

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 11 OCTOBER, 1928

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

QUESTIONS.

REVENUE FROM TOTALISATOR FRACTIONS.

Mr. KING (*Logan*), for Mr. MORGAN (*Marilyn*), asked the Treasurer—

"1. What was the total amount received last financial year from fractions from the totalisator?"

"2. What was the amount of revenue received last year in taxation apart from fractions from totalisator?"

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

"1. £15,613 13s.

"2. £4,962,469 4s. 11d."

SUGAR EXPERIMENT FARM AT HOME HILL.

Mr. KING (*Logan*), for Mr. MOORE (*Abigny*), asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

"1. What is the area of the sugar-cane farm worked by the department at Home Hill?"

"2. What area was devoted to experimental plots?"

"3. What area was devoted to crops for purely revenue purposes?"

"4. What were the expenses and receipts in connection with the farm?"

"5. What were the financial results of the area devoted to growing crops for purely revenue purposes?"

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

"1. The area of the farm is 204 acres, of which 56 acres were under cane during the year ended 30th June, 1928.

"2 and 3. The whole area is more or less experimental, but 3¼ acres were under specific plots.

"4. The total expenditure to the 30th June, 1928, was £2,758 14s. 1d., and the total receipts, £1,800 18s. 1d.

"5. Cane was cut from 24½ acres, returning a gross of £1,430 16s. The expenses on account of this year for cultivation, plants, irrigation, water rates, harvesting, etc., were £973 6s. 8d."

PAPERS.

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

Sixth Annual Report of the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission.

Annual Report of the Commissioner of Public Health.

ARCHITECTS BILL.

INTIMATION IN COMMITTEE.

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

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY (Hon. D. A. Gledson, *Ipswich*), for the SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. M. J. Kirwan, *Brisbane*): I beg to move—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to provide for the registration and to regulate the practice of architects; and for other incidental purposes."

This Bill has been asked for by the Institute of Architects for a number of years, and it has been decided to introduce the Bill for several reasons. One of the main reasons is that architects in Queensland are at a disadvantage with the architects of other States, where they have reciprocity and are protected under the law. Therefore, the architects here are unable to practise in the other States. This Bill giving them registration will also give them reciprocity, and they will be able to practise in the other States.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: They cannot do that now.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: No; they cannot do that now. They can only practise in Queensland, whereas any architect registered in any of the other States under the law can come to Queensland and practise here. Under this Bill there will be reciprocity between Queensland and the other States where the architects are registered, and then architects in Queensland who have been trained in our schools and colleges, and are quite competent to go down South, can be registered there and take their place with the leading architects of the Commonwealth and other parts of the world. Because they have no registration at present they are debarred from getting the protection they have a right to. This Bill will give them that right.

The Bill provides for the establishment of a board of which the Government will practically keep control—the members of the board will not be able to get out of hand and do anything to the disadvantage of architects and builders here. There will be six members of the board, three of whom will be nominated by the Governor in Council, one by the Institute of Architects, and two by the practising architects. The board will prescribe the examinations and fees and register each architect in the State. Those who have been practising as architects will receive registration under this board without further examination.

Then the Bill provides for a certain period of practical work either before or after the passing of the measure or partly before or partly after; that is to say, if a man has been engaged in this work for two years, he will have a further three years to put in, or if he has practised for four years he will have to put in another year before he will have a right to go in for the examination and become a qualified architect.

The Bill is similar to other measures which have been passed to protect professions, and similar measures are in operation in the Southern States.

The term of office of the board will be two years. The members can be reappointed, or other individuals can be nominated by the Governor in Council for election to positions on the board.

There is no need this morning for me to give details of the persons who are qualified for registration, as they are all set out in the Bill. One important feature is that an appeal will lie against decisions of the board. It may happen that an applicant may be turned down by the board, in which case he can appeal to the Supreme Court against the refusal of the board to register him as an architect. The board will also have power to remove from the register the names of persons who, in their opinion, have proved

to be incompetent or not fit to hold the position of architect. Such persons also will have the right of appeal to the Supreme Court for a rehearing of their cases against any appearance of injustice which they think has been meted out to them by the board.

These are the main provisions of the Bill, which follows the lines of other measures to protect architects and give them their proper standing in Australia, as is given to architects in the Southern States.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: Is there a residential qualification?

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: No, a practising qualification.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowoong*): I welcome the introduction of this Bill. During the occupancy of the position of Secretary for Public Works by the present Secretary for Agriculture I was privileged to discuss with him the desirability of such a measure. I did so at the request of the architects, and, as the Secretary for Labour and Industry has pointed out, this Bill meets with their approval. The rights of the public are protected, the rights of the architects are conserved, and the Government, through their representation on the board, will be able to see that no injustice is done. It is a proposal to place the architects of Queensland on a similar footing to those in the South, and I am very pleased that the Government have introduced the measure.

HON. J. G. APPEL (*Albert*): The Bill which the Minister desires to introduce is very important, because anybody who engages an architect for building purposes puts himself in his hands, and he may be competent or incompetent. This measure, of course, provides that an architect shall be a competent man. That being so, the rights of the public who engage in building operations are safeguarded. Under those conditions I think that every member of the Committee can safely support the measure.

Mr. HANLON (*Ithaca*): I trust that under the Bill the rights of the public will be safeguarded, as has been suggested by the hon. member for Albert. I would not think it desirable for the Government to introduce a Bill to create a vested interest among the architects of the State without in some way protecting the people who are compelled to place their building operations in their hands. On looking over similar legislation which has been introduced in recent years, I think there has been a most important omission inasmuch as no remedy has been provided for people who do not get service from practitioners in these protected professions. This Parliament has created a vested interest in several professions, which so operates that the public are compelled to put themselves in the hands of the members of those professions. If those professional people, through carelessness or inefficiency, cause loss or suffering, the public has no remedy. I believe that in this Bill some protection should be given to the public and some penal clauses should be included whereby persons who suffer loss through carelessness or inefficiency will have a remedy.

Mr. KING: Will you make that apply to the worker?

Mr. HANLON: It does apply to the worker.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: He gets the sack if he is inefficient.

Question—That it is desirable that the Bill be introduced—put and passed.

The House resumed.

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

Resolution agreed to.

FIRST READING.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY (Hon. D. A. Gledson, *Ipswich*): presented the Bill, and moved—

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

Question put and passed.

Second reading of the Bill made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—EIGHTH AND NINTH ALLOTIED DAYS.

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

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE.

ELECTORAL REGISTRATION.

Question stated—

“That £33,828 be granted for ‘Electoral Registration.’”

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): I intend to state my views on what should constitute an ideal democracy and how the representatives of such a democracy should be elected. Firstly, there should be devised the easiest possible method that the brain of man can conceive of permitting people to be enrolled; secondly, it should be a very difficult matter to have names removed from the roll; and, thirdly, the simplest method that can be devised by the brain of man should be devised for the purpose of enabling people to vote. They are the vital constituents of an ideal democracy in my way of thinking. Some time ago I realised from my reading of Grote’s “History of Greece” that there was a tendency in the Australian Commonwealth to destroy democracy. In the first election held under the preferential system of voting for the Commonwealth Parliament 178,000 informal votes were cast. No one can convince me that there were so many illiterate people in Australia, and I believe that the huge number was due to the complicated preferential system of voting. I have supported many new proposals in my time, and I hope to live to support a good many more; but I believe in being very careful. While on paper proportional representation may appear all right, and the preferential system may appeal to some people, I have discussed the system of voting in relation to the Senate elections with many people, but I have not met one who has been able to explain how the final result is secured. The person who devised the preferential system of voting was no friend of Australian democracy. It was a cunning device to destroy democracy. From my reading of ancient democracies I know something of how they were destroyed. They were not destroyed by one stroke of the pen, but by a gradual process, such as reducing the number of members of Parliament. This is a question which comes under electoral registration. There are some hon. members who believe that a reduction of the number

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of members of this Assembly from seventy to fifty would accomplish a wonderful reform.

Mr. BRAND: Hear, hear!

Mr. COLLINS: It may not be necessary to have seventy-two members of Parliament. If you went on the lines outlined by Grote in his "History of Greece," you could reduce the representation in this Chamber to fifty, or even to thirty or ten members. It is far easier to corrupt ten men than fifty. There is safety in numbers. I want to inform the democracy of Queensland and the Commonwealth not to be swayed by the cry for a reduction of members of Parliament in order to save a few paltry thousands of pounds. After all, what is the saving of that amount of money when Parliament is called upon to deal with votes totalling £15,000,000 or £17,000,000? What are a few thousands of pounds paid to members of Parliament as compared with keeping members of Parliament honest and true to the principles to which they have been elected? It is nothing. I hope the working population will not allow itself to be influenced by the cry for a reduction of members of Parliament and the saving of a little expense in connection with the holding of elections, and having polling-booths thereat. I have no complaint on the score of polling-booths in my electorate. Representations made by me in this respect are invariably granted. Why should I not get them granted for some portion of my electorate? The Proserpine end of my electorate is one of the wettest districts in Australia—my friend the hon. member for South Brisbane knows the district as well as I do, having represented the constituency for three years—and the people there should not be requested to go 8 or 10 miles, when rain is falling in torrents, simply in order to record a vote. Whist, on the one hand, it is right and just to give every man and woman a vote, it is also right and just, on the other hand, to see that polling-booths are created to enable the people to record their votes. That is my idea of a democracy.

This question should not altogether be judged from a party point of view. I give utterance to these sentiments knowing the long struggle through the centuries of the past by the people to possess the franchise they have to-day. Therefore, we should, as far as is humanly possible, protect that right, and see that they have an opportunity of recording their votes, and that no system is introduced to destroy the effect of those votes by the introduction of the preferential system of voting, as in the Senate elections, when 178,000 people in this great Commonwealth were disfranchised through no fault of their own but through the fault of a cunning, vicious system of voting. Every man has not passed through a college or university. Most of the voters in the Commonwealth come from our State schools.

Mr. HARTLEY: Thank God!

Mr. COLLINS: I quite agree with my friend. We are proud of our State schools. I hope we shall hear no more in this Chamber or in Queensland about a reduction of members in Parliament for the sake of saving a few paltry thousand pounds. One of the safeguards of democracy is to have a full, representative number of men in Parliament to protect the interests of the people.

I hope the police will continue their good work of seeing that every man entitled to

vote has his name placed on the roll, because it is the natural right of everyone to exercise the franchise. Splendid work in that connection has been done by the police in my electorate, and I hope the good work will be continued in future.

We have been told time and again that democracy is on its trial. Never was a more fallacious statement sent out to the world at large. Democracy is not on its trial; as yet it has not had a trial. When I read books from our own library dealing with past history, and know how the world was governed by a certain type of individuals representing the wealthy landowners on the one hand and the wealthy interests of the country on the other, I say that what is on trial is not democracy, but the people who have governed mankind and made a sorry mess of it up to the present. How can democracy be on its trial? The Labour Government have been in office only since 1915, and what is that brief space of time when we review the history of hundreds of years? The people who hold views similar to those expressed by hon. members opposite are on their trial, and I hope to hear nothing more in the press about democracy being on trial, because, whilst we may have made a few mistakes, the people with whom hon. members opposite are associated have committed practically all the crimes in the calendar against the progress of mankind.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is drifting a little.

Mr. COLLINS: I am dealing with a vote of £33,828 for electoral registration, which is practically the foundation of this Parliament and of democracy; and I am referring to the sufferings and the hardships endured when mankind was governed by the few. People should not be carried away by any talk of a reduction in the number of members of Parliament, which is not the salvation of mankind. The simplest method possible should be devised to enable men to enrol, and, when enrolled, to exercise the franchise under a simple system.

Mr. KELSO: What is the matter with preferential voting?

Mr. COLLINS: Will the hon. member say that there must not be something wrong with any form of voting which brought about 178,000 informal votes? Surely such a system must be wrong.

Mr. Kelso: That has nothing to do with preferential voting.

Mr. COLLINS: The hon. member belongs to the party which believes in the preferential system of voting; I belong to the party which pins its faith in a simple system of voting, which I hope will be retained in Queensland.

Mr. BRAND (*Burrum*): It is very interesting to listen to the hon. member for Bowen talking about democracy. All Australians recognise that democracy should be their first care, and that at all times they should see that democracy in its

[11 a.m.] true sense is carried out in all the Parliaments of Australia: that is, that the majority of the people should rule. Most remarkable, indeed, is it to hear from a member on the Government side that what he calls "their system of voting" is the best system for democracy, whereas the Federal system of voting is not the best

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system for democracy, and at the same time to find in power in the Federal Parliament a Government who were elected by a majority of the people, whereas in the State we have in power a Government who were not elected by a majority.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That is not true.

Mr. BRAND: We contend that, according to the votes cast at the last elections, a majority of the people were against the Government. I know that the Minister in charge of this vote has always claimed that the Government secured a majority, although a very small one.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You have not proved your argument.

Mr. BRAND: We have done so, and it is not for me to reiterate what has already been placed in "Hansard." We have from time to time pointed out the difference in the votes for Government candidates from the votes for Opposition candidates, and everybody in Queensland, when they are discussing the possibilities of the next election, ask, "Do you think you can get over the gerrymandering of seats that took place a few years ago?" We have a member on the Government side talking about democracy, yet a few years ago a Commission was appointed by the Government to redistribute seats to the advantage of Government members. And that is what took place. An investigation of the rolls of Queensland to-day will show that no fewer than eighteen electorates contain a lesser number of voters than is required according to the statutory minimum, and out of these eighteen electorates sixteen are represented by Government members and only two by Opposition members. On the other hand, there are eleven electorates which contain a larger number of electors than is required by the statutory maximum, and nine of these electorates are represented by Opposition members and two by Government members: showing that the great bulk of the people are in electorates represented by members sitting on this side of the Chamber. If you take the whole of the electorates of Queensland, it will be found that the average number of voters on the rolls for electorates represented by members sitting on this side of the Chamber is 7,474, whereas the average number of electors on the rolls for electorates represented by members sitting on the Government side of the House is 6,099.

Mr. C. J. RYAN: You are twisting the figures.

Mr. BRAND: I am not twisting the figures. The hon. member is more capable of twisting than any other member of this Chamber. We know why these figures are as they are. Hon. members opposite are in power simply because of a redistribution that took place under a Labour Government with the idea of keeping the Government in power. I heard some criticism yesterday of the way in which the Redistribution Commission had gerrymandered electorates. If anyone wants to see gerrymandering, he has only to go to the Burrum electorate, where a state of affairs exists which could not obtain unless men deliberately set out to fix the boundaries of electorates in a certain way. In one place they jumped across the Mary River—a great natural boundary—to cut out half a dozen voters who were recognised to be of our shade of political thought.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I heard of a commission which at one time crossed the natural boundary of the Fitzroy River.

Mr. BRAND: I am talking about my electorate.

The hon. member for Bowen spoke of democracy, and said he wanted the simple form of voting provided by the Labour Government, which really means that, no matter how many are in the contest, the first past the post wins, although he may have a minority of the total votes cast. That state of affairs cannot exist under the Federal system of preferential voting, which is recognised by the leading authorities of the world in democracy as the fairest system of voting known, because it sets out to secure a majority representation.

Mr. FOLEY: I don't think you understand it yourself.

Mr. BRAND: The electors of Australia are sensible men and women, and quite understand preferential voting. I admit that hon. members opposite do not want the people to understand it. If hon. members opposite will interview the Principal Electoral Officer of the Federal Department here, they will soon realise how the system operates—it cannot operate except in one direction, which is that the majority opinion of the electors of Queensland prevails. That is just what Labour members do not desire.

I asked the Minister a question a few days ago concerning the position of Barrimoon, and I was informed that it was in the Burnett electorate. It was news to everyone that Barrimoon was in the Burnett electorate. It is on the Burnett watershed of the Dawes Range, but at the last election it was very handy to have it in the Port Curtis electorate, the result in which election was very close. The hon. member for that electorate is a member of the Government Party, and the 103 votes he secured at Barrimoon at the last election were very handy. As a matter of fact, the hon. member told us that members of our political organisation had brought this matter forward, and that that was the reason why to-day, with a Burnett by-election in view, those electors have now been transferred to the Burnett roll. Our organisation has been quite alive in the matter. It had one opinion that Barrimoon was still in the Port Curtis electorate, and another that it was in the Burnett electorate. The returning officer for Burnett told us definitely that it was in the Burnett. I submit that these Barrimoon electors were allowed to remain on the Port Curtis roll at the last election for the purpose of assisting the Government candidate. It was a very handy vote to have. We want to see electors on the rolls for the electorates in which they reside. It is not a good thing to know that people who leave an electorate cannot be taken off the roll for that electorate. It simply means that, if one wished, he could remove even the hon. member for Paddington from his Gibraltar by setting about flooding the electorate with our voters. Such a voter would have to reside there only a month, and then he would get on the roll, and nobody could take him off. We say that an elector residing in an electorate should be on the roll for that electorate, and not on another roll for a certain purpose. It is good to know that under the Federal system, which is a fair system, the latter contingency cannot happen, and that people must be on

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the roll of the electorate in which they reside.

Mr. BRUCE: Or off altogether.

Mr. BRAND: It is not a difficult matter to get on the Federal roll, and when a man has been taken off a roll, although he has not left the electorate, he can secure his vote at election time. (Government dissent.) Hon. members opposite should know that. It is not so with the State system, under which, if a man has been removed from the roll by mistake, which has not been discovered before polling day—possibly by a typographical error—he is not entitled to vote. Only those who are on the clean roll of the returning officer can exercise the franchise. The system which operates at Federal elections should operate at State elections—that is, where an elector has resided in the electorate since the previous election, and has not removed from his place of abode, he should be entitled to vote notwithstanding the fact that his name has been taken off the roll through some error.

The matter of electoral redistribution has always been a burning question with members of Parliament. We on this side yield to no one in our desire that democracy should be the first care of every true Australian. I only hope that we shall be able so to arrange our system of voting in Australia that it will not only be easy but also cheap to get on the roll, and that every man and woman over twenty-one years of age will be able to exercise the franchise in all elections, Federal or State. I can see no reason why that cannot be brought about by an amalgamation of the two authorities. This dual system in many of our departments is not economical, and there is no reason for believing that we cannot arrange with the Federal Government for the carrying out of the duties of both offices in a way that will be equitable to all concerned. I have not so lost faith in human nature that I doubt that that can be achieved. I believe it can, and that it should be done in the interests of the economical government of our country, whether we look at the matter as Queenslanders or as Australians. The system of voting that will be in operation at the forthcoming Federal elections will determine the majority vote and uphold the true principles of democracy, notwithstanding the utterances of the hon. member for Bowen. We definitely assert that one should not look to Labour Governments in search of the true disciples of democracy.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*): It would perhaps clarify the position if I were to make a few observations at this juncture on the matters raised by hon. members, several of whom have complained about the electoral rolls. Considering that we have something approaching 500,000 names on the rolls that are altered from time to time to the extent of about 35 per cent. per annum, making almost new rolls every three years, the Electoral Department does exceedingly well; and the few complaints submitted last night and this morning speak volumes for the efficiency of the officers and the effectiveness of the methods employed by the Government in securing clean and up-to-date rolls.

My attention was drawn last evening to the suggestion of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that we should revert to the system of electoral rights; but I should be

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very sorry to see Queensland take such a retrograde step. Electoral rights were tried at one time in Queensland, and found wanting, and, as evidence of the difficulty in operating the system, I relate this incident mentioned in "Queensland Politics During Sixty Years," by Charles Arrowsmith Bernays, the present Clerk of the Parliament—

"The abolition of the 'voter's right' reminds one of an excellent story. A worthy farmer, enthusiastic in the exercise of his specific rights, had secured his 'voter's right,' and fearful lest he should lose it, he securely pasted it on the back of the kitchen door. Election day came round, and it was a busy day for him during harvest. He put off his voting until within an hour of the close of the poll, and, finding it impossible to remove his 'voter's right' from the door, he hurriedly took the door off its hinges, marched to the polling-booth with the bulky piece of timber, and triumphantly recorded his vote."

He was an enthusiastic voter, and it would have been very unfortunate for him had he pasted his "voter's right" to an iron safe, or some other object weighing half a ton. That story should remove any desire to reintroduce the electoral right. The present system in operation in Queensland is working exceedingly well, and it brings to my mind that I invited any member of the Opposition who so desired to go to the electoral office and investigate for himself the electoral machinery and our electoral methods. I venture to say that that offer has never before been made in Australia by any other Government to an Opposition. That invitation was to inspect for themselves the inner workings of our electoral machinery. It was a fair offer. Some members of the Opposition took advantage of it, inspected the office, and subsequently expressed their high appreciation of our methods, admitting that the system was 100 per cent. efficient. Now we have some hon. members opposite seeking to condemn that system.

I now want to deal with the unfair and unreasonable criticism of my department that was offered by the Leader of the Opposition concerning the transfer of Barrimoon from the electoral district of Port Curtis to the electoral district of Burnett. The hon. gentleman jumped into print without making inquiries, and, by innuendo, suggested that the electors of Barrimoon were transferred recently from Port Curtis to Burnett for the purpose of assisting the Labour candidate in the by-election. That is not true.

Mr. TAYLOR: Wouldn't you have been inclined to put the same construction on it yourself?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I would not. I would first inquire into the case and make my deductions afterwards.

Mr. BRAND: It took place, nevertheless.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Barrimoon is away out from Many Peaks in mountainous country in which it is very difficult to define boundaries. It is quite possible for any person to make a mistake in delineating the boundaries of the two electorates in that part of the country.

Mr. TAYLOR: Have you any record of a similar mistake having been made?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Yes. I have in my hand a telegram published in the "Courier" of to-day stating that, as a result of the recent alteration of boundaries in New Zealand, the people had the spectacle of having political candidates speaking in the wrong electorates. It is an easy matter to make a mistake in connection with boundaries. It is most difficult to determine boundaries because of the mapping out of certain electorates.

Mr. ROBERTS: A perusal of the maps in the Lands Office shows very distinctly where that district is.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It does show very distinctly in the Lands Office, but the Lands Office is not at Barrimoon. All the Government officials in that district made a similar mistake. Barrimoon was regarded as being part of the petty sessions district of Gladstone, and cases have been tried there which should have been tried elsewhere. That shows that the electoral office was not the only party to make the mistake. Here is the point: If the Labour Party desired to take advantage of the transfer of Barrimoon from Port Curtis to Burnett, it would have moved me in that direction; but it did not do so. As a matter of fact, the alteration was made at the request of Mr. Clegg, the recognised agent of the Nationalist Party in the Port Curtis electorate, who was the first to draw my attention to the matter. The very fact that Mr. Clegg drew the attention of the department to the error, and was instrumental in having the correct boundaries defined and Barrimoon transferred from Port Curtis to Burnett, shows conclusively that we never took this step for party purposes. I certainly would not do so.

Mr. BRAND: The transfer was made on 20th September.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The date is immaterial. The fact is that the Leader of the Opposition stated that the transfer had been made for party purposes, whereas it was made at the request of the agent of the Opposition.

Mr. BRAND: Did he not raise the question as to what electorate it was in?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Our attention having been drawn to it, what was the obvious thing to do?

Mr. BRAND: Have you his request?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I have it.

Mr. BRAND: Will you read your reply?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I am not going to waste valuable time in reading correspondence. Mr. Clegg wrote to the department expressing the belief that Barrimoon was in the Burnett electorate. We immediately took up with the Survey Department.

Mr. MOORE interjected.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That statement is not a fact, and such remarks will not cloud the charge made by the hon. gentleman against my department of transferring these voters to the Burnett electorate for party political purposes, whereas that action was taken at the request of his own political agent.

Much has been said about roll-stuffing and gerrymandering in connection with the last redistribution of seats. I agree with the hon. member for Bowen that electoral registration is the basis of all government. If

anything was wrong with the fundamental question of the registration of electors and of electorates, is it not surprising that, when a want of confidence motion was moved in this Parliament—and it was a drag-net one, which gave scope for the discussion of almost everything—not a single hon. member of the Opposition thought of this so-called inequitable redistribution or the alleged roll-stuffing? Surely, if the question was one of any magnitude, the opportunity would have been seized by the Opposition then to mention the matter. But the Opposition must stand condemned in the eyes of the community by reason of the fact that they pretend that the redistribution is bad, and yet, on a want of confidence motion, they did not consider it sufficiently important even to mention it.

Mr. KING: Do you not know that the motion dealt with one particular subject—unemployment?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The motion gave ample scope for the discussion of these matters; yet the Opposition forgot all about this question, showing their sheer hypocrisy.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Anyone who has followed the discussion by the Opposition on this matter since 1921 knows that their action is sheer humbug.

Prior to the last election the Leader of the Opposition declared that he was confident of capturing twenty-one seats from Labour. If the hon. gentleman was sure that the Opposition could win those twenty-one seats—and I believe he thought he was sure—he must then have thought that there was nothing wrong with the electoral redistribution. The whole thing shows the insincerity of hon. gentlemen opposite.

It may interest hon. members to know that an Electoral Districts Act was passed in 1887, and it was not until twenty-three years later that another such Act was passed.

That was in 1910. We came into [11.30 a.m.] power in 1915, and we were only in office six years when we proceeded to a redistribution, showing that we earnestly believed in a redistribution of electorates and of the electors of Queensland. Yet within six years of the redistribution a party that took a quarter of a century to bring about a redistribution complain again and want another redistribution.

The Opposition charge the Government with gerrymandering at the redistribution. If we gerrymandered in 1921, why are they clamouring for the Government to gerrymander again? If the Opposition really thought we were unfair in 1921, they would be praying to heaven that we would not get an opportunity of doing it again, showing again their insincerity. They are asking the Government to gerrymander again! (Laughter.) Talking about gerrymandering reminds me of the fact that the Opposition should be the last in the world to talk about gerrymandering.

Mr. MOORE: Don't you know who really worked out the scheme?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I know who worked out your scheme. I know that the Opposition have proved themselves to be past masters in gerrymandering. I know to my cost how well they can do the job.

Mr. MAXWELL: This Opposition never did anything of the kind

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The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You are the lineal descendants of the other crowd. I was one of the victims of their redistribution.

Mr. MAXWELL: Not now.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: No, I am not, and I hope I shall never be again. At that time there was a very large number of double electorates in Queensland, mostly held by Labour, and the Government of the time conceived the ingenious idea in 1910 that they could so divide these double electorates as to put the Tory section in one part and the Labourites in another so as to divide, as they said, the sheep from the goats. The goats, of course, were the Labour Party. They there and then appointed a Commission. They divided Charters Towers in such a way that they made it impossible for me to win the seat at the time. They divided Fortitude Valley so as to make it for the time being a sure seat for the Tory Party. Townsville, Rockhampton, Gympie, Ipswich, South Brisbane, and Maryborough were all divided into single electorates, and divided by such boundaries that they managed to grab a seat from the Labour Party on each occasion.

Mr. MAXWELL: You did the same at Merthyr against Mr. Macgregor.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: What we did against Mr. Macgregor was that we put back again into Merthyr 400 votes that should never have been taken out. (Laughter.)

Mr. MAXWELL: And you took out a lot of others that should have been left in.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member for Toowong to be careful to obey my call to order. I am not going to shout myself hoarse. If he refuses to obey my call I shall have to deal with him.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The hon. gentleman complained about the Labour Government wiping out Tory seats. The Labour Government had nothing to do with the wiping out of seats. We appointed a Commission, which did it fairly and squarely. They might as well say that the Commission appointed by the previous Government wiped out Labour seats. What about Croydon, Bulloo, Clermont, Carpentaria—all remotely situated and fairly reasonably entitled to representation because of their remoteness from the seat of government; but they were ruthlessly destroyed simply because they were Labour seats.

After all the talk about redistribution, out of the forty-three seats now held by the Labour Party twenty-nine were only slightly affected, and those were affected by an addition from an adjoining Labour seat, showing that they were not very much affected. The only radical alterations made were in fourteen seats, which, of course, had to be increased or diminished according to their position, showing that there is not very much in the arguments of hon. members opposite. I believe as much as anyone in this Chamber—and also because of the fact that I administer the Electoral Department—in the necessity for equitable representation. I recognise the necessity for an Opposition, however bad it is. (Laughter.) A poor Opposition is better than none, and we have no desire to wipe it out. Unless we get proportional representation—which no one

in this Chamber desires—which has been found very ineffective in many countries—unless we get that system, regardless of whether we have equality or inequality in the electorates, we are bound to have inequality of representation in Parliament. If we went to the country to-morrow with the electorates evenly balanced so that we had a perfect quota, it would be possible, because of a wave of public opinion on one side or the other, for either party to win the whole of the seats in the Legislative Assembly with an aggregate majority of seventy-two only—that is a majority of one for every seat. Therefore, we must not, because of an anomaly which may arise in representation in Parliament, attribute an unsatisfactory position in any country where the system exists to any inequality in redistribution. That reminds me of a question asked earlier in the session, the answer to which should be somewhat emphasised, in connection with the representation of the Labour Party in this House compared with the number of electors we represent outside. In that answer I pointed out that a very much greater anomaly took place here in 1912 when the Tory Party got into power. They had then 110,817 votes against the Labour Party's 99,054 votes, or a majority of 11,550 odd; but the Government won by two to one—forty-eight Government members as against twenty-four Labour members. The Government members at that time represented an average of 2,308 votes, and the Labour members represented an average of 4,126 votes; but the Government of the day sat quite comfortably in their seats, and thought they were entitled to sit there; and Labour men, who realised that it was an election anomaly, did not squeal. Hon. members opposite, however, have never stopped squealing.

Mr. BRAND: Look up "Hansard" and you will find why they squeal.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Nobody less desires a redistribution of seats than hon. members on the opposite side of the Chamber.

Take the last Federal election. The Labour Party got 1,200,000 and the Country-Nationalist Party got 1,500,000 votes; yet the latter got in all their senators, and we got none. I could refer also to the previous elections, and point out similar occurrences. As Mr. Thomas pointed out in the House of Commons, you will find that in 1922—not very long ago—the Tories in the Imperial Parliament had a majority of seventy-three, although they were in a minority in the country of 3,000,000. At the last election, when the Tory Government went to the country, they were again in a hopeless minority. Each Tory member represented 19,000 electors; each Labour Party candidate 37,000; and each Liberal member 80,000, showing that there is not very much in the contention of hon. members on the other side.

Hon. members opposite have said that since last election we have been a minority Government. I have repeatedly stated that this Government secured a majority of votes at the last election—I have made that clear over and over again. I have also gone to the trouble of making public through the press and placing in "Hansard" not only the analysis of the votes but also the methods by which I made that analysis. It may be interesting for hon. members to

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know that the very same process of reasoning that I used in 1923 was used in analysing the last election figures, and in 1923 the "Daily Mail" said this:—

"Still another contribution has been made to the review of the recent State election. One may say that the line of reasoning adopted by the Attorney-General is decidedly fair."

