of the contention that the hospital districts were exactly the same as local authority districts. I beg leave to disagree with that

statement. In the particular district of which I have personal knowledge, the mere fact that the people use the hospitals in Dalby and Nanango does not alter the fact that the general run of the business of the district is not with these places, but with Toowoomba. With the hospital, it is a totally different matter. There is an ambulance stationed in Yarraman which runs to Nanango. The people in that particular district, who go to the Nanango hospital, do not go there to transact their ordinary business requirements. Motor buses run from Cooyar right down to Toowoomba in the same way as they run to Toowoomba from Dalby. That is where they do their business. That proves conclusively that a hospital district does not necessarily agree with the local authority area.

The Home Secretary also quoted a lot of attractive figures showing the average amount paid by ratepayers in the various local authority areas comprised in the Toowoomba hospital district. They are of no value whatever, and are absolutely useless. Throughout the areas I am connected with we have dozens of small townships cut up into township allotments which have no buildings erected on them, and pay rates on a minimum valuation basis. A number of allotments in such townships bring down the average quoted by the hon. gentleman.

The principle of taxing land for the upkeep of hospitals is a wrong one. I have always protested against it, and have advocated that the tax should be on income. The annual conference of the local authorities' association has protested against this method of taxation, and at the last conference unanimously opposed the principle to which I am objecting. I am satisfied that this principle will be altered, because the more hospitals that are created the quicker that alteration will be brought about. Why should the capital of the man on the land be taxed, while certain business men, such as bank managers receiving good and stable salaries, every year escape? The farmer pays the tax twice—by a tax on his land and in general taxation.

Mr. WEIR: The farmers only pay 3 per cent. of the general taxation of the State.

Mr. MOORE: The farmer pays his share of the general taxation whenever he purchases goods. It is unfair to tax the farmers' tools out of which they make their living for the upkeep of hospitals. In the majority of cases a farmer is paying a hospital tax on land which he has mortgaged.

Mr. WEIR: His mortgage is capital—not income.

Mr. MOORE: I object to the man on the land paying this tax on his capital. The tax should be on income, as it is in other places. The Government in West Australia have brought down a Bill providing for the upkeep of hospitals by a tax on income, leaving it open to the local authorities to contribute voluntarily. It is unfair to tax people on their capital value, which is very often something they do not own. This principle places an onus on a section of the people who are least able to bear it. It is quite easy for the Home Secretary to remedy this unfair position. I know that it would mean an alteration of policy and I do not expect any alteration, although I shall protest against it from year to year. The Home

Mr. Moore.]

Secretary should alter the existing unfair position under which many people are forced to contribute to a hospital they cannot use, merely because they happen to be in the local authority area in which the hospital is situated. It only wants an alteration of three words in the Hospitals Act to remedy the position. There is no such difficulty regarding representation as the Minister imagines.

THE HOME SECRETARY: What would you advocate?

MR. MOORE: At the present time you have a very large area, and I have never known a dispute in any of the areas with which I have been associated. The trouble has been to get some one who cared to undertake the job. Representation could quite easily be allocated according to area. It must be apparent to the Minister that, if there is an area in which the nearest hospital for some people is 10 or 12 miles away and these people are compelled to contribute to a hospital 70 miles away, then the position is most unfair. The whole matter can be remedied by the alteration of the Act in the way I have mentioned. People have no objection to contributing to a hospital; but they desire justice extended to them by allowing them to contribute to a hospital which is more suitable to their needs. We are quite prepared to accept the existing hospital districts, and, if the Act were amended so that the hospital district shall comprise a local authority area "or part thereof," then the position would be rectified. I want the Home Secretary clearly to understand that the hospital district must necessarily be the district in which the community of interest in business is the same. That can be quite easily demonstrated to the Minister or to any of his officers. So long as the present unfair position is allowed to continue—we call attention to the matter every year—then so long will annoyance be the lot of people who are compelled to contribute to a hospital to which they cannot go. Seeing that the matter can be remedied so easily, why not attend to it? Of course, the more hospitals that are created the quicker the alteration which we seek is likely to be effected, in view of the fact that the agitation will be increased. The fact of making the hospital district paramount, and saying that the hospital boundary has to coincide with the community of interest on the business side of the people who live in the local authority area, will only create more trouble, because nothing can make them coincide. So far as I know, they do not coincide in any of the areas on the Downs. There may be some in Central Queensland. The unfairness of the present position should not be allowed to continue any longer than is absolutely necessary.