When the controversy as to the method of calculating majorities or minorities was in progress, Mr. H. Duncan Hall, the author of the "British Commonwealth of Nations," became very interested in the subject. He was in Sydney at the time, and collected from the newspapers the analyses which had been made, and he wrote to me drawing my attention to the differences in them. He said that he had read mine, which he regarded as decidedly fair; but, in order to clear up the point, he wanted me to give him some additional facts. I gave them to him, and received the reply that he had further investigated the matter, and had come to the conclusion that my system was absolutely sound and fair; and the article which he wrote appeared in the same year and can be perused by hon. members in the "Round Table." On the last occasion I gave hon. members about five months' notice of the method I had adopted, if they wished to dispute my figures.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: We do dispute them.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Hon. members opposite do not get anywhere by saying merely, "You are wrong." If I say, "You are wrong," I not only say so, but I show hon. members where they are wrong.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: If the Opposition say the one word "Wrong," they think they are going to get the public to believe it. Of course, human psychology lends itself to that sort of thing. If you say the one word "wrong" often enough, a lot of people will believe it; but Government members and the public outside are not so simple as to accept the mere say-so of the Opposition that my figures were wrong. I placed those figures in "Hansard" last year for one particular purpose, and I stated that purpose at the time—so that members of the Opposition during the following nine months might examine the figures and scrutinise my methods; and, if I were wrong, give me a good sound thrashing this session. So far, they have not been able to do that; and I do not think they can do it. If they could do it, my figures would have been blown to smithereens long ago. I am not going to waste the time of the Committee by quoting the figures again; but, if hon. members desire them, they can be secured from the speech I delivered last session.

That brings me nearer the question of electoral redistribution. I think we should examine the matter and see where the Government stand on this very important question. Perhaps the Opposition have forgotten that there was a Tory Government at one time in Victoria, and as recently as 1924, and again somewhat later—I am merely using the year 1924.

Mr. MOORE: Because it suits.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: In 1924, there were sixty-five seats in Victoria, sixteen representing 454,000 people, and forty-nine representing only 445,000 people. In other

words, less than one-fourth of the seats had more than half the voters; yet nobody said that there was anything wrong about that.

Mr. MOORE: Didn't they?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Fifty-one out of the sixty-five seats were either above or below the electoral margin, and one seat—Bundarra—was fifteen times larger than another seat. So that our Tory friends can do things pretty well when they get the chance.

Let us analyse the electoral position and the alleged electoral inequality. What do we find in connection with the so-called dreadful electoral position in Queensland? There are thirteen seats above the electoral margin. Would hon. gentlemen opposite be surprised if I told them that to-day there are seventeen Commonwealth seats above the electoral margin? No one is squealing about the Commonwealth electoral registration. There are nineteen State seats below the margin, which is 15.76 per cent., and only three Commonwealth seats below the margin, but they represent 14 per cent. below the margin. There is not very much in that.

Mr. MOORE: Nothing at all.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Yet hon. members on the other side make a fuss in connection with State electorates because a number of the seats are below the margin. Where are these thirteen State seats above the margin situated? With the exception of two—Cooroora and Albert—they are in the metropolis; and the others are in the metropolis. If any seats should be above the margin, then those seats should certainly be above it.

Mr. MOORE: What about Brisbane, Townsville, and Gympie?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: This is an anomalous position that you might find anywhere, because the areas are developing largely into manufacturing and industrial areas instead of residential areas. The seats below the margin, with the exception of two, are remotely situated from the seat of Government. The seats that are remotely situated should be below the margin. There is nothing wrong with that. The system is perfectly sound. The seats adjacent to the seat of Government should have a fairly large population, and those remotely situated should have a small population.

There has been some talk about one vote one value. Does the Leader of the Opposition believe in one vote one value? If he believes in one vote one value, what does it mean? My interpretation of one vote one value is that a vote, say, at the Gulf of Carpentaria, should be as effective as a vote in Brisbane, and, in order that votes situated in remote parts of the State far distant from the seat of government should be of the same value as votes at the seat of government, greater representation must be given to those remote centres. That is the principle I go on, and which I now justify. Why, a man in Brisbane without representation would probably exercise a greater political influence than the man in North Queensland or in the Far West.

Mr. MOORE: The "Funnell gang" seem to know more about it than anybody. (Laughter.)

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The hon. gentleman may know more about the

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"Funnell gang" than I do because it seemed to go up in smoke last night.

Take a man standing his trial in the Cook electorate. He might be sentenced to imprisonment for one month through a great miscarriage of justice, and it is just possible that, before the particulars of his case reached Brisbane for consideration, he might have served that term of imprisonment. Such is not the case with regard to the people in Brisbane.

Mr. MOORE: They have a midnight court here.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That is for the convenience of both sides, and when it is fair to do so there is nothing wrong about that. It is difficult to find out whom the Opposition represent in this Parliament.

Mr. MOORE: The majority of the people in Queensland.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Rubbish! That idea has been exploded.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They represent big vested interests.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Take the area of the electorates in Queensland.

Mr. MOORE: That is the thing that counts with you—acres, not people.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The area is and should be regarded as a factor. The Opposition represent 14.25 per cent. of the total area of Queensland whilst the Labour Party represent—

Mr. BRAND: The gum trees.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: 85.75 per cent. of the area of Queensland. The hon. member is one of the gum trees. At least, judging by his interjections to-day, he is not much more intelligent than one. I do not mind sensible interjections.

Mr. BRAND: You used to say that the Opposition represented gum trees.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The Opposition like to talk about the small number of electors in remotely situated electorates, such as Flinders, but they overlook the fact that our electorates are of enormous dimensions, and, if they were brought up to the quota as they suggest, it would be impossible for the people therein to be properly represented. The Gregory electorate is larger than the States of Victoria and Tasmania combined. Look at the Cook electorate! It has an area of 98,000 square miles. That is an enormous territory to oversee, as it is larger than Victoria. My own electorate is much larger than Tasmania, and surely electorates larger than Tasmania are entitled to some consideration! Only as recently as 1918 my electorate contained 8,000 electors, but, because of the huge slump in mining, the number of electors, as also in the case of Mount Morgan and Burke, has slumped largely. The abnormal drought has also driven thousands of men out of the pastoral electorates.

Are hon. members opposite contending that there should be a redistribution of seats every time an abnormal drought or a great mining depression takes place? Under those circumstances we would be having a redistribution every few years; and nobody, I am sure, desires to have that political turmoil introduced in Queensland.

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Reverting to the question of electoral boundaries, I have calculated the number of electors in Northern Queensland and Central Queensland at 135,000. If we had an electoral redistribution to-morrow, an electoral commission could by law again allot the twenty-five seats in existence at present in those divisions of the State, because these electorates would be above the minimum quota. In other words, a redistribution, if made to-morrow, would make no practical difference.

If I were seriously to consider the question of electoral redistribution, I would unhesitatingly recommend to the Government to do what we as an Opposition advocated in 1910—that, instead of a one-fifth margin, there should be a one-third margin, as now obtains in Victoria. I would also advocate that, in arranging the size of electorates, the commission should take into consideration remoteness from the seat of government. Supposing that were done, what would be the position? Taking the sixteen North Queensland seats, the nine Central Queensland seats, and the four Western seats—Balonne, Maranoa, Murilla, and Warrego—and regarding those seats as remotely situated from the seat of government, the number of electors—namely, 156,725—would, on a one-third margin, enable us to have thirty-five electoral districts for that portion of the country, instead of twenty-nine as at present.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: Why not make it 50 per cent.?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I am merely pointing out a perfectly reasonable rearrangement of the seats. If we did that, we would be following on almost parallel lines the redistribution adopted by the Tory Government in Victoria just before the Hogan Government were returned. I have had the Victorian figures analysed. I said to the Principal Electoral Officer here, "Draw out a parallel set of figures for me on the basis of electorates, giving the Queensland electors the same basis of representation as electors in Victoria." That analysis reveals the following position:—

District.	No. of Seats at Present.	No. if Victorian Principle were Adopted.
Metropolitan	20	13
Urban	23	21
North Queensland, Central Queensland, and four Western seats	29	38

What are the hon. members squealing about? We give them now under our present distribution twenty-nine seats in an area which, if a redistribution were carried out on the lines adopted by the Victorian Tory

[12 noon] Government, would enable us to have thirty-eight seats in that area—an area represented almost exclusively by the Labour Party. So I think hon. members opposite should be quite satisfied that the Labour Party have tried to be fair, and have in no way attempted to create inequality in this Chamber or in the electorates. If the Opposition want a redistribution, let them tell us what they want and let us consider it; but, if I am going to consider a redistribution, I am going to give the electors remotely

situated from the seat of government a fair deal—a deal they have never had before. If I introduce a system of one vote one value, I am not going to have one vote one value on the basis that Opposition members talk about. I will introduce a system of one vote one value on the basis that the electors in Gregory, Burke, and Flinders will have the same political influence in this Parliament as the electors in Brisbane. I would be glad to hear from supporters of the Opposition what they want in this regard.

Mr. CLAYTON: Why don't you bring in plural voting at once?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: This party was responsible for the abolition of plural voting. I do not want to go into ancient history; but, if I did, I could tell the hon. gentleman that when the Labour Party appeared on the political horizon we found the abominable state of affairs that one man could have a vote and exercise it in every electorate in Queensland.

Mr. TAYLOR: You are practically advocating getting back to that.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I am advocating getting back to sane and sound representation equitable to all parties. Anyhow, I put the proposition up to hon. members opposite, and I want to know where they stand. The trouble with the Opposition is that they blame the inequalities of the electoral redistribution for their present position instead of their own incapacity. Where in the history of Governments—where in the history of countries—modern history, at all events—can you find the spectacle of a body of men sitting “in the cold shades of Opposition after five general elections in succession, and, in addition, losing every by-election except one during that period? Here I have a long chapter of eighteen by-elections.

Mr. WEIR: It would be interesting reading.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Perhaps it is interesting. Those eighteen by-elections consist of Gregory, Valley, Maryborough, Rockhampton, Barcoo, Leichhardt, Maranoa, Herbert, Paddington, Rockhampton, Warrego, Buranda, Toowoomba, Eacham, Chillagoe, Balonne, Stanley, and Mitchell.

Mr. WEIR: Who won them?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: All, except one, were won by the Labour Party. We lost one of those fights, and we gave them another because we did not contest it. Where can you find a record like that?

Mr. TAYLOR: It is a record, all right.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: There must be something wrong with the Opposition. I feel sorry for them, and I feel sorry to some extent for Queensland, because—I say it advisedly—it is a good thing for a Government to have a good Opposition. If we have any failings at all as a Government, those failings must be attributed to the fact that we have not had in Opposition men capable of keeping us up to the mark. Talk about losing the last election because of gerrymandering! Who should be the judge of that? The electors certainly.

The principal supporters of the Opposition outside have no illusions as to why they lost the last or the preceding election. I shall give the opinion of Mrs. W. S. Anderson, M.B.E. She was the President of the

Queensland Women's Electoral League at the last election, and a very capable woman, who did wonderful work. When the election was over did she go squealing, and saying that the result was due to gerrymandering? No. This is what she said, as reported in the “Daily Mail” of 29th September, 1926:—

“Speaking candidly, she thought the disappointing result was due to the fact that they had not had a type of candidate that appealed to the electorate generally.”

(Government laughter.) That ought to be sufficient; but, if it is not sufficient, I shall give another opinion—not from a Labour paper. Take the notorious “Western Champion” at Barcardine, noted for its hostility to Labour and its support of the Tory Party—

“Mr. Moore says he is disappointed at the results. So are thousands of Queensland electors, but their disappointment in him is a hundredfold greater than his disappointment . . . All that Mr. Moore managed to do was to submerge nationalism for the time in the hope that he had established peace when he had only brought almost suppressed warfare . . . If an organisation selected the Opposition candidates, it had better commit the hari-kari; if they selected themselves they should have the decency to remain for the rest of their lives in oblivion . . . Labour won because its candidates deserved to win.”

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That is what the fair-minded critic outside says. Then here is a little bit from “The Graziers' Review,” which appeared immediately after the last election:—

“The paralysing incompetence and lack of vision that can be charged against the Opposition and its party machine is more than anything else responsible for the lack of public service or desire for public service on the part of men who ought to be anxious to enter public life, and so degenerate has the machine and its sponsors become that men who ought to be supporting the organisation with funds are definitely not doing so.”

I have no desire to weary the Committee with more quotations; but these go to show that the criticism of the Government by the Opposition—attribution of the position in which they find themselves to the shortcomings of the Government—has been most unfair.

An hon. member on the other side last night referred to duplicate voting. We stand remarkably sound in this regard, because at the last election when all the returns had been sent in and aggregated only 273 people had apparently voted more than once, and we know “apparently voted more than once,” when examined, merely means clerical errors.

There is also the question of enrolment on State and Commonwealth rolls respectively. The Opposition say that our rolls are not clean, and, of course, that the Commonwealth rolls are ideal; but what are the facts? It is very difficult for a man to get on the Commonwealth roll. Our roll is one of the easiest rolls to get on, and one of the most difficult to get off, and, as the hon. member

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for Bowen said, it should be so. I believe in that, and I would rather have on the roll a few surplus names that, after all, can do no harm because there is no duplicate voting in Queensland, than have any man off the roll who has a right to be on. That is the principle I go on, and I think it is a sound one. The nomadic worker has the greatest difficulty in getting on the Federal roll.

MR. TAYLOR: Why?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Because, if he is away from his electorate more than a month, or if he gets out of his own subdivision of his electorate for that period, he is liable to be struck off the roll.

MR. TAYLOR: You said that he could not get on. I say he can get on just as easily as he can get on the State roll.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He has to remain at least four weeks—perhaps very much longer—in a particular locality before he can get on the roll; and, if he is a seasonal worker going from place to place, it is probably many years before he can get on.

Now let me get down to figures, which, after all, are the things which should matter, rather than idle and unwise statements. The adult population on 31st March last numbered 492,048. The actual enrolment on the State rolls on that date was 478,757, showing that 13,311 adults were in the State but were not enrolled. That is not evidence of the inflation of rolls. I explain that deficiency of 13,311 persons by saying that the number included arrivals who had not completed their residential qualifications, temporary residents, tourists, travelling agents, and persons whose claims were in transit and process of transfer. So that, by and large, on the 31st March last our roll was a very good roll.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Take the Commonwealth roll on the other hand. The number qualified for enrolment was the same—492,048 electors. Two months after the 31st March—when, of course, in the ordinary course of events there would be more people in Queensland—the Commonwealth enrolment was only 451,320, showing a deficiency of 40,728 names. Allowing for the margin of 13,311 that I have allowed in our own case, I find that 27,417 adults resident in Queensland who ought to be on the Commonwealth roll were not enrolled. I shall not say that they were entitled to be on the Commonwealth roll, because the law of the Commonwealth does not qualify them all to be on it. Anybody can examine those figures. When I did so I thought I would have an analysis made in order to get the facts of the case, and I said to the Principal Electoral Officer, "Take the Commonwealth roll for the Kennedy electorate, and compare it with the State rolls for the districts included in the Federal electorate of Kennedy." It was a herculean task; but our officers got down to it, and analysed them most carefully, comparing each name on the Kennedy roll as far as practicable with the names on the State rolls. What did that reveal?

At 12.15 p.m.,

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

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: My official information is that 5,710 of the names that

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were on the State rolls were not on the Federal roll. If hon. members opposite require any further evidence as to the merits of the State roll and the demerits of the Commonwealth roll, then they are hard to please. I have no fault to find with the Commonwealth electoral officers, who are a capable, competent, and fair body of men, but I do condemn the Commonwealth system. They have to obey instructions, and the system is responsible for the state of affairs in Queensland. One hon. member last night referred to the number of prosecutions under the Commonwealth Electoral Act. I submit these figures in connection with the Commonwealth Electoral Act—

	Notifications Issued.	Fines Imposed.
1924	18,000	5,000
1925	10,000	3,000
1926	12,000	3,000
1927	21,000	5,000

Probably the notifications were issued requesting electors to enrol, or, more likely, they had been removed from the roll because of change of address, etc. The State office has done exceedingly well, particularly when it is considered that in 1927 no fewer than 121,000 alterations in names on the rolls had to be made by the State office. The few mistakes that are made indicate that the office is staffed by a capable body of officers. Every three years the State rolls are theoretically rewritten. That is to say, alterations are made to one-third of the names each year.

The officers are faced with difficulty in connection with arrivals and departures. Last year the arrivals in Queensland numbered 72,000, and departures 69,000. All these matters have to be carefully noted, and the problem is a most difficult one. A man may come to the State, remain a few months, qualify, be enrolled, and depart. However, the officers have carried out their work very effectively.

Quite a lot has been said in support of a uniform roll for the State and the Commonwealth. I have not, and never have had, the slightest objection to a uniform roll, but I insist that it must be a roll that will be fair to the electors of Queensland. We would be absolute lunatics if we were to accept a uniform roll on the basis of the present Commonwealth Electoral Act, which has been condemned by every hon. member on this side. We would practically be disfranchising tens of thousands of electors, which I refuse to do. The Opposition may talk about a saving in cost.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Have we asked that electors should be disfranchised?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: If hon. members opposite advocate that I should institute a uniform roll on the basis of the present Commonwealth Electoral Act, then they are asking me to disfranchise at least 50,000 electors in Queensland, which I refuse to do. Of course, they allege that our rolls contain more names, but I far prefer to have the additional names and pay the additional cost than disfranchise anyone. There are more names on our rolls because our office gives better service. The Commonwealth office provides a triennial roll, whereas we provide an annual roll. If one had examined

the Commonwealth electoral roll in the early part of this year before the reprint was made, one would hardly have recognised the roll. It was not the slightest guide. Our roll is an annual roll, brought up-to-date, and, in addition, we provide a quarterly supplement. Of course, it may cost a little more to give that service, but, if hon. members opposite are content with a triennial roll, in preference to the annual roll with the quarterly supplement we supply, then let them say so. It will make no difference to me, because I want to give the public fair service and the electors a chance to get on the roll and record their votes.

Apart from that fact altogether, the Queensland rolls, as printed, are exceedingly useful. They are now used as a basis for the jury system, which saves us immense sums of money in the preparation of jury lists. They are also used at local authority elections, and save these bodies large sums of money in the printing of rolls. If the Commonwealth would meet me and discuss a roll by which the interests of the electors of Queensland will be safeguarded and there will be no danger of their disfranchisement, I shall have no objection to getting a joint roll to-morrow.

I have explained most of the points raised by the Opposition; but, if there be any additional ones raised, I will consider them, and no doubt hon. members on this side will have something to say on them, if necessary.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): The hon. gentleman who has just resumed his seat has had a particularly good time. The hon. gentleman is feeling pleased with himself. I do not know whether everybody else is. It is just as well for the hon. gentleman to feel pleased with himself.

MR. C. J. RYAN: The Opposition are not.

HON. W. H. BARNES: No hon. member on this Committee can more readily read character than you, Mr. Weir, and did you notice how very pleased the hon. gentleman seemed to be? If you could only take him into the various electorates and let him smile as he smiled this morning when delivering his speech, he would have a wonderful effect on your supporters. There is no doubt in my mind that any trouble which might have arisen in Maryborough would have been brushed aside by one of his smiles.

THE TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I suggest to the hon. gentleman that he keep his references to smiles for the next vote. (Laughter.)

HON. W. H. BARNES: I shall be very pleased to do that, Mr. Weir, but you are always smiling. The Attorney-General wanted to make it clear that this side of the Committee were out to disfranchise electors. He had not the slightest grounds for making such a statement.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You are charging us with that.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman is making an absolute mis-statement.

MR. BOW: I will prove it later.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. member can try to do so if he likes. No Government ever stood for more honest government than the Government to which I had the honour to belong.

MR. H. J. RYAN: That is why you are in opposition.

HON. W. H. BARNES: We will not lose our tempers over a statement of this kind; but the fact remains that the statement made is an incorrect one. I emphasise that I have never been connected with a party or Government that went crooked. The hon. gentleman is making a statement which is not correct.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: What did I say?

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman said that it had been suggested that we were out to disfranchise the electors by the proposals we were making.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I said that was the effect of your proposals.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman is evidently backing down.

MR. WINSTANLEY: You tried to disfranchise them when you were in power.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Has any hon. member on this side ever stated that the electoral officers who had to do with the preparation of the rolls were out to do the improper thing? As an ex-Minister I can say as a result of my experience with the various departments that the officials would scorn to do anything but what was right. My experience is that officials of the State Government stand along the lines of doing the square and straight thing at every turn. I have had a good deal to do with them, and have defended them when they have been assailed by other hon. members.

Hon. members will notice how the hon. gentleman applauded Mrs. Anderson (the then president of the Queensland Women's Electoral League) for the remarks made by her after the last election. No doubt the lady in question did express herself as the honourable gentleman said. At the same time, whatever the party did at the time, Mrs. Anderson was behind and supported what was done. Do you notice how the hon. gentleman has been searching for political treasures which are so hard to find, and did you hear the rumour that the hon. gentleman has had a staff of people going round right and left to see what information they could get to deal with this vote? All the hon. gentleman succeeded in getting was the little paragraph that he has quoted. Then he goes to the "Western Champion," which he also quotes. The point which I make as a public man is that it is the duty of the party—be it the Nationalist Party, the Labour Party, or any other party—and the duty of the citizens, to get the right stamp of candidate. Taking my own personal case, if it is considered that the hon. member for Wynnum is not the right stamp for the party, then it is the duty of the party and of the citizens he represents to get a proper member for Wynnum. The responsibility rests upon the people; and surely no member of the Labour Party will say that the responsibility does not rest upon their own people. So far as the "Western Champion" is concerned, if that paper was a supporter of this party at the time that was written, then it must have been a supporter of the milk-and-water kind—it was certainly not very strong.

I have always found the Attorney-General one of the most courteous Ministers—I have stated that privately, and have no hesitation

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in saying it publicly—and one who will frequently put himself out to oblige. The hon. gentleman said that figures should matter in this Chamber. I am going to repeat figures which will matter, and which have mattered outside. Would the Government have been sitting where they are to-day if figures had mattered, as they should have mattered, even in connection with the last State election? No! If figures had mattered, they would have mattered very seriously for hon. members opposite. I would not like to tread on the hon. gentleman's corns; but would they not have mattered to the hon. gentleman? He represents an electorate with 2,536 electors, and the quota should be something like 6,509.

[12.30 p.m.]

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Due to a big slump in mining.

HON. W. H. BARNES: There was no big slump in the hon. gentleman making sure of that constituency. He represents only 2,536 electors.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: There were over 3,000 electors when I first won the seat.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am not disputing that. Is the hon. gentleman denying my statement?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It has nothing to do with the case.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Nothing ever has to do with the case when it affects hon. members on the other side, but it always has to do with the case when it affects this side. I want to put it on record that the hon. gentleman was elected by a constituency with 2,536 voters.

Mr. HARTLEY: Suppose he does, what about it? Do you want to disfranchise him?

HON. W. H. BARNES: To say the least, when we have an election, let us have a fair "go." That is all I am asking.

Mr. HANLON: A fair "go" under the old postal ballot system, when you got hundreds of illegal votes.

HON. W. H. BARNES: That is a voice that does not charm very much. It is very noisy, but I am not going to answer it now. Let us have a fair "go"!

Mr. COLLINS: We cannot have a fair "go" when you have the money power behind you.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The money power is on the other side. It is extracted from the pockets of the workers through the "Daily Standard." That is where the money power comes from.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Will the hon. gentleman connect his remarks with the vote.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am trying to put hon. members right. I am glad the Home Secretary is here now. I know he is a very generous fellow at heart, because I know that on one occasion he prevented a very serious disaster at Rockhampton. The hon. gentleman represents 3,780 electors.

The HOME SECRETARY: That is not true, and you know it.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am quoting the figures supplied to me, and, if the hon. gentleman can prove they are incorrect, I must accept his word.

The HOME SECRETARY: Do you suggest that a member should resign when the number

of electors in his constituency falls? Quote the figures at the last election.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am not suggesting anything of the kind. I give these figures believing them to be correct—

Electorates below statutory minimum.

Government	...	...	16
Opposition	...	...	2

Those were the figures supplied to me on 31st March, 1928.

The HOME SECRETARY: Quote the figures prior to my election! Be fair!

HON. W. H. BARNES: What is the use of the hon. gentleman saying that? I can remember when there were 11,000 electors in my electorate, while Mr. Theodore was then representing a northern constituency which contained only about 2,000 electors. That has been the policy of the other side right through. That is the position, and the Government should put it right. Did you ever hear of a Government member getting up and saying that he would approve of anything that was wrong? They say they never make mistakes. When the other fellows do right they claim the credit, and when they do wrong they disown them. If this condition of things exists, the Government have a duty to see that it is altered so that it will be fair to the community as a whole. They should see that one vote has one value.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: What do you mean by one vote one value?

HON. W. H. BARNES: There should be a certain percentage in favour of country electorates. That is the basis that should always be adopted in electoral matters.

The HOME SECRETARY: What do you advocate?

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. member asks me what I am advocating? I am advocating that the Government should have some conscience, and that they should do the right thing if they want to find out what the minds of the people are. That is a fair position to take up. (Government interjections.) Notice how hon. members opposite are barking!

The HOME SECRETARY: You are deliberately trying to mislead the Committee.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am not deliberately trying to mislead the Committee. There should be a fair redistribution as far as it is humanly possible to give it.

The HOME SECRETARY: You know that I had my full quota when I was elected to this House.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman has made that statement, and I must accept it; but, if that was the position, it is not so to-day. Does the hon. member challenge that?

The HOME SECRETARY: What I am asking now is whether you advocate confining the redistribution to the unequal electorates or whether you would apply it throughout the whole State?

HON. W. H. BARNES: The only way it could be done would be through the whole State; it would not be fair otherwise.

I am very glad to have been able to put before the Committee the fact that the Minister tried to make it appear that certain things have been happening, whereas, if you put a political gauge against them you can

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explode them and show the public that a lot of the statements made have been entirely foreign to the true issue.

Mr. FERRICKS (*South Brisbane*): The hon. member for Wynnum appears to me to have wandered right round the subject without getting to any definite comparison between the system of Federal voting and the highly efficient system in operation in the State sphere. Quite recently I had the opportunity of witnessing the working of the card system adopted by the Federal Government, and whatever efficiency may be claimed for it I found during the few weeks involved that the cards apply relatively to a very small section of voters. In the first place, it will be agreed that the fee of 15s. per 100 paid by the Commonwealth Electoral Office for the reporting by the postman of alterations in addresses is an inducement for the postman or any other official to pile up as many hundreds of names as he possibly can. The instant he observes during the course of his duties that a voter has changed his address, a notification goes in to the Electoral Office; but, if there is any fairness to be claimed for such a system, the weakness is that a new postal address is not found by the postman in the case of a very large section of voters. What I mean is this: When the postman obtains information during the course of his rounds that Mr. and Mrs. Jones, for instance, have removed to other premises, they are sent cards by the Electoral Office at the termination of about a month, when they are entitled to claim fresh enrolment. That is very good so far as it goes in the case of Mr. and Mrs. Jones, but very largely in an electorate like South Brisbane, and nearly as largely in the electorate of Kurilpa, the signing of those two cards does not embrace the whole of the household, for this reason.

In the whole of the metropolitan area there are, perhaps, no districts where a bigger transformation has taken place than in South Brisbane and Kurilpa in the increase in the number of tenement houses and the letting of rooms and modern flats. It applies very largely pretty well all over the area of South Brisbane. I believe to nearly as large an extent in Kurilpa, and to a very large extent in some of the other metropolitan electorates, the position being that people are moving in from the outer suburbs and sharing relatively large homes amongst two and sometimes more families, getting the advantage of comparatively cheap rents, and avoiding high tram fares, whilst other families are going into apartments for the same reasons. In the case of the Mr. and Mrs. Jones to whom I have referred for the purposes of illustration, the card system reaches them; but they may have three or four rooms let to people who are not all migratory workers, but who do not receive much correspondence through the post—some none at all—with the result that they are overlooked, or are not brought within the field of operation of the card system as practised by the Federal Government. In my opinion that is the biggest weakness of the system, if it is claimed that it aims at enrolling all persons entitled to enrolment. It does not reach that section of the community to whom I referred. Even if one or two workers occupying rooms in a comparatively large house do get correspondence, and are consequently reported by the postman as having become resident within that subdivision of a Federal electorate, at the

expiration of a month or so—although very rarely is a claim card filled in at the expiration of one month—a card is forwarded to the divisional returning officer. Any divisional returning officer in the metropolitan area will tell any inquirer that the name of that person, who may not be a migratory worker, but who probably has merely changed his or her address, is not forthwith put upon the roll, but that it is retained for another month or so to make quite sure that the claimant has become settled in the subdivision. Many of these people to whom I have referred shift their postal addresses, and, when the comparative few who do get enrolment shift to another apartment or boarding-house, their names come off automatically. If any hon. member opposite will tell me that he honestly believes that the operation of such a system in the instance I have quoted is effective to enrol all persons entitled to be electors, then I say he must be pretty biased if he will not recognise the true position when it is pointed out to him by one who has recently experienced it—a position which will be experienced by himself if he goes into any of the areas round about the metropolis.

Mr. KELSO: Is there not a responsibility on the elector?

Mr. FERRICKS: There is, but surely a man going about looking for work—residing in South Brisbane perhaps for six weeks, shifting to the North Coast line in the banana-growing industry, or getting into the sugar industry or any other occupation in primary industry—is entitled to some protection in the retention of his name on the Federal roll.

A man who is in search of work, travelling the different parts of the State finds it practically impossible to have his name retained on the Federal roll. If hon. members had some experience of the mass of the people they would realise the truth of what I am saying. If hon. members opposite would attend the booths in some of the industrial areas of the metropolis, they would have forced upon them the conviction of the truth of our assertion as to the difficulties confronting workers in remaining on the Federal roll. Why, at every polling-booth in the largely populated areas of the metropolis, men and women—men in particular—are turned away in scores because their names are not on the roll.

At 12.47 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. TAYLOR: How do you account for the fact that some of the electors bring along a Federal card notifying enrolment, and insist that their names are on the State rolls then being used?

Mr. FERRICKS: There are thousands of men and women not on the Federal roll at election time, and the present Federal system is responsible for their exclusion.

Mr. KELSO: Have they the right to vote on such occasions?

Mr. FERRICKS: They have not the right to vote, as the hon. member would know if he attended some of the booths in the industrial areas of Brisbane. I quite admit that some names are inadvertently removed from the roll, but I refuse to admit that duplicate voting is practised. It probably happens in this way: The husband may go to one booth and the wife to another to

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record their respective votes. In the one booth the name of the husband is ruled off by the clerk responsible, and at the other booth the name of the husband, instead of the name of the wife, is ruled off in error. Can anyone say that that is not liable to occur in a rushed polling-booth? At the last South Brisbane elections there were five alleged cases of duplicate voting, the circumstances of which were very similar to those that I have related.

The claim by the Opposition in connection with the redistribution of seats has been more than fully answered by the Attorney-General, and no comment was made by the Opposition because of the soundness of the argument adduced. Was it not eminently fairer to excise two seats on the Darling Downs—I was going to say the over-represented and over-governed Darling Downs—than to excise two seats in the Gulf of Carpentaria area in North Queensland, where two seats, Carpentaria and Croydon had previously been abolished.

Mr. MOORE: The two extra seats came to Brisbane.

Mr. FERRICKS: In comparison with other districts of the same area the Darling Downs, on account of its representation and "pull," has been responsible in Parliament for more political railways than any other part of Australia. Hon. members opposite refer to the excision in the last redistribution of two seats on the Darling Downs and the Musgrave electorate as instances of gerrymandering.

Is the conviction not forced upon hon. members opposite that, if a redistribution took place every few years—which, in effect, is their claim—it would be quite possible—and indeed it often has occurred—that there would be a diminution of population in some electorates and an aggregation in others owing to the activities in different industries? If we were to follow out such a policy every time a number of anomalies occurred due to the fluctuations of population in the different electorates, we would be altering the electoral boundaries every three or four years. Hon. members know that an increase in population has taken place in North Queensland since the opening of the North Coast Railway by this Government. Look at the increased number of electors on the roll for Herbert, to say nothing of the thousands who have not been able to get on the roll for that district owing to their having to go to other districts in an endeavour to earn a living!

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Will you tell us whose policy it was to build the North Coast Railway?

Mr. FERRICKS: The point is—who built it? If the policy the hon. gentleman refers to had been carried out when it was initiated, the State would have had the advantage of obtaining the money at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. or 4 per cent. interest and of cheap material.

Take the development we expect to take place in the Mount Isa district. We expect an aggregation of population there, and, if that aggregation exceeds all expectations and amounts to tens of thousands to the great benefit of this State, will it be contended seriously by hon. members opposite that a redistribution of seats should take place? It was the practice of the Commonwealth Parliament to have a redistribution of seats

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every five years in the event of the electors in any one State increasing to such an extent as to justify that State having an additional member. That has not been availed of, because the Commonwealth realises that a redistribution once in ten years is quite sound and sufficient. I do not know when the next redistribution of seats will take place, but there is a lot in what the Minister says—that hon. members on the other side themselves are not very anxious for a redistribution of seats, but, probably with an eye to the immediate future, are endeavouring to make out a case against the Government on very false grounds. Something has been said about jumping rivers in the alteration of electoral boundaries. Some curious things are done in other places and under other circumstances.

I was pleased to hear the commendation from both sides of the Committee regarding the readiness of the electoral office at all times to agree to the establishment of booths in country electorates. It is quite a correct policy to provide facilities for the easy recording of votes, provided the circumstances warrant the granting of that right. Of course, it is not necessary in the metropolitan area to the same extent, but a curious thing happened at the last municipal elections, which are conducted on the State electoral rolls.

In the South Brisbane electorate we had five polling-booths and a separate polling-booth in North Brisbane, making a total of six. In addition, there was established in the area of South Brisbane a polling-booth for the electoral district of Kurilpa. That polling-booth was situated in the State high school building, but although within the boundaries of the South Brisbane electorate, any South Brisbane voters who desired to record their votes there had to do so as absent voters. That is an anomaly in itself; but, to aggravate the position, the City Council established within the borders of the Kurilpa electorate—at the kiosk building in Dornoch terrace—a polling-booth for South Brisbane, at which electors of Kurilpa would have to vote as absent voters. Whatever actuated the town clerk in arranging such a position as that I could not understand then, and do not understand now. It appeared to be aimed at creating confusion, and to render the task of voting more difficult, with the idea, perhaps, that in the end some voters—probably some lady voters pressed for time and who would become a little confused—would go away without voting at all. Let me repeat my remarks: Within the borders of South Brisbane, at the State high school building, there was a polling-booth for the electorate of Kurilpa, at which South Brisbane electors had to vote as absent voters. A few blocks further up Gladstone road, at the kiosk on Dornoch terrace, there was a polling-booth for the electorate of South Brisbane, at which Kurilpa electors had to vote as absent voters. I hope that position will be guarded against. I am in favour of placing facilities at the disposal of the voters, but the polling-booth on Dornoch terrace should be available for use by Kurilpa electors, and that at the State high school building for South Brisbane electors.

Another curious matter, over which I find on inquiry the State Electoral Office has no control, is the extravagant number of postal votes which were recorded at the last municipal election. On a previous occasion I mentioned the case of a lady, who was blind

and illiterate, recording a postal vote. Information has since come into my possession quite accidentally from a most unexpected source which shows, on unimpeachable authority, that a lady who was blind and mentally deficient exercised a postal vote.

Mr. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): In addressing myself to this vote for "Electoral Registration." I would offer the congratulations of the democratic-minded section of the workers to the Minister and to the officers of his department for the high state of efficiency into which they have brought the electoral machinery of the State. There is not the slightest doubt that never in the [2 p.m.] history of Queensland has an opportunity to clearly express their wishes been given to the people of the State so effectively and well as under the present Administration. A lot of the abuses of the old days have been wiped away. It has been made easier, simpler, and surer for a man to get on the roll and stay on the roll—that is, the State roll—and I hope that, while this Government remains in power at any rate, all the soft soap and humbug expressed by gentlemen on the other side—all the appeals to soft sentiment and sometimes the hammer of the press will simply pass over without having any effect at all on the Administration, because everybody knows that the real sentiment behind the prototypes of gentlemen opposite and their political bosses is to prevent as far as possible the will of the people finding expression at the ballot-box. There is not the slightest doubt about that.

Mr. MAXWELL: It is absolutely untrue.

Mr. HARTLEY: It is absolutely correct. One has only to go over the history of Administrations other than that of the Labour Government to see very clearly that every effort, every trick, every sharp practice that they could put into force was put into force to prevent the general masses of the people—the working class people—expressing their preference for one party or the other in the State. The attempt was always made to keep workers from saying who should govern and on what lines they should govern. You could see that quite clearly in connection with the Commonwealth roll. The Commonwealth system for the enrolment of electors is a bad system. The State system aims at getting men and women on the roll and keeping them there, and allowing no one except just before an election to come between the voter and the electoral registrar whose duty it is to enrol them. It is the elector's duty in the State to get himself enrolled, and it is the electoral registrar's duty in the State to help him to get enrolled. This is totally different from the Commonwealth principle. The Commonwealth principle is to allow an intermediate party to come in—a third party—in the form of an already overworked postman, and they pay the postman 14/5d. per head to put men off the roll and to put them on; and the confusion that results cannot be wondered at because it is a system that cannot be fully developed. All the postman does is to call at the residence of certain electors. Perhaps he finds he cannot deliver the letter for that day or perhaps the succeeding day. He immediately notes it "Left," and no further inquiry is made. The people at that residence may have gone away for a fortnight or a month with every intention of returning. It may be absolutely essential that they return. They are only away for a holiday,

but that does not matter to this wonderfully efficient Commonwealth Electoral Department—that is, if you can believe hon. gentlemen opposite. It does not matter that the addressee will not get the card for some weeks at any rate, informing him that it is intended to omit or erase his name from the roll. By the time he gets it the damage is done. On the other hand, very often the postman inquires who else is in the house. There may be visitors there, and he immediately notifies the electoral office that such-and-such persons from another electorate are residing there, and the office immediately enrolls them for that address and gives notice to have them taken off the other roll. No wonder there is confusion. That cannot happen under the State system, and I, for one, will always oppose any attempt to bring about a uniform roll if it is going to be placed under the control of the Commonwealth Electoral Department. I consider that they are inefficient and hopelessly out of date, and their tricky method of paying postmen 14/5d. per head to put men on and off the roll does not commend itself to my judgment—that is, if we wish to have anything like a correct roll.

Hon. members opposite have been complaining a good deal about the manipulation of boundaries of electorates in connection with the redistribution of seats. They have a simple remedy—they have simply to get over on these benches, when they can manipulate the boundaries. They did it before this Government came into power, but, in spite of their manipulation of the electoral boundaries, this Government got into office and will continue to distribute the voting strength of the State as they think fit.

Mr. MOORE interjected.

Mr. HARTLEY: I do not bother about commissions, whether in connection with the late Government or not—I think commissions have come to the stage of being a farce. When hon. members opposite get on to these benches they can manipulate the boundaries. They would not expect us to give up our own seats so that they can come on this side—that is sheer humbug and hypocrisy. This Government can be depended upon within certain limits to see that no undue preponderance is given to them. There is nothing to argue about in that! Whether that can be justified from the ethical side or not does not enter into the question so far as I am concerned.

The question is, when you are in the saddle keep in the saddle. (Opposition laughter.) That is a very old proverb—as old as the hills. Hon. members know that the class they stand for and the press did not scruple at any method or means to keep them in power when they were in power and keep the representatives of the workers out. You have only to go back to the 1910 redistribution and take one striking example. Of course, the plans of hon. members miscarried then, the same as this Government, if they go beyond the bedrock sentiment of the people as to what is right and decently fair. The people will allow a certain amount of latitude. Go over that margin of latitude and it will be "Good-bye" to this Government just the same as it was "Good-bye" to the Government in 1915. Just take one example of how hon. members opposite manipulated boundaries under the redistribution in 1910. They wiped out two or three electorates in the North that would have been Labour if

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they had had the opportunity of returning representatives. In addition, they altered the boundaries so as to make sure that out of what might be two doubtful ministerial seats they would make one sure ministerial seat. That is what they did in Rockhampton. Rockhampton returned two members, as you know—Mr. Grant and Mr. Kidston—and, when they came to divide the Rockhampton electorate, they simply straddled the river and put part of the electorate on one side of the river into Fitzroy and they moved the boundary of another area which had been a separate constituency so as to make the electorate of Keppel, and made old North Rockhampton into part of Rockhampton. There was a natural geographical boundary for an electorate, yet they ignored it and simply left a number on each side of the river and took out the Labour portion of Rockhampton so as to make a safe seat for Mr. Grant in Fitzroy. When they came to the election in 1912 it was proved that they had made a fairly safe seat for the then sitting member, because he was returned by a majority of about 600. In the 1915 election he lost that. It only goes to show that it does not matter how boundaries are manipulated, unless the administration of the Government commends itself to the people, the will of the people will override such considerations as the destruction of what they believe to be the political faith of a section of the community even against the Government's designs. In regard to other matters, hon. members opposite know that prior to that 1915 election—whether they saw the storms gathering or not we can only guess—every attempt was made to manipulate the rolls in favour of the then Denham Government.

I know that the Railway Department was canvassed for the names and number and locality of all railway construction workers. A list was sent out from the electoral office in Brisbane, or from the Justice Department I believe it was, to various registrars in the various parts of the State, objecting to certain names being on the roll. The Electoral Act was altered so that the residential qualification was so interpreted that no railway construction worker who lived in a tent could get his name on the roll. That was done. I remember, in the 1915 election, I went into the revision court and appeared on behalf of 300 men in Fitzroy and a number in Normanby. I was then co-operating and assisting the then Labour member for Normanby. We were instrumental in preventing the disfranchisement of some 500 or 600 men altogether. Hon. gentlemen opposite know that these were the wonderful tactics and methods employed by the Government representing the political faith of hon. gentlemen opposite at that time. In spite of that, after all this, as the hon. member for Wynnum and others have said, if this redistribution of boundaries has been so unfair, how do hon. gentlemen come to account for it that we displaced them after they had redistributed the electorates to what they thought was to their satisfaction? In 1915 the Denham Government went to the country with a following of forty-eight, and Labour with twenty-four. It was a big majority, but, in spite of that, after the manipulation of these boundaries, they were defeated and Labour returned with a number of forty-four and the Denham Government that afterwards became the party of which hon. members opposite are members were returned with twenty-eight.

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Mr. MAXWELL: That proves that your argument is wrong, and that there was no manipulation.

Mr. HARTLEY: They did what they thought would secure their return—manipulated the boundaries to their advantage. In 1920 this Government redistributed the electorates. I think in the 1923 elections we were nearly defeated and returned to this House with a majority of two only.

Mr. EDWARDS: That was in 1920.

Mr. HARTLEY: It was after the redistribution of boundaries, at any rate.

Mr. BRAND: No; it was before the redistribution. You are tangled up properly.

Mr. HARTLEY: I may have made a mistake. You come to this position—that we were returned here with a majority of two, and at a subsequent election we got back again to our normal strength of forty-three. That all goes to show that, even in the electorates where we were supposed to be strong, the administration of the Government was not in accordance with the will of the people, and in spite of the boundaries our numbers waned, but with the increase in progress in the State we were returned with a greater majority. As far as I can see, and as far as my vote will go, it is, as long as fair representation is given to various interests of the State, not altogether confined to the number of people in a certain portion of the State, but to the interests and areas and remoteness of the electorates so boundaries should be fixed.

The hon. member for Wynnum instanced the slump in the number of voters in Flinders and Mount Morgan. What remedy do hon. members suggest? Do they want to wipe those two electorates out because a slump in the industries reduced their voting strength? That is the policy that has been prevailing in years past, and for which to a great extent the condition of industry in the Southern portions of the State is attributable to-day—that you simply counted heads and not the area of the country or the interests of the country, or the expansion of industry in the outlying portions of the State. Administration by merely counting heads and giving representation by the numbers of people in certain places has brought a good deal of population to one point of the State, and has really loaded the rest of Queensland with a big residential population in Brisbane, which to all intents and purposes is something in the nature of a commercial and industrial cancer on the economic life of the State. Any system that does that is a bad system. Our party does not do that. Our policy is holding the smaller electorates there because we recognise the soundness of the development of the out-ports of the State. Those people are entitled to representation, and it is not right that, because there is a big bulk of the population here living on the rest of the State, they should get all the representation. As the hon. member for South Brisbane pointed out, the great burden put on this State was by the super-favouritism shown to the Darling Downs and this southern corner of the State. It has put a big increase on our debt and a big loss on our railways. These politically gerrymandered railways have not given any compensation in the nature of additional development to the rest of the State. Any Government that

opposes or prevents that policy being carried further is bound to get the confidence of the people in the future.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): The Minister this morning delivered a prepared statement, and I gathered from it that his object was to show that the Federal authorities were out to disfranchise some thousands of electors of Queensland.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That was the intention of the Federal Act.

Mr. ROBERTS: The conclusions of the hon. gentleman are wrong. I have enough confidence in the Commonwealth Government to say that that was not their intention, and that the Federal Electoral Act does not provide for that. It is quite easy for electors, after having been enrolled in one electorate and removing to another electorate in order to follow their occupation, to obtain enrolment in that electorate. No one knows that better than the Attorney-General. The hon. gentleman followed that charge up by forecasting a redistribution of seats. He said that, if he had his way—and I largely subscribe to it—he would consider the remote portions of the State in any redistribution. But did not the hon. gentleman receive a report from a Commission which recommended wiping out three different seats away from the metropolis, and did he not endorse that report and introduce legislation providing for three additional seats in the metropolis? Was not that the policy definitely followed by the Minister, who now talks about greater representation for the men in the backblocks? His Government could have disregarded the report of the Commission. Because it made recommendations, it was not necessary that either he or his Government should endorse those recommendations; but he followed that report up by introducing a Bill which practically disfranchised a large number of people in the country of three representatives, and added those three representatives to the representation of the metropolis.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Do you remember the four electorates you wiped out?

Mr. ROBERTS: This is the man who talks about doing the right thing by the men in the backblocks!

The hon. gentleman made the statement that, roughly speaking, there were 40,000 people not enrolled who were entitled to be shown on the Federal roll, and, allowing for the 13,000 who may be moving about or not qualified to be enrolled, the actual position in Queensland is that 27,000 people are not shown on the Federal roll. Whilst I have not had time to compare the seventy-two electoral rolls in use in Queensland, I have examined two rolls with which I am particularly concerned—the rolls for the Toowoomba and East Toowoomba electorates. The date of the latest official State roll is the 17th July; that of the Commonwealth the 26th July, so that for comparative purposes that is as close as one can get. Of course, in those rolls that are dated July we cannot take the actual number stated on the supplementary roll, because there is a large number of deductions by reason of erasures. Taking first the roll for the Toowoomba electorate, the State roll shows a total enrolment of 7,303; that of the Commonwealth 7,224.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Nearly one hundred less.

Mr. ROBERTS: There is, of course, a period of fourteen days difference, whilst it must be borne in mind that a special appeal is being made at the moment for people to register their electoral qualifications in view of the forthcoming Federal elections.

So far as East Toowoomba is concerned, the figures are 6,700 for the State roll and 6,709 for the Federal roll. If the position is similar in regard to other electorates, then the figures I have quoted show there is nothing to complain about. I know, however, where the 27,000 are to be picked up. They are picked up by reason of the fact that the moving population the Minister talks about—the vote which he wants to get—is considered in fixing the date of the elections. A lot of those people may have left the State, and there is a possibility that at certain times of the year they come back. We cannot check these things.

Reference was also made to duplicate voting. I agree with the Minister that the duplicate vote is not worth counting—that it would not probably exceed ten; but the difficulty we have to contend with is that all the electorates of Queensland are not so free from a lot of shuffling as is the East Toowoomba electorate, otherwise the Minister would be sitting on this side of the Committee and responsible Government would be re-established in Queensland. I know where the electors are in my electorate, because it is the duty of men who aspire to political honours to see that they are not defeated by such traps as are set in their way. The electoral roll of one hon. member who sits opposite contained the names of 700 persons whose place of residence was not correct, and a great number of those people voted. I realise they have worked the machine for all it is worth. I am not placing the fault for that, but I will see that it is not done in my electorate. These men do vote. Whether it is the

[2.30 p.m.] person who is entitled to vote or a substitute I am not in a position to say; but we had an instance only yesterday showing that men are prepared to exercise votes to which they are not entitled. Only yesterday we were told that union tickets were issued to people who were not entitled to them, and, if they do that in connection with a plebiscite, they will do it when the actual voting comes to elect a member to this Parliament. If I can prevent that, I am going to do it. I do not want to disfranchise anyone. I heard the Minister talk about going to the electoral registrar and giving him information, and how nicely he would receive it. If I did that, the hon. gentleman would stand up in this House and say, "The hon. member for East Toowoomba has attempted to influence the electoral registrar." I look after my own business, and I allow the electoral registrar to look after his business.

Mr. BRUCE (*Kennedy*): The hon. gentleman who has just resumed his seat suggests by innuendo that there would be corruption at the polls so far as Queensland is concerned. That suggestion is wrong. So far Queensland has been exempt from that kind of thing, and I am rather surprised that the hon. member for East Toowoomba should make such a suggestion. While the hon. member for Fitzroy was speaking, he made

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the statement that he believed that commissions to-day were largely a farce. This was heartily endorsed by the Leader of the Opposition saying, "Hear, hear!" Probably he was thinking of the fifty-eight commissions appointed by the Federal Government, and, if we take their activities as an indication, I should say they are certainly rather a farce. The hon. member for Burrum spoke on this question, and I could quite understand him expressing the views that he did; but I could not understand his taking himself so seriously. The whole Labour Party in Queensland is unrepresented in the Senate, and no man with any common sense or reason can dispute the fact that, as the Labour Party are represented by some hundreds of thousands of people in Queensland, they are entitled to some representation in that body. But they have none whatever simply because, by careful manipulation of the rolls, the Tory Party see that they do not get it. I remember polling some 24,000 votes as a Senate candidate in 1920. A colleague of mine, Mr. J. V. MacDonald, polled 104,000 first selection votes. The lowest on the Opposition side was General Thomson, who polled 100,000 odd; yet not a Labour candidate got in. Hon. members opposite have been talking about the system of voting, but the Federal system of voting definitely prevents Labour representation in the Senate.

Something has been said in reference to the Mount Morgan, Chillagoe, and Flinders electorates. We know that during the war America secured control of the mineral product of the world and fixed prices causing a slump in the mining industry throughout Queensland; and that was the sole reason for the fall in numbers in those electorates. I remember in 1918, when the Attorney-General became member for Flinders, there were 7,000 odd votes on the roll for that electorate. There are 2,000 odd voters on the roll to-day; but, when Mount Isa gets going, there may possibly be 10,000 voters on the Flinders roll in the course of a year or two. No Government, irrespective of what party they represent, can possibly arrange for occurrences such as this.

Queensland is entitled, on its voting strength, to another Federal member; but the Commonwealth Government will not give it because the necessity of arranging that seat might possibly give the Labour Party two or three extra seats in Queensland. Although we are entitled to that representation, the Commonwealth Government will not allow it. We have not got the representation we are entitled to as Queenslanders; and some hon. members opposite are apparently such "little Queenslanders" that they will not support the rights of the State.

I remember there was no trouble from the Opposition regarding the redistribution of seats in connection with the Kennedy electorate. There were rumours in the daily papers that this seat had been presented to the Opposition—that they would put up a candidate who would walk in and take the seat—and they were very pleased. Personally, I did not agree with that view, so I nominated as a candidate, and won the seat. In 1926 there was the same story. The Opposition had nothing to say about the redistribution, but they had overlooked the intelligence of the people. They forget that the people were intelligent, and that the redistribution did not affect the issue at all. The difficulty is that we cannot say that redistribu-

tion of seats will cut out the intelligent people. If we could do that, the Opposition might get into power; but we cannot do it. It does not matter how seats are cut out. Some hon. members on this side have said that, when the Opposition get into power, they can redistribute the seats to suit themselves; but I venture to say they cannot. No matter how they redistribute the seats, the Labour Party will still remain on these benches, because of the good legislation we have carried out. The people are intelligent enough to know which party suits them and increases the prosperity of the State. If hon. members opposite arranged a redistribution of seats, the result would be that we would still be sitting over here. The time has gone past when hon. members opposite can take the votes from the nomadic workers—the actual producers of the wealth in the State—and when they can rely on the intelligence of the people in the State to vote for them; they are a discredited party. It is only a party which has done things and acted in the interests of the people of the State that can ever hold the Government benches; therefore, the party opposite will always be in opposition.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, *Mount Morgan*): I desire to refer to the remarks of the hon. member for Wynnum, who, in my opinion, placed the position regarding my electorate wrongly before the people of Queensland. The hon. member implied that I was representing less than the quota of people necessary to elect a member. There is a significance about the thing, because the hon. member for Mirani, in a letter that appeared in the "Courier" a few days ago, in making a comparison of the voting strength of the four electorates that were dropped by the recent redistribution, quoted my electorate as one of those that were below the quota, forgetting that my electorate had more than the quota when the redistribution was made. Apparently he intended to mislead people into a belief that the Government had done something dishonest in retaining Mount Morgan as a seat when they dropped certain country electorates. During my election campaign the quota of electors on the roll for Mount Morgan was 4,573, the number of people who voted being 3,942, or 86 per cent. of the enrolment. I maintain that the fact that the industrial depression has made it necessary for a large section of the population of that town to leave the district and have their names removed from my roll is not a reason why the whole State of Queensland should have a redistribution of seats. The hon. member for Wynnum insinuated that the redistribution was necessary because of the mining depression. He did not tell the Committee whether the redistribution was to apply to Mount Morgan alone or was to be general.

Mr. KING: To apply to the whole State.

The HOME SECRETARY: That means that the whole State must be redistributed because of the temporary depression in one part of it. Everybody knows that the mining industry has reached a point where it requires sympathetic consideration, and, if you are going to show that sympathy by removing from this Chamber the handful of men who represent that important industry because certain electorates have fallen below the permissible minimum, it means that at a period when the industry specially requires representation in this Chamber to protect

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its interests it will be deprived of it. The present roll for Mount Morgan numbers 3,964. Normanby—which has never had the minimum allowed—has 4,783, or 1,819 more than Mount Morgan. I do not object to a redistribution, because I would have the satisfaction of knowing that the hon. member for Normanby would leave this Chamber and I would represent both Mount Morgan and Normanby. But, although Mount Morgan has only 3,964 voters, in intelligence they have demonstrated that they are far ahead of some of the most numerous electorates by choosing me as their representative. (Laughter.) I have no objection to a redistribution of seats. I would have no objection to a fixed period for a redistribution; but I cannot subscribe to the argument that, because temporary depression has manifested itself in one corner of the State, a redistribution of the whole State should follow as a natural corollary.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): An aspect of the electoral registration which I do not think has yet been mentioned is that, if I, for instance, live in the electorate of the Attorney-General for five or six months and my name is on the roll for that electorate, and if I remove from that electorate and come to South Brisbane and reside there the time necessary to enable me to get on the South Brisbane roll but do not do so, and an election takes place in Flinders, I am able to vote down here against the Minister. I think that is wrong. Some period of time should be fixed—whether I am a nomadic worker or not—within which I should have to get on the South Brisbane roll.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You are liable to prosecution if you do not.

Mr. TAYLOR: I doubt very much if I am, according to the interpretation of the Act that I have had. People can remain on a roll and be resident in an altogether different part of the State for six or twelve months, and yet vote in respect of that enrolment. That is a thing that should be remedied.

It has been stated that the Opposition have tried to keep people off the roll. We cannot keep them off if they want to get on. What power have the police to prevent any person who is a resident of Queensland and is qualified from getting on the roll if he wants to get on? Hon. members on the other side know that we have not the power.

Mr. C. J. RYAN: You can mislead them.

Mr. TAYLOR: You would do that, but we would not. The Commonwealth department has been mentioned during the debate; but, if any department does its utmost to secure the enrolment of electors, it is the Commonwealth department.

Mr. BRUCE: To get them off.

Mr. TAYLOR: Nearly every letter that passes through the post office to-day has stamped on the envelope certain advice. This appears on the envelope that I hold in my hand, posted in Brisbane on the 5th of this month—

“Commonwealth rolls. Correct enrolment compulsory.”

These letters are being distributed not only in Queensland but throughout Australia.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: Thousands of people never see a letter.

Mr. TAYLOR: That may be so.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: They do not all live in the metropolis.

Mr. TAYLOR: The Commonwealth department is doing its duty in giving as much publicity as possible to the fact that enrolment is compulsory. Some responsibility, then, rests upon the electors to see that their names are on the roll. Neither the State nor the Commonwealth should be expected to spoonfeed the electors in this matter.

Mr. BRUCE: That is all right in the city, but what about the country?

Mr. TAYLOR: It is probably more difficult and always will be so in the country. The hon. member for Bowen said this morning that at one Federal election there were 178,000 informal votes cast.

Mr. HARTLEY: The last Federal election.

Mr. TAYLOR: That amounts to 5 per cent. of the total population of the Commonwealth entitled to vote.

Mr. C. J. RYAN: That is a high percentage.

Mr. TAYLOR: I do not think it is. I have always received the greatest courtesy from the present Attorney-General. Since I have been in this Parliament we have had three or four lay Attorneys-General; but the present Attorney-General stands head and shoulders over the others from the point of view of ability. I told him that after his handling of legal Bills in this Chamber. There is nothing to complain of in that regard. This morning he endeavoured to bring forward all the inequalities and defects that exist in the electoral systems of the other States to justify certain irregularities and inequalities which we contend exist in Queensland. It is certainly not a fair basis for argument to suggest that, because there are bigger quotas or certain irregularities or inequalities in other electoral systems, we are justified in continuing these defects in this State. The main thing is to give every man and woman a vote.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I did not condemn the Victorian system. I rather suggested that we might, with some justification, follow that system.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: We have something worse than that here.

Mr. TAYLOR: I do not remember the hon. gentleman applying any argument in that direction this morning. Our duty is to give every person entitled to vote a chance of recording that vote. That does not exist in Brisbane at the present time. No polling-booth was established in Brisbane on the occasion of the recent by-election for Mitchell.

Mr. BOW: If there had been one it would have increased my vote.

Mr. TAYLOR: No opportunity exists in by-elections for people to record their votes in Brisbane, if they happen to be here.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: We have done the next best thing; we give every person who is entitled the right to vote.

Mr. BOW: They do not do that in the Federal elections.

Mr. TAYLOR: How could an elector for the Mitchell electorate who happened to be in Brisbane on the day of the by-election record a vote? The voter, probably, had not the money to proceed to the Mitchell

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electorate to record his vote. At a general election at one time a polling-booth was established at the tourist bureau for the convenience of Queensland visitors in Sydney; but during the last election, and I think the preceding election, no such convenience existed.

Mr. HARTLEY: Why should there be?

Mr. TAYLOR: If it is right to have an absent polling-booth in Brisbane for the electorates of Rockhampton or Fitzroy, surely it is right to have a booth in Sydney?

Mr. HARTLEY: Why not in London?

Mr. TAYLOR: I do not want to carry my argument to a ridiculous absurdity. A resident of Queensland holidaying in Sydney or Melbourne should have an opportunity of recording a vote there on the occasion of a general election.

Mr. CARTER: Would you have a booth in New Zealand.

Mr. TAYLOR: No; you have to draw the line somewhere.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BRUCE: The polling-booth in Sydney was not availed of.

Mr. TAYLOR: On the last occasion that a polling-booth was established at the tourist bureau in Sydney it took the officials until 10 o'clock at night to cope with the demands for ballot-papers.

Mr. HYNES interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member for Townsville must not interrupt when an hon. member is speaking.

Mr. TAYLOR: On that occasion many electors of this State then in Sydney left the polling-booth without exercising the franchise. Electors of Queensland who are temporarily absent from Queensland should have the opportunity to vote.

Mr. HARTLEY: A man should safeguard his right to vote, the same as the State safeguards it for him.

Mr. TAYLOR: I recognise that there are certain responsibilities on the electors. The elections of the Brisbane City Council are held on the State rolls, and I have had several instances of people complaining that they were not on the roll, notwithstanding that they had received a card informing them that they were. I advised them to get the card, and found that it was a Federal electoral card.

Mr. BRUCE: I saw that several times in the council elections.

Mr. TAYLOR: That is so—they thought they were on the roll for the State, but were not.

If the Government can see their way to come to some arrangement with the Commonwealth Government whereby one roll will suffice, then the difficulty which has been mentioned and probably many other difficulties will vanish. There should not be two enrolments for State and Federal purposes; one roll would remove much of the confusion that exists at present.

Mr. HYNES: Do you not think the State should have full control of its electoral laws, without any reference to an outside body?

Mr. TAYLOR: The State would have full control of its own laws. It would merely be a matter of collecting the names

and saving expenditure—following the same principle that has been adopted in connection with the collection of income tax.

Referring to Barrimoon, I interjected that, if the Minister were on this side of the Chamber, he would probably take the same view as the Leader of the Opposition. I am not going to criticise the department. Some of us are to blame: and, if Barrimoon has been included in the Port Curtis electorate for a number of years, so much the more blameable are the individuals who are really responsible for it. Whatever opinions hon. members may have on the matter, it was certainly not mandatory on the part of the Minister to make the change on the eve of a by-election. It would have looked much better if the change had not taken place at the present time.