MR. HARTLEY: On the income basis, how would you allocate the payments to the various hospitals?

MR. MOORE: It is collected in exactly the same way from the people in the area.

MR. HARTLEY: It goes to the hospitals in the area in which it is collected.

MR. MOORE: The same position would operate if it were collected on an income basis, in much the same way as it operates in connection with the collection of stamps for unemployment insurance.

[Mr. Moore.]

MR. HARTLEY: You will put a very big task on the Income Tax Department to collect the amount.

MR. MOORE: The Income Tax Department would not have to collect it. It would only have to notify the hospital board or whoever has to collect the amount from the various individuals in the area.

MR. HARTLEY: That is a very big task.

MR. MOORE: It has not been found a difficult task in other matters. It will be quite easy to collect the tax, and you are going to impose it on a fair basis.

MR. HARTLEY: It will be a very cumbersome business.

MR. MOORE: It is far more cumbersome and far more unfair to make the local authorities collect it from the land of the people.

MR. HARTLEY: The land cannot move from one district to another.

MR. MOORE: That is just what actuated the Government in bringing in this tax. The man on the land could not get away from it, consequently he was in the position that you could absolutely force him to pay. That is one of the unfair elements in the whole proposition. The basis is wrong, and that is generally endorsed by the people in the country who have to contribute most.

MR. HARTLEY: What do you suggest?

MR. MOORE: The hon. gentleman thinks I am afraid to suggest that there should be a hospital tax on wages. I am not. I am quite prepared to advocate what is right. Any number of workers recognise that they should contribute to the hospitals. That is voluntarily recognised by the railway workers and the miners. Nobody will object to contribute a fair amount to the hospital, but the present basis is unfair, as it is placing the tax on the capital value of a section of the community when very often the capital value is not there.

MR. WEIR (Murryborough): I am glad of the opportunity of discussing this question, because I realise that members of the Opposition are merely making political propaganda out of a very poor case. I am not enamoured entirely of this hospital taxation proposal, but I am big enough to say that it is the best I can conceive, and therefore I am going to defend it. The hon. member for Aubigny, in common with the rest of his team—if I may use that expression without being offensive—go to the country and put up the same argument in the country that they put up here. To my mind it is not logic. I do not think it is sound, and from that angle I propose to debate it. The hon. member has given the Chamber the impression that the farmer is the man who is hardest hit. That is not true, and I will tell you why. Let me look at it from the point of view of income tax as a start. We know that the difference between income tax and local authority tax is 60 to 40. Practically stated, that is the position.

Look up the income tax returns supplied to Parliament, and you will find that the farmer, who is supposed to pay the biggest share of this taxation, only finds 3 per cent. of the taxation of this State.

MR. LOGAN: Because they have not got the return.

Mr. WEIR: I welcome the interjection. The farmers pay 3 per cent. of the aggregate income tax of this State, and against them I put the employees of the State, who pay 20 per cent. of the aggregate income tax.

Mr. MOORE: Take the man outside in the country.

Mr. WEIR: The farmer is paying 3 per cent. of the aggregate income tax of the State, therefore he is not paying his share of hospital taxation from an income tax point of view. Against him I take the employees of the State, who pay 20 per cent. of the aggregate income tax. Taking 20 per cent. as against 3 per cent. in regard to income tax payments, I argue that the employee is contributing more per head to the hospitals than the farmer from an income tax point of view. The man on the land, according to the hon. member for Lockyer, is not paying more because he is not making the earnings. His local authority taxation is based on the value of his land. The same thing applies to the city dweller, who is the employee. The local authority taxation of the city dweller is based on the value of his land. He pays 20 per cent. of the aggregate income tax of the State, and again pays his quota per medium of the local authority taxation of his land. He is not making a living from the land at all. He is already paying on his income per medium of the income tax, and, because he lives on his small piece of land, which is not assisting him to make his living, he again pays through his local authority taxation—that is twice. Then the third time comes. A number of workers in our cities—we might take Maryborough as an illustration—are paying a definite amount every week in order to get into the hospital in case of need. Take the miners, for instance, amongst others. All these men are paying a third quota of contribution towards the hospitals. These men pay 20 per cent. of the aggregate income tax, local authority rates, and voluntary contributions.