Mr. BRUCE: There will be a row if Barrimoon wins the Burnett.

Mr. TAYLOR: In conclusion, we on this side are not attempting in any way to keep people off the rolls. If hon. members opposite give but slight consideration to the question, they must know that we have no desire to disfranchise people; that we have no power to do so; and that any elector who is qualified can be enrolled, irrespective of members on both sides of the Committee.

Mr. BRUCE (*Kennedy*): I agree with the hon. member for Windsor that electors residing within the metropolitan boundaries or in places where the postman calls have no grievance if their names do not appear on the roll. When I was organising on the Bowen-Collinsville railway construction works, there were men residing at the various camps whose names appeared on the latest roll. In those circumstances we did not worry; we thought everything was right; but just at the eleventh hour, prior to the Federal elections coming on, we found that men who had shifted from, say, 25-mile Camp to, say, 36-mile Camp, had their names deliberately erased from the roll. Five or six hundred men engaged on those works were disfranchised because they had moved from a completed portion of the work to another location where work had to be done.

Mr. TAYLOR: Were they still in the same electorate?

Mr. BRUCE: Of course they were. Some only moved 10 or 11 miles; others only 5 miles. I presume the hon. member infers that these men could have got cards entitling them to vote. The point is, however, that it is not known definitely whether a vote recorded in that way will be allowed.

[3 p.m.]

If it had not been that we found it out at the eleventh hour, those men would have been disfranchised. That method of controlling a roll is not fair. That vote was practically a 100 per cent. Labour vote.

The same thing occurs in connection with sugar workers. They may be registered at Smith's farm, and before the season is over they may be cutting at Brown's farm, and they may be wiped off the Federal roll. It depends largely on the people controlling the roll at the time and their political opinions. Men carrying out seasonal work who only move a few miles are deprived of their right to vote under the Federal system. I agree with one hon. member, who said that it would be better to have on the roll men who have gone to the other States than to deprive

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people living in the State of the right to vote. That certainly is done by the Federal authorities, and I, for one, for that reason alone would be very loath to adopt the Commonwealth system.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*): I do not think the remarks of the hon. member for Fitzroy have in any way helped the Minister. It seems to me that, when an hon. member says, "When you are in the saddle, stop there," he infers that any means justify the end.

Mr. CARTER: He did not say that.

Mr. MAXWELL: He did. The hon. member does not know what the hon. member said, and I am quite satisfied that the hon. member for Fitzroy will be game enough to admit that he did say it. No matter what an individual Minister may think is right, when the Electoral Districts Act lays it down definitely what shall be done it is only a fair proposition that the Minister should instruct his officers to arrange a redistribution of seats for the whole of Queensland so that each electorate shall contain somewhere near the quota fixed by the Act. I emphasise again what I said previously in connection with this vote—that the Electoral Districts Act of 1910 provides for a quota of one-seventy-second of the total votes, but permits a margin of one-fifth above or one-fifth below that quota. The total enrolment is 479,007. The statutory quota is 6,653; the minimum is 5,323; the maximum 7,983. If we analyse this a little further, we find that it has been so arranged that of the electorates above the statutory maximum the Government represent two, and the Opposition nine; and, by way of excuse, if I may term it such, the Minister says that this was done by Tory Governments previously. I claim that we are not responsible for what was done by previous Governments—if they did it. If a thing is wrong, it is wrong. That was wrong, and the Minister has no right to perpetuate something which is wrong.

The ridiculousness of the thing is emphasised in connection with the hon. gentleman's own electorate. The number of electors on the Flinders roll is 2,536, and, as a reasonable man, the hon. gentleman must admit that it is a most unfair proposition that he should represent only 2,536 electors—I am told that, according to the latest return, the number is only 2,373.

It is not fair at all, when we come to consider other electorates with from 5,000 to over 11,000 electors. Hon. members opposite would have been perfectly justified and would have done it, if they had been sitting in opposition, if such a thing had taken place.

I would remind the Minister of one seat which was treated in a way which was not honourable—I refer to the Merthyr electorate. That was undoubtedly a disgraceful episode, when a number of people of a certain political leaning were removed from one electorate to another. At the same time, other people who had anti-Labour political leanings were taken out of Merthyr and pushed somewhere else. The result was that Mr. Macgregor, who held the seat, was pushed out.

We talk about crossing rivers—the Government crossed Breakfast Creek, in the Valley electorate. They went across Bowen Bridge and right away into another electorate to make good in some way the wrong they had done in that electorate. No matter who does that kind of thing, it is not right.

We on this side do not stand for that. It does not matter what hon. members opposite may say about what previous Governments did. Let the Minister set an example to the whole community by saying, "If other Governments did those wrongs, we do not stand for them." The party with which he is associated says, "We believe in a clean roll; we do not believe in corruption; we believe in a fair and decent spin to everybody." Does the Minister think that it is giving a decent spin when electorates with 2,500 electors are put on the same footing as electorates with 6,000, 9,000, or 11,000 voters? That seems to me to be most ridiculous.

Then there are electorates below the statutory quota, in connection with which the Government have sixteen members, and the unfortunate Opposition only two. That is not fair. It is dishonest. Hon. members opposite know that things were arranged that way. They are in the saddle, and I suppose they will stay there as long as possible; but there will come a time when the people will throw them out of the saddle, and I venture to say that it will not be long before that time comes.

I want to refer to a statement of the hon. member for Bowen in connection with the number of representatives in Parliament. The idea, he said, of talking about reducing the number of members of this Parliament to fifty! I wonder what he would have said if he had heard the speech made by the Secretary for Mines the other night! Does the hon. member forget that unification is the policy of the Labour Party, and that it will result in the elimination of the State members of Parliament? Where does the consistency or sincerity come in on the part of hon. members opposite, who on some occasions when they are out of the saddle are prepared to advocate unification, but, when they are in the saddle, unification is no good to them?

We were told at the inception of federation that the cost of government was going to be reduced; but hon. members know full well that the cost has become so heavy that it is almost unbearable. Undoubtedly, some arrangement must be made—whether it be by means of unification, a reduction of members, or something else—to reduce it. Things cannot go on as they are, in view of the taxation that has to be paid. I am not going to pursue that subject; but I point to the inconsistency of the hon. member for Bowen, and leave it at that. He says that democracy has never been given a trial. We know it has. It has failed lamentably under this Government. I was glad to hear the speech of the hon. member for Fitzroy, because the people will know that the thing is to stay in the saddle when you are once there. It will be for the Opposition to convince the people that they should capsize the Government out of the saddle.

Mr. HARTLEY: You have been trying to do it for over ten years.

Mr. CARTER (*Port Curtis*): I have had the opportunity of studying both the Federal and State electoral systems and comparing the system in this State with the systems in the other States and in the Commonwealth; and I have also compared it with the system under the late Denham Government, so favoured by members of the Opposition. When one considers the electoral

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systems of both the Commonwealth and the State, one cannot but feel that they are most suitable for their purpose. They are admirable systems, and, were the methods of cleansing the rolls exactly similar, I would be quite agreeable to have one roll for the two purposes of Federal and State elections. I have nothing but admiration for the Federal and State Electoral Registrars, as I regard them as both capable and trustworthy officers. The card system used in the said offices is perfect, because in each case the roll automatically purges itself. That is to say, an elector transferring to another electorate states the electorate he is leaving, and he is automatically taken off the roll. Anybody who has studied the card system employed both by the Federal and State authorities must realise that duplication is almost impossible. There may be odd cases; but in many instances where there is apparent duplication, it is caused only because there are persons of similar names. Take my own name. It would be impossible for my name to be duplicated on any roll because they would take my place of birth and my age. It is extremely unlikely that there would be two persons of my name born in the same place on the same day and enrolled on the same roll. If I transferred from Gladstone to Brisbane, I would state all these particulars. The result is that they would take my card out of the Port Curtis file and put it into the Brisbane file. That applies in both State and Federal systems. They are both admirable.

The Federal electoral system is quite equal to the State electoral system from the point of view of enrolment, and I have just as much faith in the Federal staff as I have in the State staff; but, when it comes to removing names from the roll, it is entirely a different matter. Under the Federal system your name may be taken from the roll without your knowing anything about it, because you have not access to a Federal roll amended every three months as is done in the case of the State roll. The State roll enables one to ascertain those who have been removed from the roll and those recently placed on the roll; but the Federal roll is only printed every three years. You may be off the roll for over two years and know nothing about it. A number of people leave a hotel where they are staying, and cards are addressed to them at the hotel informing them that it has been reported that they are not living at the address given. Of course, they do not get those cards notifying them that their names will be removed, consequently the names are removed without their knowledge. They examine the electoral roll that is available, but there is nothing there to indicate that their names are off the roll. That is why the Federal electoral system is wrong from the point of view of removing names, and why I do not view it favourably in contrast with the State system. There is no roll compiled in Australia as complete and fair as the Queensland electoral roll, which stands alone in that respect. Once a name is placed on the State roll it remains there until taken off for just cause. We are told that people may not remove their names. I have had evidence of that myself. Until the last election the name of the former member for Port Curtis, Mr. J. W. Fletcher, had been retained on the Port Curtis roll for nearly three years, although he had resided during that time in the Maranoa electorate. He

enrolled on the Federal roll for his new district, but omitted to remove his name from the Port Curtis roll, hoping to be able to use his vote against me at the State election. I ascertained his new place of abode, and his name was removed after a claim form had been sent to him by the State Electoral Registrar stating that, if he did not enrol in Maranoa, he would be fined, and that, in any case, his name would be removed from the Port Curtis roll.

Mr. BRAND: Did you do that?

Mr. CARTER: I certainly did.

Mr. BRAND: I am surprised at you.

Mr. CARTER: Any common-sense man would do it, and, if the hon. member does not do it, he is not awake to his own interests. This gentleman and his wife were three years out of my electorate. There is another case of an elector who was four months out of my electorate.

Mr. BRAND: You claim to be generous to your opponents.

Mr. CARTER: So I am; but I am not generous to unfair, dishonest men. I allowed the name to remain on the roll for three years, and then at the psychological moment the name was removed to another roll. If the electoral registrar ascertains that a man has removed to another electorate, it is his duty to change the enrolment. There is no fairer man in charge of any department in Queensland than the State Electoral Registrar in Brisbane. Our friends on the other side are loud in their praise of the Federal authorities, who are informed only by postmen that men should be off the roll. It has been said that men may vote by post in respect of an electorate in which they are not enrolled. I had evidence of that during the last election.

A man who had been compelled to put his name on the roll for Mackay, to which place he had gone from Port Curtis, still voted for Port Curtis, his name apparently still remaining on that roll. I do not believe he voted for Mackay. He was honest enough not to do that. His name was taken off the Port Curtis roll automatically with his registration on the Mackay roll. The same practice applies in the case of every elector when leaving the electorate for which he is enrolled. Immediately he is enrolled for the electorate to which he has removed, his name is automatically removed from the electorate he came from. It is the common custom in the Federal arena for postmen to take electors off the roll. The Federal registrar is honest in the matter; but, as the Federal Government do not issue a supplementary roll every three months, the fact of whether an elector is on or off the roll cannot be correctly ascertained. The Federal electoral registrar is sufficiently courteous to inform any individual who applies to him whether he is on the roll or not; but we should not be compelled to depend on the registrar for that information. Rolls should be published every three months. If that were done, the Federal rolls would be much cleaner. Electors can be taken off the Federal roll for twelve months or two years without being aware of the fact. They would know that they were on the roll at some period or other, but probably during a temporary absence of two or three weeks the postman called and found them absent, and they were taken off the roll. The Federal Government have resorted to the reprehensible practice of

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"scalping." That is to say, they pay postmen to keep electors off the roll. If they paid the postman to place electors on the roll, there would be some justification for their action.

Mr. MOORE: They also pay them to put electors on the roll.

Mr. CARTER: Then I commend them for it. They should be assisted in that object.

Some hazy statements have been made by hon. members opposite regarding the transfer of electors at Barrimoon from the Port Curtis to the Burnett electorate. Those who made the statements, unfortunately, were in absolute ignorance of what took place, otherwise they would not have made their statements. Barrimoon is on the railway line that is being constructed from Many Peaks to Monto, and, as the construction of the line progresses, the workers go out of one electorate into another. During the last State election, not ten people at Barrimoon were entitled to be on the Burnett roll.

Mr. MAXWELL: But 100 votes were recorded there.

Mr. CARTER: That was because a polling-booth was established there, and electors came from the eastern side to the western side of the range to record their votes. The majority of the people who voted there came from the Port Curtis electorate. The top of the range is not the whole of the boundary between the Port Curtis and Burnett electorates. The other boundary is on the western fall of the Dawes Range at Mount Cannindah. Barrimoon is not half a mile from that boundary. Many of the electors, knowing this, allowed their names to remain on the roll, and no steps were taken to transfer their names as the work progressed. I do not suppose there are ten people on the roll at Barrimoon. The men working on the construction works at Kalpowar, about 4 miles to the south-west of Barrimoon, could vote there. They are now 7 miles on the western side of Barrimoon, and consequently well in the Burnett electorate. Friends of hon. members opposite, believing that these men were remaining on the roll for the purpose of voting for me, got busy, and the result was that the whole of these people were changed to the roll of the electorate where they resided. That change was made at a time when it was unfortunate for hon. members opposite, as somewhere about 300 strong Labour supporters were thus transferred to the Burnett roll at the instance of the agent of hon. members opposite. Now they are angry.

Mr. MAXWELL: That is wrong.

Mr. CARTER: It is not wrong. These people, who are my prospective opponents, very naturally got busy; and, when the people came to me, I said, "You are not on my roll any longer; your place is in the Burnett electorate." The enrolment commenced before a by-election was ever thought of; but now that certain people have moved to get the change and realise that Mr. Martin will probably win the Burnett seat for Labour, they are very sorry that they ever interfered with the electors in and around Barrimoon.

On the subject of boundaries, it is interesting to note that the same boundaries which in 1918 resulted in forty-eight members being returned to this side of the Chamber, as compared with twenty-four on the Opposi-

tion side, were responsible three years after for the Opposition attaining to within four of a majority. That clearly shows that boundaries have nothing to do with the position—that is a matter of the feeling of the electors. The boundaries of the electorates of Queensland are equitably fixed. Personally, I suffered considerably at the last redistribution, when a portion of the Musgrave electorate was included in the Port Curtis electorate, but I flatter myself that, although that portion of the Musgrave gave Mr. Cattermuil a majority of 400 over Mr. Armfield in the 1920 elections, the change has not very materially affected the strong position of Port Curtis.

Further, it was noticeable that in the metropolitan area where Labour candidates were returned for the Legislative Assembly, anti-Labour candidates were returned for the local authorities. The people realised that, whilst they might vote for the Tories for the local authorities and in the Federal Parliament, they could do no other than vote for Labour in this Parliament, because the Labour Government had done more for the people of Queensland than any previous Government or than any Government in other States of the Commonwealth. It is the action of the Government in the interests of the people that influences electors to vote for the present Government, irrespective of what the boundaries are.

The hon. member for Logan last night made reference respecting a new system of electoral enrolment, and he had much to say about a system of electoral rights.

[3.30 p.m.]

I had some experience of electoral rights in New South Wales, and I can quite believe that every member of the Opposition would be keen on that system. When electoral rights were granted in New South Wales one can easily understand that any nomadic worker who had to carry his right about with him would have a worn-out right in three months, and so be disfranchised. There was nothing to prevent employers, especially upon stations, from gathering electoral rights from the aboriginals, who at that time had votes and were given electoral rights. I know one station where the manager collected over fifty electoral rights from aboriginals, and the whole of those fifty rights voted for somebody, and no doubt for the station-owner's candidate. That system was an excellent thing for those who could sit down and acquire those rights. There was no more wretched system of enrolment than those electoral rights. New South Wales had it for one period only, and then wiped it off the slate, as they were satisfied it was unreliable and unsatisfactory, and I trust that no modern Government will adopt such an obsolete system as that.

While hon. members opposite complain that the roll is not purged, I noticed on looking through "Hansard" the other day that the hon. member for Enoggera, during a discussion on the Estimates for the Department of Justice—I cannot recollect just which session—went so far as to say that over 400 names were knocked off his roll. If that were done in Port Curtis, it is something that I would complain of, because people should not be knocked off the roll unless they go to some other electorate, and apparently those of whom the hon. member was speaking were knocked off, although there was no evidence as to where they were.

Mr. Carter.]

I have the highest admiration for the State electoral registrar and the officers of his department, and commend the excellent work they are doing, and I would like to say that the amount paid to the electoral registrar in the State of Queensland is not sufficient for a man occupying such a responsible position, and I should like to see his salary increased by £100 or £200.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL (*Toombul*): The speech delivered by the Attorney-General was very similar to that which he delivered two years ago. At that time he quoted from the "Daily Mail," and subsequently said that nobody had disproved his figures in regard to the result achieved at the last general election.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I said "successfully disproved."

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: I challenged those figures then, and I challenge them now. His figures are not correct, and I would refer him to the speech delivered by the hon. member for Nundah in October, 1926.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: We blew them out.

Mr. KELSO: You did not.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: The hon. member for Nundah at that time gave a detailed list of the votes in sixty-three contested electorates, the totals being—

Labour	...	...	...	186,706
Opposition	...	...	...	189,830
Majority for Opposition	...	...	...	3,124

Similarly, adopting the method that was followed by the Attorney-General in arriving at a fair average for the nine uncontested seats, it was ascertained that, if we accepted the figures that were polled on previous occasions, in those nine uncontested seats—

Labour polled	...	...	28,998
Opposition polled	...	...	25,916

Adding the two totals together—

Labour polled	...	...	215,704
Opposition polled	...	...	215,746

giving the Opposition a slight majority of forty-two votes.

It has to be remembered, however, that, although the Opposition polled a majority of votes at the general election, we are in a big minority in the House—having only twenty-nine members as against forty-three Labour members. I have also taken figures from the Sydney "Bulletin" of September, 1926, in which an exhaustive analysis was made of the votes cast at the general election, and that paper arrived at the conclusion that the Opposition had actually secured 1,900 more votes than the Labour Party. I think that deduction was quite correct. It will be found in regard to the contested seats that between the election of 1923 and that of 1926 there had been a big decrease in the population of most of the Labour centres, whereas, prior to 1926, there had been a very large accretion of voters in the seats held by the Opposition. I instance the electorate of Coorooroora as a notable example, and also the electorates of Fassifern and Toombul. The population in those electorates had increased at a very rapid rate, whereas the population in Labour seats, such as Burke and Gregory, had decreased considerably; therefore, the analysis published by the "Bulletin" can be accepted as a very fair statement, proving beyond all doubt—and I challenge the Minister to disprove those

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figures—that the Opposition polled 1,900 votes more than the Labour Party at the 1926 election.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: What is wrong with my figures?

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: The figures of the hon. gentleman are absolutely incorrect, and I challenge him to disprove the figures I am quoting.

I do not think it is necessary to contrast the methods followed in other States of the Commonwealth, and compare them with the methods in Queensland. The Opposition case is this: As the basis of our franchise is one adult one vote, the natural sequence must be that every vote must have the same value; otherwise, if votes are not of equal value, it strikes at the root of our franchise. Consequently, to have absolute justice every electorate should be equally balanced; but we know it is impossible to bring that about. The quota system has, therefore, been adopted, and so as not to penalise the sparsely populated areas in Queensland, Parliament in its wisdom decided to give a reasonable margin to those areas, and that the thickly populated areas should have a larger quota than areas where the population was sparse. The Minister said that, if he had his way, instead of making the margin one-fifth, he would make it one-third. I would like to know why it should be one-third. If it is reasonable to give a margin to sparsely populated areas, and one-fifth is not sufficient, why would one-third be sufficient? Why not go the whole hog, and say, "We will allow a margin of 50 per cent. or 75 per cent.?" It all rests with the Government; and there is no doubt that in arranging electorates or standing by the present arrangements they are not giving a fair deal to the electors. In many of the electorates now held by the Opposition the margin is more than one-fifth below the quota. On the other hand, the Minister will find that many of the Government electorates cited by him to-day are more than one-third below the quota now allocated to the large centres in South-eastern Queensland; so that, while the Act provides for a margin of one-fifth, we virtually have one-third or more than one-third in many cases, giving country electorates a very big advantage over thickly populated areas in and around Brisbane. I think that all sparsely populated areas should have a little margin allowed them owing to their distance from the capital; but, if distance from the centre of government alone is to be taken into consideration, where are we going to stop? Is Burke to have a smaller number than Warrego, Balonne, or Gregory? All these electorates are far distant from the capital. It seems to me that the fairest way is to fix a quota, and insist on the margins being preserved. A variation of one-fifth above would bring the maximum to about 9,000 around Brisbane, which is a fair basis of representation, as against one-fifth below, which would be about 5,000 in the far North and West. As it is, we find that many electorates represented by the party opposite are a long way below the permissible minimum. Hon. members cannot contend that Brisbane is very remote from the seat of government. Is it, then, justifiable that the number of electors in that electorate should be very much below that in some of the suburbs?

The redistribution of seats should come up for review at fixed periods, and the whole matter should be placed in the hands of some tribunal absolutely independent of Parliament. If you look up the Electoral Districts Act, you will find that the Commission which is appointed under it is required to be guided by community of interest and natural geographical boundaries. The country would be prepared to leave the vexed question in the hands of a tribunal which would review the matter periodically, say every six years. I do not contend that because there is a temporary depression at Mount Morgan the roll for that electorate should be at once rectified, because we cannot provide for every contingency; and during that period of six years, we would have to take the risks of variation above or below the permissible maximum and minimum.

If the electorates were distributed fairly, the Opposition would have much larger representation, and, despite the fear of hon. members opposite, would be quite prepared to accept the responsibility of taking charge of the government of the State. It would be our endeavour to give the people a fair distribution, and I would not be a party to any scheme which would not give a fair allocation, taking into consideration community of interest and geographical boundaries.

Some hon. members opposite contend that we should retain the present boundaries, in Mount Morgan and Flinders in particular, because the diminution of population is only temporary. I, for one, would like to see a large influx of population, but the evidence is quite against it. For the last few years there has been a steady flow of population to the thickly-populated centres, especially Brisbane, at the expense of the country. That being so, it is foolish in the extreme to think that the process is going to be reversed in the near future. The argument is only an excuse to delay the reform, and it is to be hoped that the next Government—which will probably come from this side—will see that the State is divided in a fair manner.

I commend the hon. member for Fitzroy for his extreme candour. He is unlike the Minister, who is prepared to bolster up a bad case by treating hon. members to what in my judgment were a lot of very stupid and exaggerated statements.

I do not think the Attorney-General treated the matter with sufficient seriousness. I am content to believe that the policy of the party opposite is that enunciated by the hon. member for Fitzroy: "When in the saddle, resort to any method to keep in the saddle." Therefore, all the statements made this morning by the Minister are absolutely camouflage and piffle. The policy has been and still is to remain in the saddle at all costs. I hope that better counsels will prevail on the Government side, and that the Minister will be prevented from further tinkering with our electoral system by making the quota one-third instead of one-fifth, as at present. If it is attempted, it will amount to a scandal that should be resisted to the utmost. While we have the principle of one adult one vote as the basis of the franchise, we should endeavour to carry out that ideal.

Mr. HANLON: It was a terrible job to grab the one adult one vote principle from your party.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: Hon. members opposite glory in delving into the past. I have always been an advocate of the principle of one adult one vote, and, when the reform was first introduced, I was a strong advocate for it. However, we are dealing with conditions as they exist to-day; and, no matter what has been done in the past, or in other parts of the Commonwealth, it is the duty of the Queensland Government to endeavour to place our electoral system on a pure and satisfactory basis. No one can honestly contend to-day that the public of Queensland are getting a fair deal in regard to the distribution of seats.

Mr. BOW (*Mitchell*): I congratulate the Attorney-General on the efficient electoral system in operation in this State to-day. It is amusing to hear hon. members opposite claiming to be the champions of the workers and of democracy. It is to be hoped that at no time will the Attorney-General alter the present system of enrolment.

Mr. BRAND: Tell us how you "bundled" Durkin.

Mr. BOW: I "bundled" Durkin because the Opposition were supporting him as a Communist, as they claim we all are. Hon. members opposite do not like their past revealed to them. I have had the experience of past Governments, and hon. members opposite cannot deny that they have applauded the actions of those Governments. At one time it was not possible to get on the roll and remain on it. My own name was removed from the roll on half-a-dozen occasions. Immediately I left Longreach, my head centre, my name was removed. Even when I settled in Longreach and had occasion to leave temporarily for work, my enrolment was challenged in the court, although I had my home in the town. I was able to retain my name on the roll only by employing an agent to appear before the court, and swear an affidavit giving my whereabouts, and stating that my family resided in Longreach. Again, in the Barcoo electorate 125 names were struck off the roll during the last quarter preceding an election for no other reason than that the then Government had given a decision as to what constituted residential qualifications. The Australian Workers' Union took a stand and tested the case. The late Judge Real heard the case, and he decided that so long as a man had a tent to live in, or even a camp under a gum tree, he was a resident within the meaning of the Act.

Mr. KING: Of course he was.

Mr. BOW: Your party said he was not, and, in consequence, proceeded to strike 125 names off the roll. I was in the district at the time, and was interested. It cost the Australian Workers' Union £80 to test the case and have the names of those men replaced on the roll. The hon. member for Wynnum was a member of the Administration at the time, and should remember the incident, although he challenged my remarks. I repeat and emphasise the statement, because I know it to be a fact. No man who is temporarily away from the district for six months looking for work should be struck off the roll. I had the experience of being on the road for nine months, and, although I had every intention of returning to Longreach, I was struck off the roll. Many men in the West were treated in a similar manner. If the Opposition had their way, they

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would make it law that men in the far West travelling in search of work, or with stock, would be struck off the roll of the electorate in which they live, notwithstanding that they intended to return to their home town.

I was pleased to hear the hon. member for Windsor make the reference he did to the condition of the Mitchell electorate at the last by-election, as it proved beyond all doubt that the workers could not live there, and had to travel North, and south as far as New South Wales, in search of work. As I have previously pointed out, many of the workers were absent from the district at the by-election. I can assure hon. members opposite that their supporters were still in the district looking after their stock and business.

Mr. KELSO: Electors absent from a district can use the postal vote.

Mr. BOW: The hon. member for Nundah knows that absent voters cannot vote, as no provision exists at a by-election for them to do so. Queensland is right out in the forefront of every State in the Commonwealth and of the Commonwealth itself in regard to the state of its rolls. The time of the average worker is taken up in looking for work, and he should not be compelled to have to watch the Federal roll to ascertain whether his name remains on it or not. The postman informs the electoral registrar of the change of address of an elector; but that does not get over the difficulty. No provision is made to notify the future address of the elector, and, unless the elector does so himself, he is disfranchised.

Mr. KERR: The postman in the new area fixes him up.

Mr. BOW: He must then drop the card.

Mr. KERR: He drops it into the electoral office.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BOW: So far as the State is concerned, an elector has at least the opportunity of staying on one roll until his name appears on another. If a man intends to return to an electorate in which he is resident, but which he has temporarily left, has he not a right to have his name retained on the roll for that electorate? There should be no limit.

Mr. MOORE: What would you say of a man who was away five years? Should his name be retained on the roll?

Mr. BOW: That is not likely to happen, because at periodic intervals, in my own electorate, at any rate, the names of those who have died or have left the district are published in the local press, which gives an opportunity for any correction to be made.

Mr. TAYLOR: The hon. member for Port Curtis referred to cases of absence for three years.

Mr. BOW: I am not concerned with the Port Curtis electoral roll, but I do say that, so far as the State rolls are concerned, no variation whatever should be made in the present system.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): It was most refreshing to hear the hon. member for Fitzroy this afternoon, when he completely destroyed the Attorney-General's speech. All the defence that the hon. gentleman had taken an hour and a-half to expound was wiped away in a few minutes by the hon. member for Fitzroy, who only told the truth. We all know what the hon. member said to

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be a fact, and, however the Attorney-General may try to cloud the issue, we have the statement of the hon. member for Fitzroy that "The Government are in power, and we are going to take steps to stay there." The hon. member also said, "Nobody believes in these commissions; everybody knows that the Government give instructions to them." Of course, we know that is the case; but it is a very refreshing thing to have a member so candid as the hon. member for Fitzroy, especially after the Minister has endeavoured to cloud the issue with the whole army of words that he put forward this morning.

One matter I wish to comment upon particularly is the attitude adopted by the Minister in regard to my action so far as Barrimoon is concerned. The hon. gentleman would not read the letter when he was requested to do so.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You can peruse it here.

Mr. MOORE: I want to put it into "Hansard."

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: There is nothing wrong about the letter.

Mr. MOORE: Nothing at all. This is what the letter from Mr. Clegg said—

"We have been wondering and are still much interested in the matter as to whether the place called Barrimoon, on the Many Peaks line, should be included in this Port Curtis electorate or the Burnett.

"The electoral registrar in Brisbane says it is in Port Curtis, and we have now got another ruling from a different source saying it is in the Burnett. We are wondering if names are being put on for both electorates. A good number has gone on for here . . ."

Then Mr. E. J. Stevens, the returning officer for the Burnett, replied—

"Referring to your letter of the 22nd instant (22nd September), I have to inform you that from maps and records in this office, the boundary of the Burnett electoral district is shown as the Dawes Range. Barrimoon, being on the Burnett watershed of this range, must be regarded as being in the Burnett electorate."

That letter is quite all right; but the extraordinary thing is that this transfer was not made until it was really too late.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It is never too late to correct an error.

Mr. MOORE: The position is this: The electoral roll presumably closed about 11th September, when the last supplementary roll was issued, and on 29th September a further supplementary roll was published, on which 313 names appeared—ninety-six more names than were on the roll when Barrimoon formed part of the Port Curtis district.

[4 p.m.]

Mr. CARTER: Because there were a lot of new people there.

Mr. MOORE: But the time of closing the roll had passed.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: We corrected an error.

Mr. MOORE: It was not an error. If they had transferred the names that were wrongly enrolled in Port Curtis to the Burnett roll, it would have been all right; but they put on another ninety-six names as well.

If the electoral registrar is going to say that the closing of the rolls is not to count, and that people can get on the roll afterwards, that is all right; but the Act says that the roll shall close at a certain date. They not only transferred 217 names that were on the Port Curtis roll for Barrimoon in the Burnett, but they put on other ninety-six names as well.

Mr. CARTER: More power to them!

Mr. MOORE: The hon. member for Port Curtis says "More power to them!" That is the same principle that was advocated by the hon. member for Fitzroy this morning, when he said "We should take every opportunity of securing all the votes we can." It is quite all right to be honest about it and say so; but is it right that, when a roll closes at a certain date, they should be able to add another ninety-six names? That is an absolutely unfair position. The principle is wrong, and cannot be defended.

Mr. HARTLEY: That is done in every election.

Mr. MOORE: I have never heard of it being done before.

Mr. HARTLEY: It was done at the last State election.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MOORE: If that sort of thing does go on, it explains to a great extent why this party is not able to secure control of the Treasury benches. That is real gerrymandering. That position is entirely wrong.

Mr. CARTER again interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I warn the hon. member for Port Curtis that, if he does not obey my call to order, I shall take steps to deal with him.

Mr. MOORE: I took exception to the transfer of those names, and I had every right to do so, seeing the conditions under which it was done. It was done at such a late period. The Attorney-General said that it had been considered for a long time before. In answer to a question, he said that, prior to that, there had been a discussion about it. When you find the writ issued on 7th September, nomination day fixed for the 14th, and then you get a transfer of these 313 names from the Port Curtis into the Burnett electorate on the roll issued on the 29th, it looks suspicious.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: There were only ninety-six extra names.

Mr. MOORE: Ninety-six extra names—but there was a total of 313 names transferred.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL again interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Minister has unlimited time at his disposal in which to state his case.

Mr. MOORE: Then there is another batch of 150 names from Kalpowar, whose addresses were wrong. If this mistake had been discovered previously, I would have said nothing about it; but, when you rectify a mistake practically while an election is going on, it certainly has a suspicious appearance.

I want to refer to the margin allowed below or above the quota. It is very hard to find a precedent to justify the position which obtains in Queensland. The hon. gentleman referred to Victoria, and said that, if

we wished to have the Victorian quota, he would be prepared to consider the matter. I do not know that there is much wrong with the Victorian quota; and, if the Minister believes in it, why does he not adopt it? When the Commission wiped out the four country seats, two extra seats were given to the cities, where the Minister says they ought not to have representation to the same extent as the country. If he believes in that system, why does he not act up to it? The quota system that has been in vogue in Queensland is moderately effective, and affords a fair representation with a margin of one-fifth over or under the quota allowed. That principle, however, was not carried out in the redistribution of seats. It is absurd when we find cities like Brisbane, Townsville, and Gympie, for instance—large centres of population—far below the quota. That is diametrically opposed to the opinion expressed by the Minister this morning. The Attorney-General was talking about widely scattered areas and the difficulty of people getting to the poll, and he urged the necessity for their having adequate representation. The Commission recommended directly the opposite of what the Attorney-General thinks is right. The Attorney-General says it was an intelligent Commission, but we had the hon. member for Fitzroy expressing a different view.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You do not believe in the hon. member for Fitzroy.

Mr. MOORE: I have always discovered that the hon. member for Fitzroy speaks the truth. He is prepared to speak the truth on every occasion, and shame the devil—there is never any cover about it.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You evidently misinterpreted him.

Mr. HARTLEY: What a lot of people do not know is that it pays to speak the truth, because you are not believed.

Mr. MOORE: The facts prove that what the hon. member for Fitzroy has said is correct. He is the one member on the opposite side who is prepared to follow up his opinions by his vote. We know that on one occasion in thirteen years he voted with this party.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MOORE: The hon. member for Mitchell is wrong in suggesting that a man should remain for an indefinite time on a roll that he has no right to be on because he may eventually go back to the locality. The hon. member for Port Curtis said that there were two people on his roll for three years who he knew ought not to be there.

Mr. CARTER: They were on my roll, but they got shifted. I knew where they went to.

Mr. MOORE: I could mention many cases the hon. member for Port Curtis knew about of men who had got on that roll whom he was anxious to get off.

Mr. CARTER: Only one.

Mr. MOORE: I think the rolls in Queensland are not satisfactory, because there are large numbers of people on them who ought not to be there. There are people on my own roll who have no right to be there. They went away years ago, but they are still on the roll. In one case a man was supposed to have been dead for seven years,

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but he voted at the last election. (Laughter.) I was curious enough to find out that his name was still on the roll. The system we have is a wrong one. It is a difficult thing to discover where a man has gone to, and whether he has got on another roll or not. We find a big discrepancy between the Commonwealth roll and the State roll. There are said to be more people on the State roll for Queensland than there are on the Commonwealth roll. It has also been stated that there are more people on the State roll than there are adults in Queensland.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL interjected.

Mr. MOORE: I am tired of the excuses of the Attorney-General, because the hon. member for Fitzroy puts up a case that we can all understand—a case proved by actual events. We cannot overlook the fact that there is a discrepancy in numbers. The hon. member for East Toowoomba pointed out that these cases do not occur in his electorate; but, when you get into Kennedy, Eacham, and other places like that, you find that it actually does occur.

Mr. BRUCE: What absolute rot!

Mr. MOORE: I could tell the hon. member a good deal that I do not intend to tell him. I am going to keep it up my sleeve. I know what has been going on, and I know that numbers of people have been put on.

Mr. BRUCE: Where?

Mr. MOORE: In Kennedy for one, and Herbert for another; and the hon. member keeps a jolly good eye on it to see that it is kept reasonably safe. With elections coming on, he does not want to get anybody transferred. It is a wrong system, because it permits people to vote when they should not. The hon. member for Port Curtis only got in by 177 votes, and there were 400 votes at a railway camp. Lots of people had left his electorate, but those were transferred there just for the time.

Mr. HARTLEY: Do you say they should not have votes?

Mr. MOORE: Some hon. members opposite say that they should have votes where they live. The hon. member for Mitchell says that they should have a vote or stay on the roll where they are domiciled, and should not have to transfer their names to the rolls in the places where they go to work.

Mr. HARTLEY: Suppose they are domiciled in a tent?

Mr. MOORE: The hon. member for Mitchell was at great pains to show that it was wrong to make them enrol for where they were living in a tent. The principle he wanted established was that, if a man goes away to secure work and stays away nine or twelve months or two years, he should remain on the roll where his home is. Other hon. members want him to be able to vote where he is working.

Mr. HANLON: If he wants to.

Mr. MOORE: That is just the point. The hon. member for Mitchell says that he has a right to stay on the roll where his home is. Hon. members want it both ways.

Mr. HANLON: When I say "If he wants to," I mean that, if he is a moving worker with a permanent home in one place, he

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should have the right to vote where that permanent home is.

Mr. MOORE: That is an argument that he should be able to be on the roll for where his vote will do the most good. That is an unfortunate position, because we would not have a true roll of the people who live in the electorate, and the people who live in the electorate would not be the ones to have the voice in the election of members. The people who would be transferred there for the particular purpose of influencing an election would have that voice. The hon. member for Ithaca says that, if a voter wants to get on that roll, he should have an opportunity of doing so. It may be a good way to win an election, but it is not a very straight way.

Mr. DASH (*Mundingburra*): I have listened very attentively to the debate about enrolment, facilities for getting on the roll, knocking people off the roll, impersonation, and so forth. I fail to see where anything in the nature of impersonation has taken place in the interests of the Labour movement. The hon. member for East Toowoomba says that he knows that it takes place, but he has failed to substantiate his statement by evidence. I have had a lot of experience of elections, and I have never yet known a Labourite to come forward and offer to help a candidate in that way.

If the Opposition know of such cases, as they have been alleging very freely, then it must be knowledge secured through the efforts of their own organisation. The electoral rolls received a good deal of attention from the representatives of hon. members opposite in North Queensland a few years ago. They adopted the practice of notifying people who had left the district that, if they did not enrol in the new district, they would be liable to prosecution, and in many instances they were successful in having the names transferred from one roll to another through electors acting under the belief that the notifications were from the electoral office. Every adult should be extended every possible facility for enrolment and for remaining on the roll. If the workers, especially those engaged in seasonal occupations, travel from one district to another in search of employment, they should be allowed to retain their names on the roll for the district in which they are usually domiciled. When a dry time is experienced in the North the workers are compelled to seek work elsewhere, leaving their families behind in the town, and the workers should be entitled to keep their names on the roll for the districts in which their families reside. We remember some of the tricks played by representatives of hon. members opposite in the revision of rolls. A few years back, when we had the system of a quarterly revision, it was necessary to attend the court personally or by agent to prove that an elector was living at a certain address or was in the electorate, otherwise his name would be removed from the roll.

Then we had the system of postal voting. Hon. members opposite suggest by their speeches that corrupt practices are the monopoly of this side; but I would remind them of what occurred in Charters Towers under the postal provisions of the Act. It was necessary to belong to a certain political electoral league if one wished to retain his job in a mine, apart altogether from remaining on the roll. When the election came

along, whisperers went about receiving applications for postal votes, and intimidating the workers by threatening them with the loss of their work if they did not record their votes in a certain direction.

Mr. KING: The charges were not sustained.

Mr. DASH: To illustrate the thoroughness of this practice, it is necessary to point out that a clean piece of blotting-paper was used, and, after the name of the person in whose favour the vote had been recorded was written in ink, the name was blotted on this clean blotting-paper, and disclosed for whom the elector voted. To-day we have a cleaner system, and no wonder hon. members opposite find fault! It does not permit of their usual trickery practised when the workers had very little say in connection with Parliament or anything else. I hope that no steps will be taken to remove names from the roll merely because the workers are in search of employment. The electoral laws and system in Queensland are almost perfect. It is a simple matter to become enrolled, and names are not removed until a person is enrolled for some other district or leaves the district or the State permanently. Under the Commonwealth system, if an elector moves about, a post card is forwarded stating that he has changed his address and that his name will be removed from the roll. If it is returned again to the electoral registrar without explanation, and you happen to be absent from town on the day it was sought to deliver this card, your name is struck off the roll; and you do not know anything about it until an election comes along and you go to record your vote. I was assisting in the Maranoa Federal by-election in 1921, and electors were quite surprised on coming to vote to discover that, although they had not been out of the district, their names had been erased from the roll for the simple reason that the postcards sent to their addresses were returned unclaimed. That fact should not be sufficient evidence that a man has left the district or changed his residence. I have had a letter posted from Brisbane to Townsville returned unclaimed as not known by postal officials, and I have readdressed the letter to the same address, and it has been received by the person for whom it was intended. That is clear proof that postal officials are not infallible. If the postal article mentioned had been an electoral card, that person would have been struck off the roll. That is proof of the unsoundness of the system, and it should not be tolerated. I hope that the Attorney-General and his officers will not take too much notice of the statements concerning plural voting, impersonation, and corrupt practices which hon. members opposite seem to indulge in when making speeches for political propaganda. Those practices are not indulged in by the party sitting on this side of the Chamber.

Mr. KING (Logan): The hon. member for Mundingburra referred to certain alleged illegal practices which took place in connection with an election at Charters Towers when Messrs. Paull and Millican were declared elected. Irregularities were alleged in connection with certain postal votes, and a petition was lodged on these grounds against the return of Messrs. Paull and Millican. I happen to know all about this case, as I appeared in it professionally. I dispute the statement made by the hon.

member. The charges made were not proven, and the appeal against the return of Messrs. Paull and Millican was dismissed. I only rose to make that statement in order to put my friend opposite right.

Mr. DASH (Mundingburra): The case referred to by the hon. member for Logan has no connection with the one mentioned by me. Everyone in Charters Towers knows the occasion I refer to, when 400 or 500 Labour electors pursued an anti-Labour agent around the town in order to recover a vote he had stolen from a woman. The Attorney-General, who was not then a member of Parliament, was one of the men who pursued the agent. (Laughter.)

Mr. KELSO (Nundah): I have never heard the Attorney-General explain the equitableness of the anomaly whereby about 50 per cent.—I will meet the Minister to that extent—of the electors opposed to Socialism managed to secure twenty-eight seats only, while the other 50 per cent. obtain forty-four seats.

At 4.25 p.m.,

Mr. MAXWELL (Toowoong), one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, relieved the Chairman in the chair.

Mr. KELSO: That is the greatest charge that has been made for some years, and I do not think the head of a department has ever previously tried to justify an electoral system which allows such a deplorable state of affairs to exist.

Mr. O'KEEFE: What is wrong with it?

Mr. KELSO: Is it equitable that we on this side of the Chamber, who received more votes than Labour members opposite, should have only twenty-nine seats as compared with their forty-four? Yet no one was more strenuous than hon. members opposite in advocating an equitable franchise.

I am sorry that the hon. member for Mitchell is not now in the Chamber, because I propose to refer to some of his remarks. He is a new member, and we can appreciate his feelings when making a speech; but, when he makes a statement which is not correct, we are justified in dealing with the matter. Up to the time of the Mitchell by-election it was stated by members of the Labour Party that they were at a great disadvantage because numbers of their supporters were absent from their electorates at election time by reason of the fact that they had to travel elsewhere to procure work. When the hon. member for Mitchell was speaking I interjected that in those circumstances an opportunity would be afforded of voting by postal vote, which I find now is not applicable during a by-election. It will be interesting, however, if I read some figures comparing the number of electors on the roll in 1923 and in 1928 so far as the Mitchell electorate is concerned. The figures are—

—	1923.	1928.	Decrease.
Number on roll	5,735	5,457	278
Votes polled ..	3,658	3,485	173

The majority of the Labour member was reduced in the latter year by 740. My point is this: If there is no postal voting, and we find there are only 278 fewer persons on

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the roll and only 173 fewer persons who voted in 1928 as compared with 1923—and apparently it was not claimed that a drought had anything to do with the votes polled in 1923—how is it that 63 per cent. of the votes were polled in both cases? Is there any organisation in the West whereby Labour can arrange that, if a man is away, his vote will be recorded, notwithstanding that there is no postal voting? We have it from the hon. member for Mitchell that a great number of his supporters were looking for work in other districts and were not in the electorate on election day. I want to know if there is any arrangement whereby if, say, John Jones were away, somebody else can take his place and vote for him.

[4.30 p.m.]

The reason given for the reduction in the majority from 1,106 to 356 was that a lot of their voters were away. If they were away, how was it that only 173 fewer votes were polled? It makes one wonder whether there is any machinery in operation by the other side enabling absent voters to vote even though there may be no postal vote.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: That is unworthy.

Mr. KELSO: It is not unworthy. It is a fair question to ask, because this matter was raised by the hon. member for Mitchell. Many of these statements that are floating about, and which are looked upon merely as rumours, are apparently verified when we find only 173 fewer votes than in 1923, notwithstanding that a drought was on and notwithstanding that there was no postal vote.

This question of unequal representation has been a matter of great concern for years past. The hon. member for Toombul quoted the figures that I used in 1926, and I stand up to those figures to-day, notwithstanding the attempt that was made by the Attorney-General in the press to refute the accuracy of those figures.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I made a successful attempt here. Do you remember what I told you at the time? I said that if, as an accountant, you made the same calculations, you would probably find yourself in gaol.

Mr. KELSO: The hon. gentleman is not an accountant, and he is getting out of his depth in regard to these figures. He did not claim in his figures that the Government got a sweeping majority; he claimed that they had a slight majority.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: We got a sweeping majority of members.

Mr. KELSO: Yes; and the hon. member for Fitzroy "spilled the beans," as the American would say, because he said, "We are in the saddle, and we want to stay there as long as we can."

Mr. WEIR interjected.

Mr. KELSO: Here is another hon. member standing up for the same thing. They say, "If you have the power, keep it if you can. Take any measures at all so long as you can keep it." Yet we have Labour members stalking the country during an election saying what Simon Pures they are, and saying that they stand for equitable treatment for the workers, assuming that the workers must naturally vote for Labour. On the Attorney-General's figures, even admitting that the Government had a slight majority, where would that side of the Chamber be if the workers did not support us? We get

nearly 50 per cent. of the votes of the workers. The workers are an intelligent body of men with common sense, and they know that it would be disadvantageous to themselves and to the prosperity of Queensland if the Labour Party remained in power indefinitely; and they are using their common sense, and, therefore, voting for us. I have no hesitation in saying that hon. members on the other side will see to their sorrow at the next election that there has been a large number of converts because of the way in which the Government have conducted, or misconducted, the business of the country. We have this outstanding anomaly that, whereas we receive about 50 per cent. of the votes, we have only twenty-nine representatives in Parliament as against forty-three Government representatives.

If anybody can tell me that a party such as the Labour Party can go out and stomp the country and say they want to mete out just treatment to all sections of the community, and that they want to have proper representation, while, in the face of that statement, year after year they neglect to correct this anomaly, all I can say is that they are talking with their tongues in their cheeks. I know the Attorney-General is only one, but he is the head of this department. I am not criticising the Minister himself, but the whole of the party, because there must be a majority of the party who stand for this injustice being perpetuated, and it is likely to be perpetuated so long as the present Government are in office. Thank goodness, there are signs on the horizon that they will not be able to continue this sort of thing for long.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: You have said that for quite a number of years.

Mr. KELSO: The old saying is still true—"You can fool some of the people some of the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time." I think this is going to react on the members of the Government Party at the next election, and I trust that for the prosperity of Queensland this party will be sitting on the Government benches after the election.

Mr. HANLON (*Ithaca*): The hon. member for Toombul, in speaking on this vote, made the remark that we should not dig up the past. People with shady pasts undoubtedly do not like them to be dug up, and the party to which the hon. member belongs does not like to have its conduct at past elections brought up. There has not been one reasonable or logical statement to convince anyone that there is anything wrong with the present electoral system in Queensland.

One thing which strikes me very forcibly is the contrast between elections now and when the Opposition were in power. Take the 1912 election, conducted by hon. members opposite. The hon. member for Brisbane—the Secretary for Public Works—received a majority of the primary votes at that election, but not a large enough majority to spoil the possibilities for his opponent. The result was that the Secretary for Public Works and his friends had nearly to live on the returning-officer's doorstep for weeks and weeks. Day after day a few votes would come in from different places and a few packets of votes from somewhere else. The Nationalist candidate eventually failed by some few votes to dislodge the Secretary

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for Public Works. The same thing applied in South Brisbane. Mr. Sherry, the Labour candidate, won the contest on the primary votes by a majority of 100 odd. Then the game went on week after week, a few votes turning up to-day and another couple to-morrow, and mysterious postal votes which turned out to be in favour of Mr. Sherry's opponent also came to hand.

Under the present system the result of the election can be announced very quickly, owing to the abolition by this Government of the postal vote, which was very much abused. Members of the opposite party were saved from defeat by the manipulation of the postal vote which they had put into operation.

Mr. KELSO: What do you mean by "manipulation?"

Mr. HANLON: It was manipulated to suit the candidate favourable to the then Government. Hon. members opposite had financial backing to pay canvassers, who went from home to home in the electorates, with justices of the peace led by a string, to canvass for the Tory Party. They filled in postal vote forms for women who did not want to vote by post. If people had only got toothache, the canvassers filled up a form for them, which was taken and stowed away for the benefit of the Denham candidate.

Mr. KING: Can you give us any specific cases?

Mr. HANLON: I can. At that particular time one of the greatest difficulties we had to contend with was to get a justice of the peace who would be fair and reasonable to Labour candidates for Parliament. We could hardly get a man who was in sympathy with Labour appointed as a justice of the peace at that time.

One thing I would suggest in connection with postal votes is that a penalty should be provided for any unscrupulous person who defrauds an elector of his vote in the course of collecting a postal vote. I had a case where a lady—an old member of the Women's Electoral League—a very good living and considerate old lady, who had been a neighbour of ours from my childhood—had voted by post for the party opposite for many elections. The chairman or the official of the league—whose name is as well known in Tory circles as that of the Leader of the Opposition—was in the habit of visiting her and arranging for her postal vote. Prior to the last election this lady visited her, and said she had come to fix up the postal vote. The old lady said she was sorry, but she had decided to vote for Mr. Hanlon, who was the child of an old neighbour. She was influenced by what women consider a good deal—a personal knowledge of the candidate. Her visitor said, "Never mind. It will make no difference. I will fix up your postal vote. It is no use depending on somebody else to do it. You can vote for whom you like, but I will fix it up now." I received a message to the effect that the vote had been duly fixed up, and at the counting of the postal vote I discovered that the covering envelope had never been witnessed. The lady who did that had been handling postal votes as long as I can remember, and to suggest to anybody that she forgot is to suggest that the listener was insane. I urge upon the Minister the necessity for making some provision

whereby people who canvass for postal votes amongst invalids and who wilfully make votes informal should be punished. After a few minutes' conversation a canvasser can tell pretty well whom a person is going to vote for, and one who wilfully fails to witness or makes any other mistake on the cover of the postal vote in order to defraud the candidate and that elector should be punished. That is the last surviving link of the old Tory method of swindling Labour candidates out of seats.

Mr. O'KEEFE (*Chillagoe*): I was interested to hear the hon. member for Wynnum eulogise the Government of which he had been a member. Some members of this Committee remember the time when the Government which hon. members opposite supported would not allow a man to have a vote in the country in which he was born. It was only when the Browne-Morgan party decided to give the workers a vote that they had any chance of taking their places at the booths on election day.

I hope the Minister will not entertain the idea of a voter's right or license suggested by the hon. member for Logan yesterday. I remember the time when it was very difficult for a working man, especially if he were travelling round the country, to get a vote at all. It was hard for a married man who had left his home and was moving about in other parts of the State to remain on the roll. Once he left his electorate, he was struck off by the Government of hon. members opposite; but, under the system introduced by hon. members on this side, a married man may safely leave his home to look for employment in other electorates, and feel sure that his name will remain on the roll where his family lives.

Speaking of corrupt practices, I should like to draw the attention of hon. members to what occurred in my electorate long before Labour had any strength in this Parliament, when it was known as Woothakata. In a little, back mining camp a scandal occurred which was known all over North Queensland at the time as the "flour bag" election, when there were more ballot-papers found in the ballot-box than had been issued by the returning officer. Hon. members opposite infer that their ranks comprise men of honesty and integrity, whilst we embrace all the rogues. At the last Federal elections the Bruce-Page Government saw fit to remove a polling-place from Boonmoo in the Chillagoe electorate, where it had been utilised for many years past. In that centre about ten families, together with the single adults, had for the first time for many years been deprived of their right of exercising the franchise. The Queensland Government do not engage in practices of that sort.

Mr. EDWARDS: You should have attended to the matter.

Mr. O'KEEFE: It had nothing to do with me. I was not then in Parliament. Every adult is entitled to record his vote, and any interference with that right should not be tolerated for a moment. It is well recognised throughout Australia that the Queensland Election Act is the best piece of electoral legislation in the Commonwealth, and I hope the Minister will not be influenced by the little gawks that take place on this vote every session. The only trouble with the Opposition is that they are annoyed because they are not on this side of the Chamber; but, whilst the people of

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Queensland have an opportunity of recording their votes, I am satisfied that hon. members opposite will always remain in Opposition.

Item (Electoral Registration) agreed to.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES.

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

“That £2,666 be granted for ‘Friendly Societies.’”

Mr. McLACHLAN (*Merthyr*): Friendly society work is a matter in which I take a great deal of interest, and in which I hope hon. members generally also take some interest. Every year the registrar of friendly societies publishes a most interesting report dealing with the operations of friendly societies in Queensland, and it is only by reading a report of that nature that one gets an insight into the very hard work that is being done.

When one realises what is being done in this State, and when one remembers that similar work is being done all over the Commonwealth of Australia by friendly societies, we can imagine the great amount of good that is resulting to the people of Australia from association with this great movement. The friendly society movement is one of thrift; and its members have their own system whereby they endeavour to make provision when sickness occurs not only for themselves but also for others who may not be as fortunate as they are. The knowledge that men associated with friendly societies have been instrumental in making benefits available to those less fortunate than themselves must appeal to every hon. member.

I have read the report of the Registrar-General and find it a very interesting document. Its object is to let hon. members and the people outside—friendly society men in particular—who may not have an opportunity of perusing the report know the exact position of the movement in Queensland. In case any hon. member or others interested may not have this opportunity, I have gone to the trouble of taking out some figures from the report to show what is being done in Queensland by this great movement.

The report deals very fully with the work throughout the year of friendly societies. One of the duties of the registrar is to see that all friendly societies are on a solid basis. He very carefully scrutinises the balance-sheets of the various friendly societies with a view to seeing that they are in a position to pay the benefits which their rules say they are going to give. If it so happens in this or any other State that the capital of a friendly society is such that it cannot meet the benefits set out in its rules, the registrar very quickly sees that the position is rectified so that the position of the members of that society will in no wise be jeopardised.

In looking through the report I see that the membership of friendly societies in Queensland has increased from 65,199 in 1926 to 66,642 in 1927, and that the actual financial membership increased from 61,909 in 1926 to 62,681 in 1927. These figures show the great work that is being done by friendly societies in Queensland. When we realise the number of men associated with friendly society work in Queensland, one can form an idea of what is being done by this move-

[*Mr. O'Keefe.*

ment all over Australia. The capital of the whole of the friendly societies in Queensland on 1st July, 1926, was £1,404,991; on 1st July, 1927, it was £1,481,736, showing an increase in capital for the year of £76,745. The report says that the amount of capital, £1,481,736, is equal to £27 17s. 11d. per financial member. When one comes to realise that this is produced by small payments which the members make from week to week into their respective societies, it shows conclusively the great amount of thrift displayed by those associated with friendly societies, not only in Queensland but in other parts of Australia.

Great care is exercised by the trustees of friendly societies in the investment of funds; and, as the registrar points out, this is one of the means that the trustees adopt to assist in building up the funds of the friendly societies. We are in the fortunate position of having had trustees from the very existence of friendly societies who have been careful in their investments. In a very few instances only have we had occasion to take exception to anything that has been done by the trustees.

The receipts from members during the year amounted to £238,126, and, as evidence of what I said about investments, I find that the interest earnings, which totalled £78,436, represented 5.4 per cent. on the mean capital. This is eminently satisfactory, particularly when we consider the strenuous times through which we are passing and the fact that the friendly societies are comprised principally of working men.

As is well known, the friendly societies are benefit societies; but everybody does not really appreciate the great benefits that accrue even in the operations for one year. Last year, for example, a total amount of £189,112 was expended in this way—

	£
Sick pay	64,433
Funeral and special donations ...	29,283
Medical attendance and medicine	95,396

which represents an increased disbursement in benefits of £4,497 as compared with the previous year.

The cost of management for the year totalled £50,705, which is equal to 17s. 1d. per mean financial member. Of this amount only 9s. 10d. was defrayed in meeting salaries and personal expenses, the balance being devoted to incidental expenses. It will be seen, therefore, that there is no lavish expenditure incidental to the management of friendly societies, whose officers are not paid fancy salaries, but who are imbued, like all other members of the societies, with a desire to lend a helping hand to men and women who in many instances are unable to assist themselves.

As showing how the friendly society movement operates throughout the whole of Australia, the following paragraph from the official “Year Book” of the Commonwealth for 1927 may be quoted:—

“Friendly societies are an important factor in the social life of the community, as probably one-third of the total population of Australia comes either directly or indirectly under their influence.”

That again conclusively proves my opening remarks that friendly societies exercise an influence which is of great benefit throughout the Commonwealth. The number of lodges throughout Australia totals 5,584, and the

benefit members at the end of the year 1925-26 numbered 558,267.

[5 p.m.]

The total revenue received from all sources by friendly societies in the Commonwealth for the year 1925-26 amounted to—

	£
New South Wales	1,000,661
Victoria	820,550
Queensland	287,488
South Australia	351,144
Western Australia	124,307
Tasmania	115,111
Total	£2,699,261

These figures are very large, and it is only when one collates them as I have done that one gets a true idea of what is being done by friendly societies in Australia. The total expenditure for the same period amounted to—

	£
Sick pay	631,441
Medical attendance and medicine	735,888
Sums paid at death of members and members' wives	178,642
Administration	385,036
All other expenditure	177,005
Total expenditure	£2,108,012

For the year 1925-26 the revenue exceeded the expenditure by £591,249. These figures are very illuminating, and show what has been done in Australia by the movement. The total funds of friendly societies in the Commonwealth amount to—

	£
Invested	11,314,018
Uninvested	134,233
Total funds	£11,448,241

When we realise that for the whole of Australia only £134,233 of a total of £11,448,242 is uninvested, we see that careful management is being exercised by all in charge of friendly societies. Investments are very carefully made, and the report shows that the societies have been very fortunate indeed in the returns received.

I desire to congratulate Mr. Porter, the Registrar of Friendly Societies, and the Deputy Registrar of Friendly Societies on the report presented to Parliament. The Registrar and other officers of the department are most courteous to anyone who goes to see them in connection with friendly society work, and their one endeavour seems to be to try to build up the movement and keep it in the fine position it is in to-day. The job is an arduous one, and I desire to offer them my congratulations on the way in which they are carrying out their duties.

I was a little disappointed that no reference was made in the report to national insurance. At the present time this question is looming largely in friendly society matters. A Bill has been introduced in the Federal Parliament dealing with national insurance, but, beyond the second reading speech delivered by Dr. Earle Page, no discussion has taken place on it. National insurance is going to be an important factor in connection with friendly society work, and I feel sure that all friendly society people will take a keen interest in the measure introduced. Friendly societies are organised all over Australia. They are a very strong power in the

land, and we hope to get some material alteration in the Bill in connection with friendly societies.

I should be out of order if I entered upon a disquisition on national insurance at the present time, but I make these remarks in passing. The Bill is now before the friendly society members. Only yesterday I had a letter from the secretary of the Manchester Unity Independent Order of Oddfellows in Melbourne stating that it is the intention to call a conference of representatives of friendly societies from all over Australia, with a view to considering and endeavouring to have the National Insurance Bill amended so as to make it more satisfactory to friendly societies than it is at the present time. I am one of those who realises that national insurance must come. Anyone who is of the opinion that it is a myth and that it is all "fireworks" is making a great mistake. National insurance must be accepted by the people of Australia, and friendly society men—even those societies which are going to be very materially affected by the introduction of national insurance—who take an interest in their work recognise that national insurance must come; they will make every endeavour to see that the legislation is framed in such a way that the least possible harm will be caused to friendly societies by the passage of the Bill.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): Like the hon. member for Merthyr, I take very great interest in friendly societies. I would congratulate the Minister on the appointment of the Deputy Registrar, Mr. Daly, who will be very acceptable to friendly societies, as is Mr. Porter himself. I was at a conference sometime ago at which Mr. Porter was present. He was keenly interested in the work of the conference, and no doubt the opportunity of keeping closely in touch with friendly societies in conference will be of considerable assistance in enabling him to understand the workings of the societies.

The hon. member for Merthyr has touched on the position of friendly societies in Queensland. I notice that the registrar pays particular attention in his report to the fact that we have not done just as well numerically as might have been expected during the past year. That caused me to look up the position of friendly societies in New South Wales, in comparison with which I find we have nothing to worry about. The registrar points out that it is largely the industrial position—which is, as we know, unsatisfactory not only in this State but in all the States of the Commonwealth at the moment—which has considerably hampered friendly societies. Unemployment and casual work affect the earnings of the worker, and we know that it is the worker who builds up the friendly society movement, and for whose benefit the friendly societies exist.

In New South Wales the membership percentage increase last year was 2.47, and ours was 2.2, so that in that respect there is not very much to be concerned about.