Mr. MOORE: Take the landowners.

Mr. WEIR: I want to take the professional man in the city. I have no brief for the professional man, who can look after himself. In the main the professional man in a city like Brisbane is working under very good circumstances, and his local valuation is high, and, per medium of his ratable value, he is being caught fairly well.

Mr. MOORE: Why take the man in business when you are talking about the farmer outside?

Mr. WEIR: I am showing that the farmer is not the man who is being severely taxed. The hon. member for Lockyer said that the farmer is the man who has been unfairly treated, and I am showing that he is not. The professional man is being fairly well hit—you can take Brisbane, Maryborough, or any other centre—because of the fact that he has a home which is fairly heavily rated through the local authority valuation, and he is also fairly caught through income tax taxation. Nobody is growling about that, and it is fair. I repeat that farmers, who are only paying 3 per cent. of the aggregate income taxation of the State and earning their living on the land on which they are paying local authority taxation, have not a leg to stand on compared with the employees in the city, who find 20 per cent. of the aggregate income taxation, pay taxation on

the land on which their homes are situated, and who voluntarily tax themselves every week in the form of a contribution to the hospitals.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (Warwick): The argument of the hon. member for Maryborough breaks down immediately when we come to consider the relative amounts which the individual farmer or employee pays. For the sake of argument, we might

[9.30 p.m.] take one hundred farmers and one hundred employees and compare their contributions. The thing is absurd. The number of employees in the country is infinitely greater than the number of farmers, therefore their individual contributions are less. The hon. member's argument is only a guess—an assumption—an assertion. What astounds me in the Labour Party's attitude on this question is the wonderful respect they show to the capitalist at every turn. They seem to be out to allow the man of means, who goes in for buying bonds free of taxation, or perhaps has large bank deposits, to escape these imposts. Even in a matter which is, or should be, the concern of every member of the community, they allow him to go scot free again. I think that no less a sum than £12,000,000 or £13,000,000 has been raised by this State on the basis of freedom from taxation. I say that the principle is utterly wrong, yet the very hon. members opposite who are everlastingly fulminating against the capitalists allow them to go free when they get the opportunity. It should be regarded as the privilege of everybody in the community to contribute to the support of our various hospitals. If I am in touch with the opinions of the people generally, they look upon contributions to the hospital as an obligation which they are prepared to honour to the fullest extent; but the basis must be equitable. Once more let me say that I feel sure that, if we get accurate figures, we shall find that the number of employees in the State is infinitely greater than the number of farmers. The Federal and State Government employees alone number one in seven of the population, and the hon. member will find, if he goes into the returns, that the income tax paid by those classes is quite a large proportion of the total.

Mr. COLLINS (Bowen): I have four hospitals in the electorate which I have the honour to represent. They are not "districted" at the present time, but we may have to ask the Home Secretary to proclaim a district in the near future. As the hon. gentleman is well aware, the hospital at Bowen is generally in a precarious condition, and therefore it may be necessary to include the other hospitals in the electorate in a hospital district. So far, however, we have been able to support our hospitals.

If the farmers in my electorate or in any other electorate consider that the districting of hospitals is a hardship, they have their remedy in their own hands. Then why do they not contribute voluntarily, and avoid the hospitals being districted? This contention that the burden falls heavily on the farmer is all moonshine. It falls no heavier on the farmer than it does on the rest of the community, because under the Hospitals Act the State contributes 60 per cent. of the amount from the consolidated revenue, to which the whole of the people of Queensland

Mr. Collins.]