On page 7 of the report for 1923 I find this paragraph—

"The inability of societies to retain their new recruits, the majority of whom are all young bloods, is the most lamentable side of friendly society activity."

Mr. Roberts.]

Further on he says—

“The percentage of sickness obtaining in the youngest group (16-24 years) is still very high.”

In the report for 1927 the registrar said—

“I also feel in duty bound to direct the societies' attention to the high percentage of sickness obtaining in the youngest group (16-24 years), as we are too inclined in the light of recent figures to overestimate the value of the younger members to a society.

“The amount of sick pay distributed to members of this group averaged 19s. 1d. per member; against this the average annual contribution per member amounted to £1 8s. 2d., leaving a surplus of 9s. 1d. per member after meeting sick pay claims. Out of this surplus it is necessary to set aside 7s. 7d. (approximately) per member to cover payment of funeral benefits, and thus the net surplus accruing from this group amounts to 1s. 6d. per member per annum.

“As shown in Table S, this group ranges second to Group 65-74 years in percentage of members ill, and the latter group must be regarded as the first group containing payments of relief to the infirm rather than advances on account of incapacity.

“Although these figures might be construed to indicate a decline in the general health of the community, I prefer to believe that it is accounted for by a greater disposition on the part of the younger members to claim on the societies.”

I stress this matter because there is a tendency on the part of various societies in conferences to do everything to attract the younger member by giving him the means of joining the society at the lowest possible rate—generally 1s. nomination fee—and by pulling down the rate of his contributions. It is the perpetual fighting between the various societies to increase their membership that wants careful consideration. Of course, societies do it not only for their own sake but also because they wish to put favourable figures before the registrar, but there is a reasonable margin, and, if we go below it, we are going to have trouble. From my experience in connection with sick pay, I am satisfied that it is one of the things which friendly societies must consider very carefully. It is due to this continual belief that it is to our interest to get the younger member. I was astonished to discover from the tables in the report how many men leave societies in from one to five years. I attribute it largely to the fact that it is so easy to get into some other society. In some towns the societies have a sort of agreement whereby they undertake not to admit into a branch in that town or district a member who has left another branch whilst unfinancial; but that is only a measure which is applied to that particular town or district. If it were applied throughout the State, then it might be of some assistance to the societies.

The report points out that a great amount of money is lost because of the basis of benefit payments. A man may join a friendly society, pay contributions for one week or two, and, in the ordinary course of events, is immediately placed upon the medical list. He is accepted in good faith, and some societies, including my own, pay

benefits immediately on joining. Within a week of joining, this man may become entitled to sick benefits extending over a number of weeks, and perhaps in seven or eight months he is unfinancial; he has paid to the society perhaps 50s., and we see him no more.

Mr. McLACHLAN: Some societies specify payments in advance.

Mr. ROBERTS: Reference is made to it in the New South Wales report, and we should provide in this State that payments entitling medical benefits should be paid in advance and credited to a specific fund, so that we shall know exactly that we are not keeping on the medical list members who should be removed. The report points out that there is a tendency to continue the unfinancial members in the hope that they will make good.

Certain action by the British Medical Association has exercised the minds of members of friendly societies very much in Brisbane during the past year, and hard things have been said on both sides. As one interested in the friendly society movement, I regret it. The medical men have their function in civic life, and the friendly societies have their place in the community; but, as business men and professional men, we should be able to solve our difficulties without any friction whatever. We are told that the payment by friendly societies to the medical fraternity for services to their members is lower than that paid by any other State in Australia, but, according to the New South Wales report, that statement is not borne out. Page 3 of that report has this statement—

“The cost of medical attendance and medicine per average adult member has increased by 61 per cent. since 1911. The cost per member in that year, in 1921, and in subsequent years, was as follows:—

	Per annum.
	<i>s. d.</i>
1911	18 3
1920-21	22 10
1921-22	27 10
1922-23	27 7
1923-24	27 11
1924-25	27 11
1925-26	28 11
1926-27	29 4

“The increased cost is due to the higher charges imposed by the medical officers and chemists. The amount of 29s. 4d., however, does not represent truly the average annual rate paid for this service, as many members do not receive medical attendance through the lodge, and others are on the medical list only for a portion of the year. The average annual rate for the whole of the State would be about 40s. The cost in this State is exceeded only in Queensland.

“In other States the charges are generally lower, but a move has been made by the medical officers for a revision.”

We can understand that; but, by and large, it is one of those things regarding which, in the interests of the friendly society movement, we ought to be able to arrive at a satisfactory basis. I know what it means to the movement. Bodies of working men band together to try to make provision for these particular benefits from their weekly earnings—they cannot pay large sums. I

[Mr. Roberts.

have had considerable experience with the medical institute in the city of Toowoomba, while I have also come in contact with the medical institute in Brisbane. I know the remuneration that is paid to medical men in connection with the duties they perform. My experience of them is that at all times they give of their best. Toowoomba has been particularly fortunate with its medical men, and the same applies all over Queensland. My conclusions from the conference I attended were that the men who were behind the guns, so to speak, are not the men who really do friendly society work, and, so far as I can see, do not want to do it; but, for some reason I could not understand, they were trying to fix a rate of pay for the men engaged in the work, quite apart from any knowledge on their part of the position. The men who are able to speak definitely as to the value of the work and the time given to it are the medical men who have had experience of it. They are in a position to say whether they are well or reasonably paid. By and large, they are reasonably paid. In Toowoomba we pay on an average from £900 to £1,000 a year to each medical man attached to the institute, and any spare time they have is at their disposal. There is no question that they do well, and are satisfied. If we cannot arrive at a satisfactory basis, then it is going to interfere considerably with the friendly societies. That is why I am dealing with the position to-day, as I am anxious to see a settlement.

Mr. McLACHLAN: Hear, hear!

Mr. ROBERTS: There are 66,642 members of friendly societies interested, and, with their wives and children, they probably number 200,000; and the sooner a satisfactory basis is arrived at between the societies and the medical men the better it will be for the movement.

The hon. member for Merthyr has touched very fully on the position of the friendly society movement in Queensland; but I want to say one or two things on the financial position of the movement. Men connected with the friendly society movement know that the average member always says, "Why are you hoarding up all that money? You have some hundreds of thousands of pounds to your credit?" If we take last year's report, we find that, notwithstanding the very large sum of money paid in contributions, there was not sufficient money paid in to meet the liabilities falling due within the twelve months by £1,691; but by returns from investment we were able to find the balance of the money and carry forward a profit for the year of £76,745. That shows that the friendly societies are on a very sound basis in Queensland. Friendly societies are expected to earn a certain sum on their investments. Last year their investments earned 5.5 per cent., and this year they earned 5.4 per cent.; and the interest on those investments caused a profit of £78,436 to be made.

At 5.25 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. ROBERTS: We were a little disturbed the other week by reason of an instruction given by the registrar that, whereas we had been allowed to take all excess interest over 4½ per cent. from what is termed the "Sick and Funeral Fund" for use in the Management Fund, we would

not in future be permitted to do that unless we were earning 5½ per cent. After a deputation to the registrar, at which the official valuer, Mr. Rendle, was present, I think the societies were satisfied that they had nothing to fear—that the reason for this position was that we had earned over 5 per cent. and, consequently, the registrar thought it was only fair that we should be valued on that earning-power, because it put us in a better financial position. That appears to me to be quite sound. I think it was also submitted that we would be able to deal with all surpluses. If that is brought about, the friendly societies will be considerably relieved from some anxieties they have had in this direction.

Reference has been made to the question of national insurance, with which I propose to deal only briefly. Probably the reason why no reference is made in the report of the registrar for this year is that, following upon his statement last year that he was not concerned with it until he had seen the Bill, the report for this year was printed before the Bill was presented to the Federal Parliament. By and large, I welcome national insurance. Having seen a copy of the Bill, and having read the remarks of Dr. Earle Page in connection with the measure, I can quite understand that it is probably very different from what people were led to believe it would be when Senator Millen explained the proposed measure to the heads of friendly societies throughout Australia a few months ago. Certainly a lot is missing; but it is possible that some of the original intentions were found to be unworkable. I think the right thing has been done, because, as it is a measure of far-reaching importance, it requires close consideration. At one stage we thought the Bill would be passed without the friendly societies being given an opportunity of stating their requirements; but I was glad to hear the hon. member for Merthyr say that action is being taken in the South to see that the claims of friendly societies are not overlooked. I do not think any Government would do anything to injure the great friendly society movement, which exists for the good of the working-class community, and provides against sickness and for the widow in her time of stress. I welcome the National Insurance Bill, whose provisions can be worked in conjunction with the friendly society movement, in which I have undoubted faith.

[5.30 p.m.]

Item (Friendly Societies) agreed to.

PARLIAMENTARY DRAFTSMAN.

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

"That £1,000 be granted for 'Parliamentary Draftsman.'"

Item agreed to.

REGISTRAR-GENERAL.

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

"That £11,481 be granted for 'Registrar-General.'"

Item agreed to.

SHERIFF AND SUPREME COURTS.

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

"That £32,756 be granted for 'Sheriff and Supreme Courts.'"

Mr. Roberts.]

Mr. KING (*Logan*): I notice that the Deputy Registrar and Taxing Officer is down for £700, and I would like to ask the Attorney-General what the Government intend doing in connection with the present Deputy Registrar and Taxing Officer. Most of us know that the Taxing Officer, Mr. Baines, has reached the age limit and, under ordinary circumstances, would be due for retirement; but I would like to stress the point that, although personally I do not come in contact very frequently with Mr. Baines since I have entered Parliament, still I do know that he is a most efficient officer, and his position will be most difficult to fill. He carries out in a most efficient manner duties which are highly technical and very intricate. The duties of a taxing officer are really the work of a specialist; and I think I am safe in saying that you could search Queensland and not find a man more capable or more fit to take on this work. His position is a unique one. I assure the Attorney-General that I have not had any conversation with Mr. Baines about this matter; but, speaking as a member of the profession and as a member of the public, I say without hesitation that, if, owing to the age limit, Mr. Baines's services were to be dispensed with, it would be nothing short of a calamity. Not only does Mr. Baines carry out the duties of taxing officer but he also carries out other very intricate duties which require a trained legal mind, and I sincerely hope the Attorney-General will take all these matters into consideration before retiring Mr. Baines from the position.

I have already mentioned the matter of the judges' salaries, and I would like now to refer to the salaries of the associates to the judges. If we deal with the highest positions, we must also give some notice to the lower positions. The associates are on a salary of £325 per annum, while the associate to the Chief Justice gets a higher salary than that. In my opinion the salaries paid are not commensurate with the dignity of the position and the work done. The associates are really the companions of the judges. They have to keep up a certain amount of appearance, and travel with the judges. They also carry out important duties. They have to minute every order the court makes in chambers or in court, and to see that the minutes are correctly embodied in orders, which are subsequently presented to the judges for signature. I trust that the Attorney-General will take this matter into consideration and see if the salaries cannot be increased to a figure more in accordance with the position.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*): I am pleased to hear the remarks of the hon. member for Logan concerning the Taxing Master, Mr. Baines, and also to note his desire that the Government should relax as far as practicable the rule with regard to that officer's retirement. I can assure the hon. member that we have already relaxed the rule. Mr. Baines has exceeded the age limit already. I agree with the hon. member that Mr. Baines is an officer whom it would be most difficult to replace, and I have discussed that phase of the question with some of my responsible officers. Personally I hope that there will be no need for his retirement for a long time.

Mr. KING: I am glad to hear it.

[*Mr. King.*]

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Hon. members may rest assured that the Government fully appreciate Mr. Baines's services, and will avail themselves of them for a long time.

With regard to the associates, the Government last year made a very substantial increase in their salaries from £250 to £325, and, in the case of the associate of the Chief Justice, from £300 to £375. In view of that fact, I am afraid that I can hold out no immediate prospect of going any further.

Item (Sheriff and Supreme Courts) agreed to.

TITLES OFFICES.

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

“That £22,961 be granted for ‘Titles Offices.’”

Mr. KING (*Logan*): A couple of years ago a reorganisation scheme was introduced or suggested in connection with the administration of the Titles Office. Prior to that reorganisation being put into effect, there was a good deal of dissatisfaction amongst professional and business men—not exactly in connection with the work carried out in the Titles Office, but in a branch of that office to which it is not necessary to refer. The office of the particular officer concerned has been abolished to a certain extent, and his duties are now undertaken by another officer in the Attorney-General's Department.

I would like to give the Attorney-General the assurance that, so far as I can gather, the new scheme is working very well indeed. Professional people who have businesses with the Titles Office are finding that their work is done quite expeditiously and well. The reorganisation has proved to be entirely satisfactory, and I think the public are very pleased indeed with the innovations which have been made.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): I endorse the remarks of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition regarding this very important office. A very considerable amount of work is done there, and, so far as I can see—and I visit it occasionally—it is done efficiently. There has been a reduction of five in the staff, and, whether that is on the recommendation of the Public Service Commissioner or not, I hope that it is not going to impair the efficiency of the office. I agree with the remarks which have been made as to the officer whose salary used to be voted under this item. I came in contact with that individual, unfortunately, and it was not very pleasant to me, and I told him that I did not think it was very satisfactory so far as the position he occupied was concerned.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*): I appreciate the remarks of the hon. member for Logan and the hon. member for East Toowoomba as to the efficiency of this office. It is a very important office, and it is very satisfactory to know that the reorganisation which was made in regard to the position of Master of Titles and the alterations which have been made generally have proved beneficial both to the office and to the community.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Item (Titles Offices) agreed to.

HOME SECRETARY'S DEPARTMENT.
CHIEF OFFICE.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, *Mount Morgan*): I beg to move—
“That £7,806 be granted for ‘Home Secretary’s Department—Chief Office.’”

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): The Home Secretary has probably greater responsibility in certain directions than any other Minister. This is a greater spending department than any other, excepting the Railway Department, and, on the other hand, it has very little revenue coming in. It spends over £1,500,000 a year, and its income is less than £100,000.

In these days of alleged economy the Minister in charge must have experienced great difficulty in securing the amount of money required for his department. In 1915 the total expenditure by this department was approximately £790,000, but by 1927 it has grown to £1,500,000, and I am not quite satisfied that there is justification for doubling the expenditure. I should like to know if new sub-departments or activities have been created under the jurisdiction of the Home Office. I have been unable to locate any activity justifying the increased expenditure of this money.

Mr. W. COOPER: What about the State Children Department?

Mr. KERR: The hon. member can look up the figures for himself. I am not quite satisfied. I can refer to departments that in 1915 expended less than the Home Office, and which have now ceased to exist altogether; and I can mention other activities where the expenditure could possibly be reduced. The Minister may claim that he is charged with the responsibility of making grants for charitable purposes, and it is difficult for me to criticise administration of that nature; but it is not so difficult after examining the position thoroughly. In 1915 the appropriation for the Chief Office was £3,855, whereas to-day, without any further activities to justify all the expenditure, the amount has increased to £7,540. At one time the hospitals were under the direct control of the department; but they are now administered by various boards outside the direct jurisdiction of the department, and much to the relief of the department. At one time the unemployment problem engaged the attention of the department and absorbed quite a large sum of money; but to-day that branch of the administration is administered by another department, and miscellaneous services have been placed under other administrative heads. I do not want the Minister to accuse me of advocating a reduction in the amount required for charitable purposes.

Mr. HARTLEY: If you object to the expenditure, you must be asking for a reduction.

Mr. KERR: The department should have given far greater attention to the question of health than it has given in the past. There has been an unwarranted amount of overlapping in the jurisdiction of the Health Departments controlled by the State and the Commonwealth Governments.

The Commonwealth Government have entered the field of health. It is not for me to say whether that is right or wrong, but at the present time we have administering the health services of the community the Health Departments of the Commonwealth and State Governments, and, in addition,

we have the health services established by the local authorities. It should be the aim of Parliament to reduce expenditure wherever possible, and this is a matter the Home Secretary can profitably go into. Some years ago a conference of Ministers of the various States was held, and in the official report there appeared an acknowledgment of the overlapping of health services. The Commonwealth Government entered the health sphere on 3rd March, 1921, and their expenditure in administering that service has increased from £16,000 in that year to £25,000 to-day. That increase is not confined to the Commonwealth only, as similar increases have taken place in the health services of the State department and the local authorities. A perusal of the Constitution of the Commonwealth will show that health is fundamentally a function of State Governments. It is this overlapping of services, where we might look for economy, that adds to the cost of administration. The Commonwealth Government could very well restrict themselves to functions such as the League of Nations. The control of disease is essentially a State matter. The overlapping of services by the two Governments is becoming intolerable, and the taxpayer is taxed twice over for the same service. The Minister should give the Committee some information regarding the steps he has taken to co-ordinate such services.

Let me mention the extraordinary position that has arisen in regard to our hospitals. The expenditure on this department has increased from £790,000 in 1915 to £1,500,000 in 1927; yet the vote for hospitals has decreased from £250,000 to £185,000, or a reduction of £65,000. That is partly accounted for by the fact that £127,000 has been expended from the “Golden Casket” funds.

My point is that, whereas the expenditure for the whole of the department has doubled, the amount allocated for hospitals has been reduced from £250,000 to £185,000.

The Home Department is costing a tremendous amount of money to administer. Comparative figures show that the cost per head of population so far as medical services and charities are concerned is greater in Queensland than in any other State of the Commonwealth. It is neither a question that more is being done nor that the salaries of public servants in Queensland are greater; because, by reason of the fact that the salaries paid to highly-placed officials are not as great in Queensland as elsewhere, the salaries here are in the aggregate less than in the other States.

The Home Secretary has been relieved of much expenditure in regard to subsidising hospitals. It is no use the hon. gentleman shaking his head, because I remember that in a report of the Auditor-General within the last year or two it was shown that, whereas £210,000 was formerly claimed for subsidies, it was necessary at that time to provide only £175,000, conclusively proving that the Home Department is assisted in this direction from the “Golden Casket” receipts.

It is an extraordinary thing that, whereas £2,620 was spent in the year 1914 for “Medical,” the amount appropriated for the financial year just closed is only £2,495.

It is very evident that a close investigation is required in regard to the financial

Mr. Kerr.]

administration of this department. Let me remind the Committee that I am not criticising any other than the financial administration of the department.

The vote for "Police" has increased from £275,000 to approximately £528,000. I would like to see some compensating factor for that great increase. The question of salaries for the police officers has been a matter of contention as between the Police Union and the Home Office. I am also given to understand that, generally speaking, the police buildings are not what they should be.

The HOME SECRETARY: They do not come under this vote.

Mr. KERR: I am criticising one of the administrative activities of the Chief Office, and the Chairman will pull me up if I am out of order in that regard. The accommodation provided in many of the police buildings is quite inadequate.

The HOME SECRETARY: The expenditure under this vote has already been incurred.

Mr. KERR: The hon. gentleman knows that police buildings, generally speaking, are out of date. Particularly is that so in regard to many of the buildings in my electorate. But what concerns me in regard to this department is that for years past it has been a well recognised

[7 p.m.] fact that the staff of the police force has been inadequate. Particularly is that found to be so when we compare the strength with the police strength in the other States. The latest comparative table that I could get is from the Official "Year Book" for 1927, which shows that in New South Wales—a State with less than half the area of Queensland—in 1921 there were 2,738 on the strength, and this was increased by 199 in 1925; whereas in Queensland the strength in 1921 was 1,105.

Mr. CARTER: New South Wales has three times our population.

Mr. KERR: It is not a question of population, as I shall show as I proceed—I am dealing with the financial part of the administration. As I said in 1921 the strength of the Queensland police force was 1,105, and that strength had only been increased by seventy-seven in 1925. Western Australia, which has one-third more territory than Queensland, has one police officer for every 699 of the population, whereas Queensland has one police officer for every 720 of the population.

Mr. COLLINS: We are a more law-abiding people.

Mr. KERR: I hope the hon. member will restrain himself. It may be a question for close investigation as to why the Queensland police force costs more per head of the population than the police force of any other State of Australia.

The following figures show the cost of the police force per head of population in the different States:—

	Cost per head of population.	
	s. d.	
New South Wales	...	11 7
Victoria	...	9 2
South Australia	...	9 1
Western Australia	...	11 8
Tasmania	...	7 9
Queensland	...	12 11

[Mr. Kerr.

It is well known that the police have complained to the Government that their salaries are not equal to those of the police in some of the other States. It is difficult to understand, and we are entitled to ask, the reason why our police force costs more per head of population than in any other State. It is not a question of the area of Queensland—Western Australia has a far greater territory—nor is it a question of population. The other States, in which the cost is lower, have a smaller area with a greater population. I do not know how to account for there being a lesser number in the police force in Queensland than in the other States of Australia while the cost per head of population is greater, and some explanation should be given to the Committee.

All the activities of the Home Department require close investigation to-day, as the expenditure is greater than that of similar departments in other States. There has been a great relief from expenditure in certain directions since 1915. The hospitals to-day are costing much less than formerly because of the relief given by the "Golden Casket." Some of the sub-departments have disappeared. Hon. members opposite may point to baby clinics as an additional expenditure, but that is an extension of a principle adopted many years ago before the Labour Government came into power.

Mr. LLEWELYN: It would be very interesting to know what the Government in the old days did for baby clinics and creches.

Mr. KERR: I am not going to discuss that subject now. This department has been relieved of thousands of pounds of expenditure in connection with unemployment. It is not a question of salaries in the department having doubled, as there are not so many activities to attend to. The Home Secretary is well fitted to occupy that office, being of a charitable nature. The Committee will realise that the expenditure is increasing out of all proportion to what it should be. I have studied the Estimates of other States for the years 1915 and 1927 and compared the position there with our own expenditure, and I find that our expenditure is out of all proportion to that in other States.

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

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, *Mount Morgan*): The hon. member for Enoggera is living in the days of the cave-man and the dark ages, as the hon. member for Bowen says, and not in 1928. He must confess that progress has been made in the conditions of the people and the employees of the State since 1915. The hon. member says that he is at a loss to understand why the expenditure of the Home Department has increased since 1915. Let me say briefly that it is because a Labour Government has endeavoured to rectify some of the wrongs and grievances of a vast majority of people in this State for fifty years while it was ruled by people of the hon. member's politics. I do not dispute the fact that the present Government have increased the Home Office vote—they have practically doubled it—but every item of increased expenditure has been justified in the opinion of the Government—which is the only opinion that counts so far as we are concerned—because we legislate and administer for the mass of the people. Com-

pare any vote for the public service with the vote which prevailed prior to a Labour Government coming into power.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Take the cost of living to-day.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member for Enoggera objects to an increased vote for the Home Department. That is all I have to reply to it. I have to show that we have not foolishly spent money in the Home Office.

The hon. member mentioned police in particular, and compared Queensland with Western Australia. The comparison is absurd. Conditions in Western Australia are totally different from those in Queensland. We are a State with a larger mileage than any other in Australia, and that is a factor that has to be considered in the policing of a country. Population does not count so much because, if population is widely dispersed over a large area, the expenses of policing are comparatively greater than in a State with a more compact population and quick transit. To show that we have not neglected our duty, I claim—in spite of what any amateur Commissioner of Police may say—that there can be only one person whose word should be taken on these matters, and that is the man who is charged with the responsibility of seeing that law and order are maintained. That man is the Commissioner of Police, who has assured the Home Secretary that there is nothing to complain of in the handling of any request that he has made to the Cabinet in order to enable him to carry out those duties. As a matter of fact, on every hand to-day people of all shades of political opinion are loudly sounding the praises of the police, and, if the police are sufficient at this period of violent crisis to achieve that result, then surely it should be sufficient to meet all requirements in times of peace and no crisis. Of course, if you are going to take the opinion of Mr. Talty and not of the Commissioner—

Mr. KERR: I did not talk about Mr. Talty.

The HOME SECRETARY: I am going to talk about him. He is the man behind the request for more police. He is continually stirring up some people in an endeavour to show that the police are starved. The police themselves are not complaining. The Commissioner is not complaining.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Does he act off his own bat?

The HOME SECRETARY: That is very difficult to say, but I have a shrewd suspicion that he does. In 1912 the strength of the police force was 1,084, and in July, 1928, it had been increased to 1,269, including recruits and detectives. The Commissioner has assured me that with that staff he is quite capable of coping with the position that exists to-day.

Mr. KERR: Have you not provided on the Estimates for forty additional police?

The HOME SECRETARY: Certainly we have, and we provided for twenty-four last year, and will provide for increased numbers as necessity arises. The hon. member for Enoggera lives in the days of the caveman and in the dark ages, as the hon. member for Bowen would say. If he had made a comparison, he would have found that for the earlier year he mentioned sub-inspectors received £340 per annum. Let me refer to senior sergeants, who received 12s. 6d. per

day, with a day of twenty-four hours, if necessary, no overtime, and no consideration at all. In addition, if a station required the services of a mounted policeman, he was not permitted to keep fowls because the Government were afraid that he might "pinch" the horse feed and use it as fowl feed. I submit these figures, showing the rates paid in 1914-15—

	Per day.
	s. d.
Sergeants	11 3
Acting sergeants	10 0
Constables—	9 6
317 at	8 6
299 at	9 0
Recruits	7 6

Now compare those figures with the rates ruling to-day—

	Per day.
	£ s. d.
Senior sergeants	1 0 7
Acting sergeant	0 18 7
Constables—	0 17 7
	0 17 1
	0 16 7
	0 16 1
	0 15 7
Recruits	0 15 1
	0 10 0

Those figures indicate that during the reign of the Labour Government it was recognised that it was the duty of the Government to provide a court to which the police had access for the consideration of their claims, and, that court having deliberated and given judgment, the present conditions obtain.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: You cannot take any credit for that.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: What are the respective years quoted?

The HOME SECRETARY: I gave the figures for 1914-15 and the latest figures. The hon. member for Enoggera asked for an explanation of the increased expenditure by my department. To-day the police are recognised as people worthy of a vote, and are not regarded as people who should not associate with their fellows. They are recognised as an important branch of the community service, and are treated as such.

Take the case of the Prisons Department. These rates were paid in the year 1914-15 in the Prisons Department—

	Per annum.
	£
Warder, two at	150
Warder clerks—	
One at	160
One at	150
Warders, thirteen at	150
Female warders—	
One at	100
One at	80
One at	76
One at	56

No doubt they thought they were well paid by the Government of the day. These rates were paid at St. Helena—

	Per annum.
	£
Warder clerks—	
One at	160
One at	150

Then there were trade instructors—qualified tradesmen—who were supposed to teach the prisoners their different trades. The

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instructors were paid on the following scale:—

Trade instructors—	£
One at	180
Two at	160
One at	140
Warders—	
Four at	150
Seven at	140
Eleven at	130
Six at	110

Married men living at St. Helena did not obtain the privilege they obtain to-day of so much time off for being isolated from civilisation, as it were, and they were compelled to keep their children there without any facilities for their education. To-day, under a Labour Government, we find the salaries of the prison employees to be—

	£
Chief warden	290
Senior warden	280
Warders—	
Ten at	270
One at	260
One at	250
Two at	240
Three at	230
Sixteen at	225
Female warders—	
One at	180
One at	170
One at	135

Those figures do not represent fully the conditions under which these workers are working to-day as compared with the conditions under which they were working prior to the advent of the Labour Government. They represent merely the actual difference in wages conditions that operated. If I were to endeavour to show the Committee the difference in the conditions, it would take me the rest of the evening.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: That is world wide.

Mr. KERR: We know that it is world wide.

The HOME SECRETARY: Then why did the hon. member ask for an explanation of the increased expenditure? How is it that he said that he had spent a considerable time in studying this question if, as he now says, the conditions relating to the increase are world-wide? The position is apparent to any one. The hon. member is asking an explanation from me, as Home Secretary, of why we are asking the Committee for a larger vote than was appropriated when this Government came into power.

Mr. KERR: I quoted other States in comparison.

The HOME SECRETARY: I am not concerned with the other States.

Mr. KERR: I am not questioning your expenditure.

The HOME SECRETARY: If I followed the argument of the hon. gentleman, he first set out to show that we were extravagant in our methods of expenditure, and then he set out to show that, in comparison with other States, we were not doing enough. What does he really require? I can go right through the whole of the Estimates for charitable institutions, health, hospitals, insanity, and Dunwich, and show what were the conditions existing in 1914-15 as compared with 1928. What were the conditions of the

[Hon. J. Stopford.]

hospitals prior to the advent of the Labour Government? What were the hours of labour of nurses in hospitals prior to the advent of Labour? They were working anything from sixty to seventy hours a week. Any man who was a patient in a public or private hospital prior to the advent of the award for nurses could not reasonably stand up and deny that the conditions of the nurses were anything short of slavery. The nurses were asked to serve three months free of salary as a probationary period, and purchase their own uniforms while they were serving that probationary period.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have purposely allowed this discussion with the object of showing hon. members just how easy it is to get away from the vote under discussion. I am not blaming the Home Secretary or the hon. member for Enoggera, who initiated it, but I do want to say that hon. members can see how far this debate may go if it is allowed to proceed on these lines. Any hon. member who desires to speak on the other votes after the vote for "Chief Office" has been dealt with would, if this were allowed to continue, be allowed to address himself for twenty-five minutes to every vote, after having spent a similar time on the vote for "Chief Office." That would give him an unfair advantage over hon. members who desire to discuss some other question later on in the Estimates, and would give hon. members an opportunity to take up too much time on this particular vote. For that reason I have decided that hon. members, if they will abuse the privilege of being allowed to discuss the principles of the administration of the department on the Chief Office vote, must adhere strictly to each vote as it comes up.

The HOME SECRETARY: In view of your remarks, Mr. Pollock, I know exactly where I stand. Comparisons will show that there has been no extravagance so far as the Chief Office of the Home Department is concerned, which is one of the most economically conducted offices in the State. Since 1915 the staff has only increased from seventeen to twenty-two, and the expenditure from £3,700 to £7,806, which is largely accounted for by increased salaries. For example, the salary of the Under Secretary, which has increased from £800 to £1,100—and most people will agree that it is not too high—shows an increase which has taken place correspondingly throughout the staff. The Government have no desire to effect savings at the expense of officials who are carrying out responsible duties.

Item (Chief Office) agreed to.

RELIEF OF ABORIGINALS.

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

"That £66,101 be granted for 'Relief of Aborigines.'"

Mr. MOORE (*Abigny*): First of all, I desire to voice my appreciation of the Chief Protector of Aborigines for the capable way in which he has discharged his duties, and the sympathy which he has shown to the aborigines under his charge. Anyone who reads the report of that officer must be struck with the fact that he has a very sympathetic feeling towards the aborigines, whom he assists in every possible way.

It seems extraordinary to me that criticism should have been levelled against the Home

Department by the executive of the police union—criticism that was most unfair. The "Police Union Journal" of the 25th ultimo has this to say under the heading of "Aboriginalities"—

"The tabling in Parliament recently of certain correspondence in connection with aboriginal matters was not intended to benefit the police. On the contrary the aim of the Home Department was to discredit the whole of the force and to destroy the good name of certain men who were mentioned in the Under Secretary's memorandum. The whole thing, of course, is pure bluff, and does not necessarily mean the end of the argument."