contribute, and 40 per cent. is obtained from the local authorities under the districting proposals. The tax is imposed upon the unimproved value of land, not upon the improvements, and there is no hardship inflicted upon either the farmers or any other persons under this proposal. The unimproved value of land in this State practically amounts to the sum that has been borrowed by the Government of this State. In other words, the community has created the unimproved value of the land by borrowing the money and spending it on public works. Therefore the community is only taking back by way of a tax on the unimproved value of the land a little of that which the community has created, and utilising it for the support of the hospitals. I quite agree with the hon. member for Maryborough that there is nothing in the contention that the farmers are bearing more than their share of the burden. To imagine that the farmer is going to suffer a greater hardship than other people who own unimproved land is all moonshine. As I said before, if the people do not wish their hospitals to be districted, then they should voluntarily contribute to the support of the hospitals. I am making that known so that the farmers in my electorate will understand the position. There is a method whereby the hospitals can be supported voluntarily. There is a little portion of my electorate on the Bowen coalfield, where up to the present the miners and the few station-owners and men employed on the stations in that portion of the electorate have been able to support their hospital without any great effort. Some of the hospitals in my electorate received a grant from the "Golden Casket" fund, which I am sure they are grateful for having received. I wish to repeat that, if the people do not desire to have the hospitals districted but to maintain them under the voluntary system, let them put their hands in their pockets, and there will be no difficulty in supporting the hospitals under the voluntary system.

At 9.39 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): Hon. members opposite have not been able to make out any case in support of the Hospitals Act. I propose to show how it works out in the case of the farmer as compared with the owner of city land. This afternoon the hon. member for Toowoomba pointed out that in the case of the city of Toowoomba it works out at an average of 5s. 9d. per head. This is how it works out in connection with farming land—

	Per head.
	s. d.
Clifton Shire ...	15 10
Milmeran Shire ...	16 4
Jondaryan Shire ...	16 8
Tarampa Shire ...	9 7

That is why hon. members opposite are in favour of this system—because the burden is placed on the farmer, and their men escape. That is what they are after.

Mr. COLLINS: Whom do you call our men?

Mr. DEACON: Men who support the hon. gentleman. If a comparison is made of the tax on the city area compared with the tax in the farming areas, it works out at a much cheaper rate per head for the working man

[*Mr. Collins.*

than it does for the farmer. Hon. members opposite are not out for equality or a fair thing. They will not have anything for the hospitals, except something that works to the advantage of the people who sent them here. What I want is fair treatment for the man on the land. The hon. member cannot dispute these figures, as they were given by a member of his own party. The farmer pays a land tax on the unimproved value of his land, whether he has paid for it or not. He might owe money on it, nevertheless he still has to pay the land tax and the tax for the upkeep of the hospital.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Every owner of a worker's dwelling pays a hospital tax.

Mr. DEACON: The owner of a worker's dwelling in the city does not have to pay a land tax on the unimproved value of his land. That is the point I am endeavouring to make. The man on the basic wage in the city does not pay income tax.

Mr. WEIR: Neither does the farmer.

Mr. DEACON: I will show the hon. member how the farmer does pay. The farmer and the landowner in the country find 90 per cent. of the revenue of the country. Where do the people in the cities get all their wealth to pay income tax except out of the produce of the land? Hon. members must remember that the mining industry is gone. That being the case, who pays the taxation of the country but the owner of the land? The farmer and the man on the land pay an unfair share towards the support of the hospitals. We are only asking for what is fair. We have to pay land tax, the tax for the upkeep of the hospitals, and income tax. It is only fair that we should ask that the working man in the cities should also contribute his fair share to the upkeep of the hospitals.

Mr. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): The hon. member for Cunningham will have to talk a little longer than he did if he desires to convince me that the farmer is contributing more to the upkeep of hospitals than the man in the city. It is a well-known fact that the man on the land is in a better position than the man in the city. He has not half the expenses of the man in the city. If the hospital tax was examined carefully, it would disclose that the man in the city is paying about three times as much as the man in the country. Everyone knows that an allotment in the city valued at £200 is worth 40 per cent. or 50 per cent. proportionately more than a similar area in the country. I will take the instances quoted by the hon. member himself. He said that a working man in Toowoomba contributed on an average 5s. 9d. per year to the upkeep of the Toowoomba hospital, as against 15s. 10d. by the farmer at Clifton.

Mr. DEACON: The business man in Toowoomba is included in that average.

Mr. HARTLEY: I am taking the example submitted by the hon. member. The man in Toowoomba paying the smaller amount owns about 16 perches of land, from which he can get nothing in the way of interest. On the other hand, the man at Clifton who pays 15s. 10d. owns probably from 50 to 200 acres.

Mr. MOORE: What about his income?

Mr. HARTLEY: He has a bigger income and has greater exemptions than the worker.

Mr. MOORE: Very often he has no income.