[7.30 p.m.]

We have had these papers tabled in this House; we have had the Home Secretary's reply; the correspondence has been published in "Truth"; and I certainly think the Home Secretary had every justification for the statements he made. The endeavour of any Government should be to give absolute protection to the aboriginals and to see that they are not exploited in any way, and particularly to see that those who are supposed to protect and look after them do not join in their exploitation. Yet, because the Home Secretary endeavoured to uphold the prestige of the department and to see that these people were properly treated, the department has to put up with this criticism. There is no suggestion that there was any endeavour to discredit the whole of the police force of this State; but there is a suggestion, and a very decided one, that it was necessary, where wrong had been committed, that it should be put right, and that the whole police force should not accept the blame that was attachable, perhaps, to a few individuals. I think the criticism was very uncalled for, and the statements made in this journal, if allowed to go out, will create a feeling between the police force and the Home Department which certainly is not for the benefit of this State, and certainly would not be for the benefit of the police. Whether the paid official of that union is merely expressing his own views I do not know; but it seems to me a pity that the official organ of a body like the police should descend to personal abuse. That is very unwise. On page 15 of the same journal it says—

"We have no apology to offer for our fearless and honest criticism in this regard, but apparently that has not been kindly received by the two culprits at the Home Office"—

It is a pretty strong term to call the Home Secretary and Under Secretary "culprits." It is going beyond the realm of fair criticism when it is put in that way—

"who are now goaded to a state of frenzy because they have been shown up. Their efforts to lower the prestige of the police force is the action of intolerant and narrow-minded people and will not give them much favour in the long run. If parliamentarians are earnest about this question they will not hesitate to grant a Royal Commission to inquire into the administration of the Aborigines Department in Queensland."

If there is any question that the whole of the police force has to shoulder an unfair burden and there is to be this criticism of the Minister and the Under Secretary, and

it can be cleared up by appointing a Royal Commission to inquire into the charges made, the best possible thing would be to grant this Royal Commission and clean the matter up and be done with it, because this is not for the benefit of the police force as a whole. It is not for the benefit of the aboriginals, and it certainly is not for the benefit of the Home Department. The criticism is altogether beyond reason. It finishes up in this way—

"Finally, it is well that we should make it clear that the police have nothing to hide. In fact, they are courting the fullest inquiry to be made into their work regarding the protecting of aboriginals. We hope Mr. Gall will prove that he is something more than the bully who will fight an elephant 5 miles away."

That may be very humorous writing, but if the police have nothing to hide and the Home Department has nothing to hide, it seems to me that the best thing is to have a proper inquiry into the situation and clean the matter up. I can hardly believe that any big body of police are behind this sort of criticism: when we know that a big majority of them are carrying out their duties in an efficient manner. They have been loyal to the Government in a most trying time, and they have done their duty to the best of their ability. Ninety-nine per cent. of those who have the care of aboriginals in their charge have done their duty; yet it seems that a section, in order to vent a certain amount of spleen on the Home Department, is prepared to make charges which cannot be substantiated, and which really have been the subject-matter of press correspondence and comment that I do not think is very helpful to the department or to the police.

If charges and counter-charges have to be sifted, the best way is not to have matters published in the press in the way they have been, but to have a proper commission of inquiry into the whole subject so as to find out what is the trouble and who are the people who think they are placed in an unfair position, and let the Home Department justify itself. From the statements which have been made and the inquiries which have been held by the Home Department, I am satisfied that the department was justified in the action it took. I do not know how much further this matter is to go, but the threat is held out in this journal that it is in no way finished. Criticisms and charges have been made which are not helpful to the police or to the Government, and I am anxious that the Government should be helped in every way possible. I recognise that the Government and also the police have a very responsible position, and it does not make for improving the relations we should expect to obtain between the department and the police officials when criticism goes on in the way it is doing to-day. I cannot understand the suggestion which was made that the Chief Protector of Aborigines should be got rid of because this department is not being carried on as it should be. I am perfectly satisfied that, while Mr. Bleakley is in charge, every effort will be made on his part to see that the aboriginals are protected. I am satisfied from reading his report that he has done excellent work, and I do not want to see that work injured by a fishwives' dispute

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which is apparently going on between the executive of the Police Union and the Home Department. That is a position which should be brought to an end, and the authority of the Home Department should be exercised. If that can only be done by having a Royal Commission to inquire into the matter, it should be done.

Mr. C. J. RYAN: Why have a Commission on what you term a fishwives' dispute?

Mr. MOORE: I would like to see the whole thing cleared up. I do not want to see either the Home Department or the police placed in a false position.

Mr. BRUCE: You said "Hear, hear!" this afternoon when an hon. member said Commissions were a farce.

Mr. MOORE: He was talking about one particular Commission. This is not an ordinary Commission, but a Royal Commission before which evidence could be taken on oath. It would be a good thing if the Government granted the request for a Royal Commission, so as to clear up the whole matter, relieve the police force from a stigma, and put the Home Department in a satisfactory position with regard to the matter.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, *Mount Morgan*): In bringing this matter up, the Leader of the Opposition recognises that a gross attack was made upon one of the best officers in this State in the person of the Chief Protector of Aborigines. For three years I personally have been subjected to the greatest possible abuse from the individual who holds the position of secretary of the Police Union. I have neither complained nor howled, because I recognised that I was doing nothing more than my duty, and I would rather have the criticism of that individual than his applause.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The HOME SECRETARY: I only broke my silence when he used a journal—and the police informed me that they have no connection with it at all—which is labelled the "Police Union Journal" to attack officers of my department. I felt compelled in the interests of those men to take off the gloves and do for them what I have never done for myself. During the past three years I have been associated with the secretary of the Police Union, and I have come to the conclusion that Ananias was a joke to him. He is the biggest liar that God ever put on earth. (Laughter.) I say that without heat. I say it after calm consideration and association with this gentleman for some years.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: We are hearing all about him now.

The HOME SECRETARY: During the time I have been in the Home Office no union secretary in Queensland has needed to come to my office on business unless it was a matter of such a nature that it could not be transacted over the telephone. I have always found that they have met me honourably and honoured any conversation that took place over the telephone, and I, in return, have honoured any promise I made to them. That was the attitude I adopted towards this individual, Mr. Talty. Like the Leader of the Opposition, I cast no reflection on the police, unless it is to express the opinion that they are so busy doing their duty to the State that they have not the time to

keep their secretary in proper order. In my opinion the police force are a body of men who are worthy of the high position they occupy. (Hear, hear!) My experience has been that they carry out their duties and endeavour as far as possible to observe the oath they take. But in any body of men there must be black sheep. You cannot expect to have a perfect police force, and occasions arise when men, by their actions, render themselves unfit to be in a properly constituted police force. The only crime that the Home Office has committed has been that, when it has found men who by their actions had, in the opinion of the office, rendered themselves unfit to be associated with the police force of this State it has not endeavoured to cloak their wrongs, but has demanded the fullest inquiry into their actions, and tried to purge the force of men who were unworthy of being in it. What is the result? Instead of the police force accepting their responsibility—and I can only assume that their secretary is their servant, and should not dictate to his masters—they have allowed him, through the journal which they claim is not their own, to vilify me, and later on the officers of my department for doing what they themselves should do—use every endeavour to make the force what we all desire it to be—a force above reproach. As I have said, my associations with this individual have been such that conversations which took place in my office were misrepresented in this journal to such an extent that at last I was compelled for my own protection to insist on having a witness in my office before I allowed him to enter to discuss matters with me.

I may be getting away from the vote. If I am, I apologise for it, and I will get back by saying that the chief cause of the vilification of the officers of my department arose from a matter in connection with the aborigines of this State.

No doubt many hon. members perused the papers that were laid on the table of this Chamber recently. The aborigines are under the control of the Aborigines Department, and they call to their aid certain police officers to watch their interests in the various parts of the State where the department cannot render the personal service necessary. The secretary of the Police Union, in the various articles that he wrote, made it appear that the police were a generous body of men, doing something for the aborigines. The police are only doing their duty. I, as Home Secretary, and the protector of the aborigines, definitely assert that whatever protection the police give the white population the greatest protection is due to the black man, who is less able to defend himself against exploitation. But when we find men deliberately using their positions as officers of the police force to exploit the aborigines—to rob them—and our attention is drawn to cases where the aboriginal has been robbed by his protectors, what are we to do? We are then in duty bound to see that the matter is fully investigated. No Royal Commission is necessary. I subscribe to the sentiments of the Leader of the Opposition that 99 per cent. of the police are sound; but certain individuals may take advantage of the opportunity that their position gives them; and, when the Home Office attempts to deal with individuals of that description, instead of being vilified by the secretary of the Police Union, it should be applauded by the police generally for endeavouring to lift the standard of the force

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to the position we all hope to see it attain. This individual would be of no significance were it not for the fact that he stands before the public of this State clothed with the authority of secretary of the Police Union, and were it not for the fact that that position gives a certain amount of standing to the assertions he makes. I have made the statement here that I regard this man as a liar. I say it deliberately and coldly. From my association with him, I say to the police of this State that I, as head of the Home Department, publicly proclaim that their secretary is a man whose word I would not take. When Mr. Talty on one occasion started the Talty cancer campaign fund and obtained £800 from the police, and the Commissioner of Police told me, I said that I would not believe one word that man would say. I am supported in that opinion by the opinion of his own officers long before I ever became Home Secretary. An officer whom many hon. members may know—Inspector Sweetman—wrote to the department after a departmental inquiry had been held, and used these words—

“Notwithstanding that this constable tries to make out that he is the emblem of purity and perfection, in my opinion he is the most dangerous class of man who has ever served under me. I have never heard a member of a police force swear such brazen lies as he did at the recent investigation of charges preferred against him and me. I cannot trust this constable in my office. After what has recently transpired it is absolutely necessary that he should be removed from this office at once, or that I should be transferred to another district.”

Mr. CARTER: To whom was he referring?

The HOME SECRETARY: To Talty.

Mr. KING: Whose report is that?

The HOME SECRETARY: Inspector Sweetman's, who then was stationed at Rockhampton.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: What is the date?

The HOME SECRETARY: 21st June, 1916. I am sorry to have to take up this attitude. I do it because a certain amount of publicity has been given, which has, unfortunately, reflected upon certain members of the police force. I was not responsible for that publicity. The inquiries which were held into the cases of exploitation of aborigines were not initiated in my office. They were initiated as a result of information that came to the office from disinterested people, from inspectors of police and officers of the Auditor-General. I would have failed in my duty had I done other than take up the stand that the fullest possible inquiry should be made into the charges levelled. Certain papers were asked for in this Chamber, and the secretary of the Police Union went to the extent of saying that he and his union had been subjected to a pin-pricking policy by the Home Department, and asserted that the man who had been found not guilty had confessed to a minor offence. The minor offence was that an officer of the police force—who I think should be out of the police force to-day, but through the generosity of the Commissioner is still holding rank in that force—was in the habit of purchasing for a song the effects of deceased intestate estates from the local clerk of petty sessions—effects that could not be sold—and then,

as protector of aborigines, selling them to the aborigines under his protection.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: What about the clerk of petty sessions?

The HOME SECRETARY: The local clerk of petty sessions only did his duty in disposing of them. In the case I refer to he sold a saddle for £10, and, when the case came under the notice of the Home Office, it was submitted to the police for investigation. Inspector Farrell, who is now in Brisbane, made an investigation. The officer told him that he had sold the aboriginal a new saddle—not an old one. There was no proof to help the inspector. Fortunately, a squatter, in whose employ the aboriginal was, came into the town the next day, the boy, with the saddle, being with him. The constable stated that the saddle was bought from a firm in Brisbane. The inspector recognised that the saddle had been made in Charleville, and the officer, whom Mr. Talty states I persecuted, freely confessed to a minor offence. What happened was this: When the inspector knew the whole facts of the case, the officer said, “I will tell you the truth about the saddle; the saddle I sold to Lawn Hills is the saddle I bought from the clerk of petty sessions. I realise now that I did wrong.”

Mr. HANLON: A modern George Washington!

The HOME SECRETARY: That officer is still in the police force. The punishment of the Commissioner was a reprimand. I had been assailed by the secretary of the union and by his journal for doing something which I will continue to do while I occupy the high position I do to-day.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The HOME SECRETARY: I merely say that I have held up to the present that this irresponsible individual does not represent the true opinion of the police force of this State. I say publicly to-night that I expect the police to show me in some public way that he is not a reflex of the general opinion of the police.

Mr. WEIR: Don't you think the retention of that man in the force is a reflection on the police force?

Item (Relief of Aborigines) agreed to.

CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS AND GRANTS.

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

“That £105,010 be granted for ‘Charitable Institutions and Grants.’”

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): I want to take the opportunity of dealing with the necessity for providing heating facilities at the Willowburn Home for Epileptics. My previous representations to the Home Secretary have been unsuccessful. I cannot quite understand the decision of the hon. gentleman, because anyone who knows the location of this home will understand that in winter time the cold from the swamp is a hardship which should be relieved in some way or other. When the home was built provision was made for a hot-water apparatus; but for some reason or other it has never been connected. The last reply I had from the department suggested that the installation of wireless equipment would be much more useful to the patients than the provision of

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heating facilities; but experienced persons who are acquainted with the condition of the one hundred odd patients who are at present accommodated there lead me to believe that, for epileptics particularly, heating facilities such as would be found in the ordinary household are an absolutely necessary. I urge the Minister to give the matter earnest consideration.

Item (Charitable Institutions and Grants) agreed to.

HEALTH.

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

“That £26,483 be granted for ‘Health.’”

[8 p.m.]

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): A very important question has arisen on this matter of health in regard to a disease which periodically breaks out and which is called “mouse fever.” It was first made a notifiable disease, but last year it was made an infectious disease. Being an infectious disease, it entails considerable responsibilities, as it means that local authorities in whose area “mouse fever” occurs have to pay for the cost of treatment. All expert opinion is that “mouse fever,” or “Brill’s disease,” is not an infectious disease. You cannot catch it from a human being, but you can catch it from mice.

Mr. HANLON: Catch the mice!

Mr. MOORE: Mice come in waves in certain seasons. There is no chance of dealing with them at such times, as they come in millions.

Mr. LLEWELYN: There is really nothing definitely known on the matter.

Mr. MOORE: There is not very much information about it. I have looked it up in a medical dictionary, and I had a good deal of trouble in finding the name, but Dr. Horn, in the employ of the Commonwealth in South Australia, in 1923 made investigations into it, and in the “Australian Medical Journal” of 15th August, 1927, he had a long article on endemic typhus. This disease is in the same species as typhus, but all the investigations made during the past four years show pretty definitely that it is not an infectious disease in the ordinary acceptance of the term. To show that what I am saying is correct, I wish to quote certain resolutions passed by the Federal Health Council of Australia held in Melbourne in January, 1927. No. 5 resolution reads—

“Notification of Brill’s Disease.—That typhus fever for purposes of the International Sanitary Convention 1926 shall be regarded as the classical form of typhus fever. Cases of Brill’s disease will not be notified under the International Convention, but information received from State Health Departments of cases notified under the Health Act of the State will be included under the weekly statement forwarded to the League of Nations and other International Intelligence Bureaux.”

You will see from that that it is only a question of notification: it is not a question of being infectious at all. When it was first found in Queensland it was a notifiable disease. In Resolution 21 passed by the Federal Council of Australia this disease

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was again the subject of a resolution, which reads—

“Typhus-like Diseases.—This council requests the Commonwealth Department of Health to investigate the form of typhus-like disease occurring in Australia.”

Before any investigation had taken place, and before the resolutions passed at this conference had time to become operative, the then Commissioner of Public Health in Queensland, apparently on his own initiative, had this disease gazetted an infectious disease. Gazetting it as an infectious disease entails very large liabilities on local authorities, and I may say that the shire council of which I am a member within the last two or three months has been charged very heavy bills on account of this disease. I was at a meeting last Tue-day when the question of this disease cropped up. It is not particularly dangerous, but, as Dr. Horn points out, it is more a place disease. It breaks out at particular periods chiefly in places where there are wheat stacks and mice. It seems that the dust from the mice and weevils is inhaled, and that causes this mouse fever.

Since this disease first broke out it has been more or less intermittent. Sometimes it breaks out in waves, and there is no possibility of a local authority being able to combat it. Local authorities should not be held responsible for a disease of this kind. It generally comes from a wave of mice. It does not seem to be definitely known how the mice convey it; but it is thought that it comes from the dust in produce stores. It has come from produce stores in Sydney. It may come from a farm or store where wheat is stocked. It entails great obligations, and there is no knowing to what extent local authorities may have to bear the obligation. Heavy outlays have to be made by local authorities in connection with diseases which are declared to be infectious. It is not that patients suffering from this disease are put into infectious wards in hospitals, because they are treated anywhere outside. There is apparently no obligation on the part of the medical officer to send any case of Brill’s disease into infectious diseases hospitals, for which the local authorities are responsible.

Mr. BOW: Are the local authorities charged for this?

Mr. MOORE: Yes. These patients have not gone into infectious diseases hospitals. It is not an infectious disease. I rang up the health officer of the shire, and asked him if there was any danger from it, and if it was necessary for fumigation to take place, and he said there was not the slightest necessity for that.

The HOME SECRETARY: Will it meet the case if it is made a notifiable disease?

Mr. MOORE: Most decidedly—I have no objection to that. It is a disease which lasts a fortnight.

Mr. LLEWELYN: They are not fit to go back to their work for a longer period.

Mr. MOORE: They are in the hospital for a fortnight. When an epidemic like this breaks out and a cost of 10s. 6d. a day is incurred for a patient, it is a very serious problem for local authorities. I objected to paying anything until I got further information on the question. The Health Officer told me that it was a notifiable disease. I

went this morning to the Home Office, and the Assistant Under Secretary turned up the "Gazette" notices, when we found that the Commissioner of Public Health had it gazetted as infectious. That places local authorities in a very invidious position, when you find the Federal Council of Health have not sufficient information themselves to declare it an infectious disease and ask for an investigation; when you find a long article of ten pages in the Australian "Medical Journal" by Dr. Horn, in which it is stated that it is not an infectious disease—that he has investigated a number of cases for years, and has looked up the "Health Journals" as far back as 1923 and finds nothing to show that it should be treated as an infectious disease and nothing to warrant the step taken by the Commissioner of Public Health.

Mr. LLEWELYN: Did he not assume that it was infectious?

Mr. MOORE: I do not know that it is right for the Commissioner of Public Health in Queensland to make that assumption without any justifiable grounds, when it is going to entail such large obligations on the local authorities. It is not merely a question of calling it an infectious disease and notifying it; but it is going to entail heavy obligations on local authorities. When the Commissioner deliberately, on his own initiative, and without any backing up by the Commonwealth health officials or any other official, suddenly declares it to be an infectious disease, it places an obligation on local authorities that might be illimitable. It is not a thing that breaks out in ones and twos—the hon. member for Toowoomba has had experience of it. Where there may be 500 or 600 cases in an area and it is declared an infectious disease, rendering it necessary to comply with the Act and to send patients into an infectious diseases hospital, a local authority would not be able to carry on under the expense entailed. They have not the accommodation or anything else.

Taking into consideration the resolutions of the Australian Health Council and the article by Dr. Horn, who has apparently made a sound investigation. I trust that until expert evidence has proved that it is infectious nothing will be done except to make it merely a notifiable disease. All the evidence up to the present goes to show that it is not transmissible except through wheat or dust, and that cannot be guarded against by local authorities.

Item (Health) agreed to.

HOSPITALS.

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

"That £193,620 be granted for 'Hospitals.'"

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I have gone to the trouble to obtain figures from the Home Department because I consider that the present system of distributing the "Golden Casket" funds amongst the hospitals of this State is most unsatisfactory and unfair, and not in accordance with the desires of the people who contribute to those funds. During the financial year 1927-28 no less than £62,850 was distributed from the "Golden Casket" funds amongst hospitals of the State. Of that sum sixteen hospital boards—or 100 per cent. of those in operation—received advances totalling £48,900, or practically the

whole of the amount distributed, since only £13,950 went to all the other hospitals in Queensland. That proves that the hospital boards received preferential treatment, which, in my opinion, cannot be justified by the department and those responsible for the distribution of the money. The funds are raised throughout the length and breadth of Queensland and by contributions by people from other States; and, when this money is being allocated, every hospital has a right to participate. It should not be distributed in the manner I have indicated.

The Hospitals Act gave birth to a pet scheme of the Government, and I am afraid that this fund is so distributed as to encourage hospitals to come under the operation of that legislation. Of the sum of £62,850 distributed throughout Queensland last year, £20,000 went to the Brisbane hospital alone, and that action cannot be justified.

Mr. HANLON: One-third of the population of Queensland will be found in Brisbane.

Mr. MORGAN: This money is not contributed solely by the people of Brisbane.

Mr. HANLON: They must contribute about one-third.

Mr. MORGAN: This is only in respect of one hospital board, and there are other hospitals that received a large amount. The Mater Misericordiae Hospital received £3,000 from the "Golden Casket" funds.

The HOME SECRETARY: That was a special grant.

Mr. MORGAN: It practically means that the Brisbane hospitals received one-half of the money distributed from the "Golden Casket" funds.

Mr. HANLON: I thought you said one-third.

Mr. MORGAN: The Brisbane hospital alone received one-third. There are other hospitals situated within the Brisbane area that received large grants from this source, whilst many country hospitals did not receive one penny. In 1928, out of the total distribution of "Golden Casket" funds, sixteen hospital boards received £48,900, and fifty-five hospitals received nothing whatever from the fund.

Mr. COLLINS: Why?

Mr. MORGAN: I do not know why. I want the Home Secretary to tell me why. I shall give the hon. member one reason advanced by the Home Secretary why certain hospitals are not entitled to any benefit from this fund. Apart from hospitals controlled by boards, 33 or 36 per cent. of the hospitals not controlled by boards received assistance from this fund.

Mr. HANLON: You know that baby clinics were built all over the country from this fund.

Mr. MORGAN: I am not dealing with money allocated for baby clinics. I am dealing with the £62,850 distributed last year from the "Golden Casket" funds. I am pointing out how the hospitals of Queensland have been treated in this connection. The Home Secretary states that certain hospitals are not entitled to any grant from the fund because they are situated in areas where the people are charitably disposed and raise sufficient money to finance the hospitals.

If a hospital gets into debt and cannot meet its obligations, the Home Secretary

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thinks that is sufficient justification for it to participate in the grant from the "Golden Casket" funds.

Take my own particular district, and the conditions of the hospitals there are applicable to many other districts. We have good seasons, when we can raise money without great difficulty by holding various gatherings wherewith to support our hospital. We might raise a fund by this means amounting to £1,000 or £2,000. In good seasons when the people in the country have the money I do not think you will find a more charitably disposed class of people anywhere. They contribute because they desire to see their hospital in a prosperous condition. We accumulate a fund in a good season, and in the very year that we raise more money than is required to provide for the maintenance and upkeep of the hospital the Home Secretary lays it down that that institution cannot participate in grants from the "Golden Casket." The people in the country realise that, if they do not, as it were, put away a nest egg in good times to carry them over a period of drought, when a drought does come along, they will be unable to carry on. It is in bad seasons that these hospitals find themselves in debt. Any credit balance that has been created in a good season is absorbed in a bad season. We create a credit balance because we do not wish to run to the Government for assistance. One of the reasons why the Government have decided that under those circumstances we cannot participate in the "Golden Casket" funds is because they desire the whole of the hospitals in Queensland to be placed under the Hospitals Act of 1923. That is their policy. This Act has been in force since 1923, but only sixteen boards have been created as a result. The financial position of those hospitals forced them to petition the Government to form hospital boards to enable them to take advantage of the provisions of the Act. If they were like many country hospitals, they would not be placed in that position. Owing to the fact that the hospitals in those localities have got into such a financial position that they cannot carry on, the Government said to them, "Form a board! Come under the Hospital Act of 1923, we will give you a big subsidy from the 'Golden Casket' funds, and help you in other directions." I desire to quote a number of these hospitals to show how they have been treated:—

Hospitals not assisted—Aramac, Augathella, Ayr, Baralaba, Beaudesert, Blackall, Birdsville, Blair Athol, Boonah, Boulia, Camooweal, Charleston (Forsyth), Chinchilla, Clermont, Croydon, Dirranbandi, Esk, Georgetown, Home Hill, Hughenden, Inglewood, Innisfail, Irvinebank, Isisford, Jundah, Kingaroy, Laidley, Longreach, Marceba, Mitchell, Monto, Mount Mulligan, Mungindi, Muttaborra, Nanango, Normanton, Quilpie, Springsure, Stanthorpe, St. George, Surat, Taroom, Texas, Thargomindah, and Wondai.

Hospitals assisted—Beerburum (£300) and Cunnamulla (£200), and thirty-two others.

Mr. HARTLEY: Where did you get those figures from?

Mr. MORGAN: Those figures were supplied to me by the Home Secretary's Depart-

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ment, and I am prepared to table them. Although the Mount Morgan hospital does not come under the Hospitals Act, it was granted £2,600 in 1926-27 and £1,500 in 1927-28 from the "Golden Casket" fund. This year there is a proposed grant of £1,500.

Mr. O'KEEFE: Mount Morgan has a fairly big population, and there is very little work going on.

Mr. MORGAN: It goes to show that the people of those districts have not been as charitably inclined as the people in the districts whose names I have quoted; and, as a result, the Government have assisted only those hospitals that have not been able to finance themselves. The Government do not encourage the districts that are charitable. No appreciation is shown of the efforts of country people who take a keen interest in the hospitals, and who deprive themselves of many things in order to finance these institutions.

The PREMIER: I was in one of those hospitals during the Mitchell by-election and I found it had a full staff but no patients. I think it was the Muttaborra hospital. It had had no patients for six weeks. What does a hospital like that want "Golden Casket" funds for?

Mr. MORGAN: In the year 1926-27 the Muttaborra hospital received £250 from the "Golden Casket" funds, although last year it received nothing. In any case, the position there is not the general position by any means, because the country hospitals are well patronised, and are appreciated by those who use them. In a good time £1,000 more than the amount required may be raised in connection with a hospital. That money, which will be available when times are not so good, is temporarily banked, just as would be done in an ordinary business.

The PREMIER: You are trying to make a hospital a financial institution.

Mr. MORGAN: Not at all. In certain districts—for example, in Brisbane, where the people have never contributed—a hospital has always been regarded as a charitable institution for which the rest of the State must pay. The Brisbane hospital, as I pointed out earlier, got £20,000 out of the £62,850 available. It is never looked after by the people in the same way as country people look after their hospitals.

Mr. MAXWELL: That is not true.

Mr. MORGAN: I take the responsibility of saying that the people in the country look after those who are sick; they do not want the Brisbane people to carry the burden. Yet the very moment we accumulate some money we are penalised, although country people contribute to the funds raised by the "Golden Casket."

The PREMIER: You have a big credit balance. What do you want money for?

Mr. MORGAN: If we are entitled to £300, we should receive it, irrespective of whether our financial position is sound or otherwise. The hon. gentleman talks about thrift, and advises people not to spend every penny they get. If that is a good policy for the individual, it is a good policy [8.30 p.m.] for hospitals, and should be encouraged. Instead of that, we are told that, if we raise more money than is necessary during one year to finance the

hospitals, we shall lose the "Golden Casket" money. That being so, we go amongst our people and say, "We must not raise more money than is necessary. We want to raise £300 less than the actual amount we require, because, if at the end of the year we show we are £300 in debt, the Government will give us £300 from the 'Golden Casket'!" Does that not encourage trickery and deceit?

The PREMIER: No hospital committee would deliberately waste money in order to get "Golden Casket" money.

Mr. MORGAN: No, but the hospital committee, instead of collecting the £1,000 necessary, would collect £700 from the people and get £300 from the "Golden Casket." That is what the Government are encouraging the people to do.

The PREMIER: They collect it on horse races.

Mr. MORGAN: It does not matter how they collect it. Horse racing is carried on in Brisbane, and the hon. gentleman goes to the races and enjoys himself, and he has no right to deprive the country people of the pleasure of horse racing. If they like to have a race meeting and donate the proceeds to the hospital, it is better than allowing the proceeds to go to John Wren, which is the case at present so far as Brisbane racing is concerned. £50,000 goes out of this State every year to Sydney and Melbourne, and the Government condone it.

The PREMIER: Do you say that the Brisbane people should not have race meetings?

Mr. MORGAN: I do not say that at all. The hon. gentleman cannot put words into my mouth. What I want the Government to recognise is that every hospital in this State is entitled to a portion of the "Golden Casket" money; and every hospital should get its legitimate proportion whether the local people raise sufficient money one year to finance the hospital or not. The Government have no right to use the "Golden Casket" money as it is being used at the present time. I understand that a board of three has been appointed to allocate this money. They make a recommendation to the Home Secretary for his approval, and the Home Secretary has laid it down, as he has stated in this Chamber again and again, that, if the people are charitable and look after their hospitals, they will get no money from the "Golden Casket." I am opposed to that, and I will fight it through thick and thin. The people in the country are just as entitled to their proportion of this money as the Brisbane hospital, which gets £20,000 a year.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, *Mount Morgan*): Before the debate proceeds too far I would like the Committee to understand that the "Golden Casket" branch was initiated and is maintained for the definite purpose of assisting hospitals that are in need of funds. As the Premier interjected, no sane Government would agree to any hospital hoarding up huge sums of money which is lent out at 7 or 8 per cent. while they get 3 per cent.

Mr. MORGAN: That is nonsense.

The HOME SECRETARY: It is not nonsense. The money is lent out by the banks. Hospital committees to-day are able to estimate their revenue and expenditure for the year, and we receive from every hospital

in the State an estimate of expenditure and income. Take the case of Mount Morgan, to which a grant of £1,500 is being made. For years the people of Mount Morgan generously maintained their hospital and built up a magnificent institution. To-day the town has gone down, but the needs of the hospital have not diminished, as there is a big development in the country adjacent to Mount Morgan. Settlers who have no capital to speak of go there, and they make claims on the Mount Morgan hospital that have to be met.

The "Golden Casket" comes in handy to keep that institution open—not so much for the town as for the Dawson Valley and the new settlement which has taken place on the railway lines in the Northern Burnett.

The hon. member points to the fact that a grant of £20,000 is made to the Brisbane General Hospital. Brisbane contains practically one-third of the population of this State, and it serves a great purpose. There is hardly an hon. member in this Chamber who does not at some time or another come to me and ask for a pass to bring from a country district some man who cannot get the treatment in his district, as he requires special attention. He comes to Brisbane to enter the General Hospital.

Mr. MORGAN interjected.