Mr. HARTLEY: I have never yet heard a genuine farmer squeal about the incidence of the hospital tax. The squeal comes from hon. gentlemen opposite, who are concerned, not with the man with 100 acres but with the man owning thousands of acres. The latter can well afford to pay for the upkeep of the hospitals. He is getting a greater benefit from them; yet these people who own land valued at £4,000 and £5,000 are those whom the Opposition are trying to exempt in some way from the incidence of hospital contributions.

The PREMIER: The "Golden Casket" contributors pay more than anyone.

Mr. HARTLEY: And I suppose that 80 per cent. of them are workers. There you have the workers again!

The PREMIER: And many of them do not live in the State.

Mr. HARTLEY: I want to know how the money collected on the basis of income will be distributed among the various hospitals. Take, for example, men contributing at Kabra. Who shall decide whether that money shall go to Rockhampton or Mount Morgan? The proposal to upkeep the hospitals from payments on an income basis is wrong for two reasons. In the first place, excessive expense will be occasioned to the Income Tax Department in allocating that money to the various localities, and, secondly, there is the difficulty of deciding to what localities it shall go. You will want practically another Board of Trade and Arbitration to decide a matter like that. For example, of the money contributed in South Brisbane, what system would be adopted of allocating that money to the various hospitals there?

Mr. WEIR (*Maryborough*): I would not like this vote to pass without referring to the attempt made by the hon. member for Warwick to upset my figures. The only part that appealed to him when he contended that my figures were wrong was that the ratio of employees paying their quota for the upkeep of the hospitals was a negligible quantity. What is that quantity? Of the men who were rated for this tax there were 9,817 employees and 903 farmers; and 3 per cent. of the whole income tax is paid by the farmers and 20 per cent. by the employees.

The only thing I can see from my point of view is the point raised by the Home Secretary in regard to the question of the reallocation of the boundaries. That, in the ordinary course of events, will be remedied by the Commission on Local Authority Boundaries. I have seen for some time that the Maryborough hospital district, which extends to the vicinity of Gympie, should be reconsidered. We are waiting now for the boundary to be adjusted, but in the meantime no one is likely to take undue advantage of another hospital. After all is said and done, this Committee wants to get the true aspect of the case so as to be able to adopt the true basis of taxation and do what is a fair thing. The farmers who pay only 3 per cent. of the income tax are not overburdened. The employees of the State

pay 20 per cent. taxation on their little homes in the city, and, in addition to that, they pay voluntarily their other 6d. per week.

Mr. MOORE: They get service for that.

Mr. WEIR: They get service in any case. Everybody knows that the intention of the Government is that people in necessitous circumstances shall be assured of a home while sick in the shape of a hospital. What was the district hospitals business introduced for? It was introduced to force people in this State to accept their responsibilities and contribute towards the hospitals.

The hon. member for Lockyer takes pride in the fact that his hospital is not districted. Some other hon. members also take pride in the fact that it has not been necessary to district their hospitals. What is at the back of that? Is it not that the people in those areas are sufficiently patriotic to keep up their hospitals by means of voluntary contributions?

Then we have places like Bundaberg, to which the Minister referred to-night. In that case the hospital was practically bankrupt and in a shocking state of disrepair. It was therefore necessary to introduce this new form of taxation, in connection with which the worker in the city is more than paying his share as compared with the farmer.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*): The number of farmers who contribute this 3 per cent. is 1,063, and the hon. member for Maryborough is jealous and is prepared to allow a vast number in the community to go scot-free in regard to this taxation. They total—

Absentees	...	...	376
Independents	...	...	1,129
Professional men	...	...	1,015
Employees	...	...	15,938

Now you see the jealousy of hon. members opposite. It is quite possible that many of these may be landholders and taxpayers, but the chances are that not half of them are. So you see that the basis of the hon. member's calculation is quite out. The point that seems to raise a great deal of trouble in the minds of hon. members is how you are going to collect the tax. Where is it to come from? The cost will be very high. You can very well leave that matter in the hands of the Commissioner of Taxes. He will have no trouble in finding out where a man has his domicile. If he fails in this instance, it will be the first time that he has failed; that is my experience.

At 9.55 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN: Under the provisions of Sessional Orders agreed to by the House on 25th August and 26th October last, I shall now leave the chair and make my report to the House.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported progress.

Resumption of Committee made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

The House adjourned at 9.57 p.m.

Mr. G. P. Barnes.]