The HOME SECRETARY: I can assure the hon. member that there are very few hospitals in Queensland where a person can undergo an operation for removal of cataract. The number of people who have been coming to the Brisbane General Hospital for that operation was so great that, as Home Secretary, I had to arrange with the Hospitals Board to allow me to erect a dark room there, so as to allow of patients from Dunwich being attended to at once instead of waiting about for months.

The grant to the Brisbane General Hospital is based largely on the fact that its operations are State-wide. I do not want to see the hospital in Brisbane take up the stand of demanding payment from the local authorities in the country for every patient who comes to Brisbane for treatment.

We give the hospital at Goondiwindi a grant of £1,000 a year. The reason for that grant is because the hospital had a claim with regard to residents of New South Wales coming to the hospital, whose Government will not subscribe towards that hospital.

Mr. MORGAN: They have contributed every year. Donations have come from New South Wales to the Goondiwindi Hospital every year.

The HOME SECRETARY: That was not the information placed before me when I was at Goondiwindi.

Mr. MORGAN: You give the Miles Hospital nothing.

The HOME SECRETARY: The grant is based on the financial position of a hospital—this year the grant probably was not made for that hospital. When hospitals are financially embarrassed, we draw from the "Golden Casket" funds to help them. After a drought breaks and the depression disappears, the generosity of the people manifests itself; and, if evidence submitted to me shows that there is no difficulty in financing the hospital in that area, we give it

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no grant. I endeavour to allocate the grant independent of what locality it may be, purely on the estimate given to us at the Home Office. Hon. members know that very often in the original grant a hospital is omitted. Its estimate of income for some reason or other has not been fulfilled through some depression. On application to the Home Office a grant is made to them for the last part of the year. The fact that it did not get a grant for the first part of the year is no evidence that, if the financial position indicates a change, it cannot claim and obtain a grant from the "Golden Casket." I have endeavoured to be as fair as I can on the evidence, not collected by my officers but submitted to the office by the hospitals themselves. As I said before, if unforeseen circumstances arise and a grant is necessary, hon. members will admit that I have never refused to meet a case of that kind.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): Mr. Pollock—

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

Mr. KELSO (*Nundah*): Diamantina Hospital is a most important one, but no large provision is made for any extension of its operations. There is a long waiting list, and the officials of the Home Department and the matron are only too anxious to do their best to take all the cases they can, but there is insufficient accommodation. The consequence is that would-be patients have to stay at the General Hospital, where the authorities are only too anxious that some provision should be made for them outside that hospital, so that the latter may better discharge the functions for which it was instituted. Everybody deplors the necessity for the Diamantina Hospital; but people who enter it have really no chance of getting better, and it is a question of patiently treating them while they remain alive, as they may do for many years. They are certainly not cases for the General Hospital. I have been in touch with the department for some time to see if some accommodation could not be provided for certain persons; but the officials regret that it is absolutely impossible to squeeze any more in. I would like the Minister to tell the Committee what the intentions of the Government are, for something must be done quickly, or there will be a larger and larger accumulation of cases at the General Hospital, with the consequent inconvenience to the ordinary patients there.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): I want to put in a plea for the Beerburrum hospital. I admit that hospitals have been treated generously, but Beerburrum is in a different position from any other hospital in the State. It is in the centre of poor country which is paying no rates, and practically all the farms have gone back to nature and are now growing timber. The people there have a very difficult proposition ahead of them, and I would ask the Minister to increase the contribution of £300 and help them a little more than he has done. If the Beerburrum hospital were in a richer district, I would not have the effrontery to ask for more. There is the Nambour hospital coming into existence, and another at Maleny, and they should, and I believe they will, be able to look after themselves. So far the Maleny hospital has done wonderfully well.

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The Beerburrum hospital has been responsible for saving a great number of lives; and, if only one life is saved annually, the expenditure on the institution is justified. At the present time the department pays a great deal more attention to the matter of giving advice regarding the location of a new hospital than was the case in the past. The Beerburrum hospital has very little hope of raising sufficient money in that centre, and a big burden is imposed upon the people. I hope the Minister will give the matter favourable consideration.

Mr. FOLEY (*Leichhardt*): While the present policy of the Government has certain features to commend it, there are certain districts on which it operates somewhat harshly by compelling a hardworking hospital committee in a small community to bleed the community dry in an effort to balance the accounts. I have in mind the Blair Athol hospital. Permission was granted to erect a hospital at Blair Athol, 11 miles from Clermont, where a hospital existed. The plea for the hospital was based on the fact of poor travelling facilities between Clermont and Blair Athol militating against the speedy conveyance of an injured miner to the hospital, and on the fact that the mine was doing a very brisk trade and the men working full time. Not only did the miners levy themselves 2d. in the £1 for contributions to the Clermont hospital, but they levied an additional 2d. in the £1 for a building fund to enable them to erect their own hospital. The hospital was erected and was operating successfully when the men were working full time and earning good money; but bad times overtook the place, trade fell off, and the miners were working only one day a week for long periods. The hospital committee was faced with a diminished income, and was compelled continually to bleed the community by little entertainments to raise sufficient money to balance the accounts. The Emerald hospital is in a comparatively rich district, backed by a pastoral area; but, when unable to meet its commitments, it received £200 or £300 from the "Golden Casket" fund. The Blair Athol hospital, serving a small community, is practically forced to work the hospital committee to death to raise the wherewithal to continue, but it is left without a "bob." Although the policy of the Government has many good points to commend it, it has a very discouraging effect on the hospital committees in small communities in carrying out their work.

The same remarks apply to Sapphire town, where the first-aid hospital receives a grant of only £50 per annum.

There is a first-aid hospital in that community, and, when the market for sapphires is good, they have no difficulty in raising the wherewithal to carry on; but, as hon. members know, they have been starved for the last two years. There is an indication in the relief handed out in that district of a good deal of poverty existing there in the last two years owing to the unfavourable market for sapphires. Yet we find the same paltry sum that was given in good times still being contributed to that hospital. The committee is consequently forced continually to bleed the community to raise funds to carry on. It would be well for the Home Secretary to take notice of some of the points raised and try to give better treatment to those small, impoverished districts which are suffering from hard times. I am not complaining about the general policy of the scheme. It is

not a good policy to allow hospital committees to establish large credit balances when the money should be used to carry on the institution; but there are special cases which should receive more generous treatment than they do at present.

At 8.52 p.m.,

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

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*): Speaking broadly and on State lines generally, there is only one way to lift the distribution of these moneys right away out of the realm of favouritism. That way is to distribute the money on the basis of patients treated in the various hospitals.

Mr. MORGAN: Hear, hear!

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I have no reason to complain. The Government have treated my district well. It was a pleasure only a few days ago to have a maternity ward opened at Warwick. We received that as a result of the generous treatment of Warwick by the Government. In addition to that, we are to have a baby clinic. Speaking generally and from an individual elector's point of view, I have nothing to complain of. We are not under the operation of the Hospitals Act, as the Government desire; but, notwithstanding that, we have received consideration at the hands of the Government which I am pleased to recognise. The thought given expression to will surely commend itself to the Government, who want to do a fair thing from beginning to end. As explained by the hon. member for Murilla, the moneys which come from the "Golden Casket" come from all over the State and from outside the State; and it would be a very fine thing to allow the people from one end of the State to the other to participate to some extent in the disbursement of the moneys so received. By so doing there would be no need for a debate of this kind. The disbursements to institutions in the country districts would be infinitesimal compared with the grants to Brisbane, Toowoomba, Townsville, and the Rockhampton hospitals, and at the same time it would create just the feeling we want to see observed throughout the State.

Mr. HANLON (*Ithaca*): The suggestion made by the hon. members for Murilla and Warwick that the allocation of about one-third of the "Golden Casket" funds to Brisbane was unfair is rather surprising.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I did not say it was unfair.

Mr. HANLON: The hon. member for Murilla waxed very indignant indeed at the idea of about one-third of the allotment being granted to Brisbane. If there is any fairness so far as population is concerned, Brisbane has one-third of the population of the State, and certainly, in proportion to the population, more "Golden Casket" money is raised here.

Mr. MORGAN: What about a district where there are 5,000 people and it gets nothing at all?

Mr. HANLON: We must not look on this question from the point of view of how much we can get from somebody else. The hon. member paints his constituents as a lot of "hums," whose only grievance is that there are a few "bobs" going somewhere else. (Government laughter.)

Mr. MORGAN: Rubbish! They meet their liabilities, which some of your people do not do.

Mr. HANLON: If the people of the city adopted the same view as some of the alleged representatives of the farmers, they would object to expenditure in many directions. Every time the hon. member for Murilla has spoken in this Chamber since I have been a member, he has had a whine about some grievance that the country people suffer from.

Mr. MORGAN: They are entitled to—

Mr. HANLON: They are entitled to whine—exactly. (Government laughter.) If they are entitled to whine, they will certainly get their due so long as they have the hon. member in this Chamber! If such hon. members would consider for one moment what would happen if city people took the same view of their dues as the country people do, the country people would be in a sorry way.

Mr. COSTELLO: Would they?

Mr. HANLON: I do not intend to wander away from the vote under discussion. If the city people were to suggest that expenditure for the education of children in the country should be in proportion to the population of the State, then there would not be half the schools there are in the country to-day.

Mr. MORGAN: Nonsense! You don't know what you are talking about. The children in the city can go to high schools.

Mr. HANLON: All that is only by the way, and is merely to illustrate the difference in the point of view of the hon. member and that of any decent-minded Australian.

The PREMIER: Four-fifths of the main road tax is collected in the city and the money is spent almost solely in the country.

Mr. MORGAN: That is not so.

Mr. HANLON: The hon. member is suffering from a contradictory complex or some such thing. (Government laughter.)

Mr. MORGAN: The Government provide tourist roads for the city people. The Premier knows that. (Interruption.)

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! If the hon. member will address the chair, I will see that he is protected.

Mr. HANLON: I am endeavouring to do that, Mr. Weir, but I do not think you can hear me with all the argument that is going on. If city people adopted the same view, perhaps hon. members opposite would have something to growl about.

Mr. MORGAN: We could starve you out in six months.

Mr. HANLON: We have no objection to the amount of money that is spent in the country districts. We do not object to a heavy vote for education in country districts, nor do we object to a heavy hospitals vote for country districts, if necessary; and we certainly have no complaints in the city as to the amount of money allocated for maternity homes in country districts.

Mr. KING: You know that the money is raised throughout the State. It is raised all over Australia.

Mr. HANLON: But surely to goodness the hon. member does not expect that we should subsidise hospitals in Sydney, Melbourne, the Pacific Islands, or South

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Africa? (Laughter.) If we took the same view as the hon. member for Murilla, we would object to more than two-thirds of the money being spent on baby clinics outside Brisbane. Personally I would be ashamed to hold such views. The need is the only justification for the expenditure of the money. We are glad to see that

[9 p.m.] in districts that are not so well provided with accommodation for women during confinement as the Brisbane people are preference is given, and the Government are spending money in those districts.

Mr. MORGAN: You are talking a lot of nonsense.

Mr. HANLON: It is rather amusing to hear the hon. member for Murilla mention the word "nonsense," considering the speeches that he delivers in this Chamber. Apparently he is referring to his sole stock-in-trade.

I would like to draw the attention of the Home Secretary to the continual complaints that are being made in regard to the administration and efficiency of the Brisbane General Hospital. Week by week people are complaining that upon patients being brought to that institution they have to wait an unnecessary time for attention. With the amount of money spent on that hospital, it should be possible to have a staff able to attend to any sick or injured person immediately upon being brought to the hospital. Some time back I took a man to the hospital. He had received an injury to his face in an argument, and I picked him up and drove him to the ambulance, and was advised to take him to the hospital. We were sitting at the hospital an hour and a-half before a doctor could attend to him. It was not a very serious injury, as he had only split his lip, which necessitated a couple of stitches; but, if that man's life had been in danger, apparently he would still have had to wait an hour and a-half. Another serious case happened last Exhibition twelvemonths. In this case a man was injured in a tramway accident and badly fractured his leg. In fact, he lost his leg, and he was lying at the hospital for hours before he received attention. That sort of thing reflects no credit on the present system of medical attention which obtains in the Brisbane Hospital; and the sooner it is altered the sooner the people of Brisbane will be satisfied that the people are getting some service to justify the subsidy that is given.

When looking over the hospital I was also struck with the amount of medicine which is supplied to the patients and with the possibility of extending the dispensing of medicine at the Brisbane General Hospital. The trade in patent medicines in Queensland is an enormous one. Anyone who has had anything to do with the patent medicine trade knows that for no article sold is less value received for the money paid than is the case with regard to patent medicines. I suppose on the average at least 33½ per cent. of the value of patent medicines sold is spent on advertising. It would be a simple thing for the hospital authorities to dispense such simple remedies as cough mixtures, liniments, ointments, constipation medicines, and so on. (Opposition laughter.) It would do an enormous amount of good if a couple of hon. members on the Opposition benches would take a dose of mental opening medicine. If the hospital authorities undertook

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the dispensing of these simple remedies, it would not in anyway interfere with the legitimate practice of the medical profession, because there is an enormous trade in patent medicines amongst people who never go to a doctor. If they catch a cold, they buy a bottle of cough mixture. If they have a headache they take some opening medicine, and, if they hurt themselves, they buy a pot of ointment; but they will not go to a doctor. It would be a very simple thing to get a prescription from the British Medical Association and dispense these simple remedies. I want to put the matter on an ordinary commercial basis. The average patent medicine which is sold at 1s. 6d. could be profitably sold by the Brisbane General Hospital authorities through the grocers and chemists of the community at 1s. per bottle. There is a possibility of cheapening the cost of patent medicines and ensuring that those who buy them will get the genuine article.

Mr. KING: You are opening up a new avenue. (Laughter.)

Mr. HANLON: If hon. members opposite had an opportunity of opening up that avenue, they would be able to give more intelligent attention to their business. The advantage of adopting this suggestion would be that some of the profit which is going into the hands of companies which are of very little use to the community would go to the hospital.

One hon. member mentioned the necessity for extending the Diamantina Hospital, and it is time the Government increased the accommodation there. People from every part of Queensland are seeking admission for the treatment of chronic diseases.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: It is in the wrong place.

Mr. HANLON: The difficulty cannot be got over by telling people they should go to Dunwich, as they cannot get satisfactory attention there. People do not like their relatives to go to a place where they cannot get skilled medical attention. The cost of extending the accommodation at the Diamantina Hospital would be well justified.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I desire to say a few words about the hospital business, which is a very burning question. I think the hon. member for Murilla is quite right in regard to what he said about the allocation of the funds of the "Golden Casket." There is no logic in the statement that, if there happens to be a drought in some part of the country, the hospital there should receive assistance from the "Golden Casket" funds, but that it should otherwise receive no assistance.

The PREMIER: Is it not rather ironical for hon. members who are against the "Golden Casket" to argue about where it should be distributed?

Mr. MOORE: I do not think it is ironical at all. The Government collect the income tax, and we object to a great deal of that. They are collecting "Golden Casket" money and spending it in a way which is not fair. Sixteen hospital boards get contributions every year whether they need it or not, while other places have to show that they are in necessitous circumstances before they can get it; and some of them do need it. They have to economise in the carrying on of their hospitals. Because the Premier went

to a hospital at Muttaborra which had no patients—

The PREMIER: I have been to nearly all the hospitals in Queensland.

Mr. MOORE: There are many hospitals in Queensland which cannot make the improvements they want because they are unable to secure a fair proportion of the "Golden Casket" money. It is only right that the allocation should be on a more uniform basis than it is to-day. It does not seem to be a question of whether a hospital is in dire necessity or not.

The matter I want to speak of particularly, and in connection with which I intend to move a reduction of the vote by £1 as a protest, is the Hospital Tax. All over Queensland wherever this matter is brought up there are the same objections—not from those whom hon. members opposite call Tories, but from hon. members opposite themselves, who just as strongly object to the basis of the hospital tax as hon. members on this side.

The Government themselves are recognising that this taxation for hospitals is unfair, because the Home Secretary has sent to each local authority a communication asking how many persons pay over £5, and what is the value of their property. The objective, of course, is to raise class prejudice again, and to cloud the issue as to whether the taxation should be on land or on income by raising the cry, "This man is paying over £5 and has a property worth £20,000. Why should he not pay?" I say that is an absolutely wrong basis. The basis we want to introduce is one on which everyone will contribute according to his wages or income. I moved an amendment in the Hospitals Bill, and I see no reason to recede from the position I then took up. To show further that the Government recognise that they have made a mistake and that there should be some relief, we find the Deputy Premier reported to this effect when he was up in the Burnett district—

"Mr. Forgan Smith also referred to the Hospitals Act. This, of course, was a measure against which 'Tory whisperers' were able to carry on a lot of propaganda, but he would like to point out that hospitals were not brought under the scope of the Act until it was shown that the voluntary subscriptions did not permit of the hospital carrying on. The difference between the expenditure and normal income was made up by the Government and the local authorities, which was on a 60:40 proportion. The Government proposed to amend the Act to allow contributions to be set off against the local authority precepts. The contributions received from each area would be credited to the local authority of that area. Under this scheme, the local authority, or the people in the local authority, could provide the local share, or part of the local share, of the cost of the hospital by voluntary methods."

Of course they could do that—they always could do it. The Bill has not been brought in yet. I do not know whether the Deputy Premier is going to introduce it. He certainly seems to be in a position to tell the people what amendment is going to be made. But that amendment would not be any good. It would give practically no relief.

Under the system of taxation on local authority valuations voluntary contributions have fallen off except in what you might call a few industrial centres—such as Toowoomba, where there is an industrial section who contribute voluntarily so much out of their wages.

Mr. ROBERTS: And get a definite benefit.

Mr. MOORE: Yes; but they are counted as voluntary contributors, and their payments go against the precept that would otherwise have to be levied on Toowoomba. That does not apply to other centres; and, in any case, Toowoomba is not a case where taxation on land would be so unfair and unjust. It consists mostly of allotments. When you come to outside areas with farms of 160, 200, or 500 acres, where they have to contribute not on what they own but on the land they hold, irrespective of mortgages, the basis is unfair.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What is your policy with regard to hospitals?

Mr. MOORE: My policy with regard to hospitals is taxation on income right through.

The HOME SECRETARY: A poll tax.

Mr. MOORE: Call it a poll tax, if you like. It would be so much in the £1, just as the voluntary contributions are made on wages to-day. Some of the workers of Toowoomba pay 1d. in the £1 per week on their wages, and I believe the same thing is done in Mackay. Why should that not be recognised as the basic principle throughout the State, instead of placing taxation on land? That is the point I make. I say the position is unfair.

The HOME SECRETARY: Why not apply it to a water service?

Mr. MOORE: It is not the same.

The PREMIER: When you get down to pure ethics it is the same.

Mr. MOORE: No. The water is laid on and the individual householder pays the rates. That is a very different thing. Very often people who contribute to a hospital do not use it.

The HOME SECRETARY: What about the tax for main roads?

Mr. MOORE: The Government are gradually admitting that it was wrong to place the whole burden on the land. We now have main roads, developmental roads, and tourist roads—gradually getting away from the first principle because the Government recognised that it was not a fair thing. I am not going to discuss the position of police and school teachers. I want to talk about the hospital tax.

The HOME SECRETARY: It is a service.

Mr. MOORE: To certain individuals. Why should one section of the community be taxed while other sections go free? Why should a man in receipt of a regular income pay nothing because he lives in a boarding-house or hotel, or the minimum if he owns an allotment of land, whereas a man earning his living on the land must contribute ten times the amount?

Mr. W. COOPER: Ten times the amount?

Mr. MOORE: Yes, ten times—twenty times—and fifty times.

Mr. HYNES: You are exaggerating.

Mr. Moore.]

Mr. MOORE: The man on the land is confronted with climatic conditions; his expenditure goes on all the time; but he is not sure whether he will receive an income. He has to pay the hospital tax just the same.

The HOME SECRETARY: Is it a very high tax?

Mr. MOORE: It is not so very high. In some places it is about 2½d. in the £1. In my area it is about one-eighth of a penny, and it has been a halfpenny.

The PREMIER: Is it not unfair to take the bulk of the taxation from the general taxpayer, who finds the bulk of the money to run the hospitals?

Mr. MOORE: We all contribute to the 60 per cent. The landholder contributes that, and then he contributes again in a class by himself. You do not single out people who do not own land and tax them.

The PREMIER: Is it not fair according to your argument?

Mr. MOORE: No. The whole of the people of Queensland contribute to the 60 per cent., and then you demand another 40 per cent. and ask the one section to contribute again.

The HOME SECRETARY: I have been trying for years to understand what you want. What is it?

Mr. MOORE: My intentions were embodied in an amendment that I moved when the Hospitals Bill was before the House. I am asking for a tax on wages and income. You can call it a poll tax if you like.

The HOME SECRETARY: Would it be a flat rate?

Mr. MOORE: No—so much in the £1.

The PREMIER: Would that not be considered in fixing an award in the same way as insurance and other things?

Mr. MOORE: No.

The PREMIER: It would.

Mr. MOORE: I do not think it would be considered in fixing an award any more than it would be necessary to consider the land tax that is imposed. Why should one section be singled out?

The PREMIER: If there is a tax on wages, then it must be a factor to be considered in fixing the basic wage.

Mr. MOORE: It would be a small tax. Are the voluntary contributions—in the case of the sugar workers it is 2d. in the £1—taken into consideration now?

Mr. HYNES: They also pay the other tax on their holdings.

Mr. MOORE: If they have any holdings.

The HOME SECRETARY: What about the farmer who pays no income tax and earns no wages?

Mr. MOORE: He has to pay the land tax.

The PREMIER: He has not.

Mr. MOORE: He is assessed by the local authority. He would have earnings the same as a worker has earnings and pays no income tax.

The HOME SECRETARY: How could you collect it?

Mr. MOORE: How did they suggest collecting it in Western Australia? By means of a stamp. You would use the stamps similarly to the manner in which they are used in connection with the unemployment

insurance fund. That scheme was dropped in Western Australia.

The HOME SECRETARY: It was dropped because they had to agree to give private hospitals 6s. a day per patient.

Mr. MOORE: I knew it was dropped, but I did not know the reason why. There was opposition to it. One section of Parliament wanted a tax on land, the same as this Government, and the other section recognised that the recommendation of the Royal Commission was more equitable.

Mr. HYNES: You have no concrete scheme to submit in place of the present method, and in a sweeping way simply say, "Make it a tax on wages, or a poll tax!"

Mr. MOORE: What is the difference between that and the present tax on land?

The HOME SECRETARY: Would you grant any exemptions under your scheme?

Mr. MOORE: People in receipt of old-age pensions and people of that class would be exempted.

The PREMIER: The logical conclusion of your scheme is nationalisation of hospitals by the State.

Mr. MOORE: You can call it nationalisation if you like. You have control of all hospitals now.

The PREMIER: It would be easier to impose a tax on incomes and for the State to control the hospitals than to adopt the other course.

Mr. MOORE: I am not going into the question of whether that is an easier method of working. The Government chose the method of taxation of land for the upkeep of hospitals because such a tax was easy to collect.

The PREMIER: Wouldn't your scheme lead to free hospitals?

Mr. MOORE: The scheme adopted by the Government does not lead to free treatment. The man whose land is taxed for the support of hospitals does not now get free treatment. The hon. member for Port Curtis throughout his electorate denounces with vehemence the iniquity of a tax on land for the upkeep of hospitals.

Mr. CARTER: I don't advocate a poll tax.

Mr. MOORE: You do not advocate anything; you content yourself with denouncing the present system.

The HOME SECRETARY: You have never submitted any concrete scheme to take the place of the present system; neither have the local authorities.

Mr. MOORE: I have tried to do my best to do so. It is worth a trial; and, if the hon. gentleman objects to its being called a poll tax, he can call it by any other name he likes. I do not see any objection to it. I am against the present system of taxation, as it is a most inequitable one.

The HOME SECRETARY: I hope you will amend it.

Mr. MOORE: Yes, at the first opportunity next year. (Laughter.)

The PREMIER: You will also abolish the "Golden Casket." I don't believe you would. (Laughter.)

Mr. MOORE: It is no use the hon. gentleman fishing as to what will be done.

[Mr. Moore.]

The PREMIER: There will be no taxes if you get into power. It will be a wonderful country.

Mr. MOORE: It is nothing but taxes now. Unfortunately, that is the position we have got into. The Home Secretary must recognise the injustice of a man being compelled to contribute taxation to an institution he cannot go to. The hon. gentleman had to insert three words only in the Hospitals Bill when it was before Parliament. Instead of compelling the whole area of a shire to contribute to the upkeep of a certain hospital, he could have so worded the provision that "a part thereof" would have to contribute. That would make it possible for a landowner 66 or 70 miles from the hospital in the main area to contribute to the hospital he was likely to use. To overcome such a difficulty local authorities impose a differential tax on those people who cannot get to the hospitals.

The HOME SECRETARY: They pay their hospital tax out of general rate.

Mr. MOORE: No local authority would be justified in paying the hospital precepts out of general revenue.

The HOME SECRETARY: The Brisbane City Council do so.

Mr. MOORE: Before the creation of the Brisbane and South Coast Hospitals Board the Brisbane hospital was to be shunned as an example. Even now it receives a subsidy from the "Golden Casket" to the extent of £20,000 a year! I am not taking that as a basis by any means, but I do protest against the existing unfair position under which many people are forced to contribute to a hospital that they cannot possibly use, merely because they happen to be in the local authority area in which the hospital is situated. The position could be remedied by the deletion of three words from the Hospitals Act.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Three words count for a good deal sometimes.

Mr. MOORE: Three words count for a good deal in an Act like this, particularly when those words—"or part thereof"—create the present unsatisfactory position. People object to contributing to a hospital 70 miles away when there is a hospital available for them only 10 or 12 miles distant. If the Government will not remedy the inequitable tax, they should at least remedy the position by making the whole area taxable. I know that the Home Secretary will probably quote averages when replying, and say that for, say, Jondaryan or Clifton the rate is only 2s. 6d. Averages, however, do not count, because in one case there may be township blocks in respect of which practically nothing is paid, and in another case agricultural land from which people derive their income. There is nothing to justify the incidence of this tax. As a protest against the inequitable conditions imposed by the Hospitals Act, both in regard to areas and taxation, I beg to move the following amendment:—

"That the item 'Hospitals—£193,620'—be reduced by £1."

The PREMIER (Hon. W. McCormack, *Chairman*): The Leader of the Opposition has dealt with the question of hospitalisation and the methods adopted to deal with the problem that has arisen. If I may be permitted to

say so, he makes suggestions which have been very badly thought out and with no regard as to the method of their application. No doubt the hon. gentleman is actuated by a desire, as he says, to make the incidence of taxation fair to everybody.

Let us trace the history of the districting of hospitals not only in this country but in others. When Labour assumed office in this State in 1915—and I can speak now with some experience of the difficulties of hospital finance after having four years association in the Home Department—we found that the position in Brisbane was such that some Government would have to face the problem of hospital finance. The old system—"the good old system," as it is sometimes called—that suited hon. members opposite was to allow these things to drift on, just as the duty of meeting the menace of prickly-pear and other things was simply evaded. Hospitalisation throughout this State, with its comparatively small population, has been a burning question for years, and the problem has been to provide sufficient hospitals for the needs of the people. The position in Brisbane was such that there was no provision made for the care of the sick. The voluntary system had completely broken down.

[9.30 p.m.]

Mr. MORGAN: Only in Brisbane.

The PREMIER: I am dealing with Brisbane for the moment. The voluntary system had completely broken down—not under a Labour Government, but under the previous Government.

Mr. KING: It is worse now.

The PREMIER: Let us admit that it had broken down then. I do not know how a collapse can be any worse. It can only be a collapse. If a man is dead, he is dead; and he cannot be any deader. That was the position as it existed under the Denham Government. Nothing was done to meet the situation in the great capital city of the State; and for a number of years we attempted to carry on in the Brisbane area, finally having to take the hospitals over and make the whole State carry the hospitalisation for the city of Brisbane. That, according to the hon. member for Murilla, was unfair. It was a wrong system, and I agree with him that it was unfair to impose upon the whole of the State the cost of the upkeep of the Brisbane hospitals without Brisbane finding any of the money at all.

Mr. MORGAN: I objected to it year after year.

The PREMIER: I know the hon. member did. He objected to it when he was over here. The hon. member is consistent in his inconsistency. He was a consistent objector on that point. Some other hon. members of the Country Party also objected. Something had to be done to deal with the situation in Brisbane. The result of that something was the Hospitals Act and the "districting" of hospitals. But what did we find? The electorate of the Leader of the Opposition did not wait for us to finalise the scheme in regard to Brisbane. It was the first hospital in this State deliberately to ask to come under the Act.

Mr. MOORE: My electorate had nothing to do with it. It was the district.

The PREMIER: The hon. gentleman's hospital was bankrupt, and it was the first

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of its own volition to come to the Labour Government and ask to be allowed to come under the district scheme.

Mr. KING: How many have not come under it?

The PREMIER: I was proceeding to say that no hospital has been brought under it except at its own request. The Leader of the Opposition says "his electorate."

Mr. MOORE: You said my "electorate."

The PREMIER: His electorate is part of that district.

Mr. MOORE: We were forced into it.

The PREMIER: That is the only hospital the hon. gentleman had, and the people of the district would not support it. All this magnificent generosity that we have heard so much about from the hon. member for Murilla did not exist in that district, and the hospital was bankrupt. That is the solemn truth.

Mr. MOORE: It was a base hospital.

The PREMIER: It was the first hospital that of its own volition demanded to be "districted." That proves that the scheme was embraced by that district.

Mr. MOORE: They wanted the money, and they had to do something.

The PREMIER: The hon. member's Government did nothing to solve the problem. We adopted a certain system of financing the hospitals. It is an extraordinary thing that I do not think any State in the Commonwealth or any country in the world has a better system of hospitals than the State of Queensland. It is one thing that we can be proud of, and I have heard prominent people admit it—amongst them a former Governor-General of the Commonwealth—Lord Novar—and his good lady, who travelled over the whole of Queensland and took a great interest in our hospitals. The Governor-General admitted, both in this country and in the old country, that Queensland had one of the most efficient and most effective hospital systems that existed in the British Dominions.

Mr. MORGAN: A lot of them under the voluntary system.

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. MORGAN: Ninety-one are still under the voluntary system.

The PREMIER: It does not matter if they are. Many of these hospitals have been renovated and built up by funds which the hon. gentleman would never have allowed to go to the hospitals if he had been in power.

Mr. MOORE: What do you mean by that?

The PREMIER: "Golden Casket" money.

Mr. MOORE: They help to find it.

The PREMIER: But the organisation accomplishing it is there. There is a definite scheme in Brisbane to-day. There is some vision being shown in regard to the future requirements of this great State.

Mr. MOORE: I am not objecting to the vision shown in Brisbane at all.

At 9.35 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

The PREMIER: It is not possible to have a scheme of organisation without someone

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in the last analysis having to be responsible for the interest and redemption involved.

Mr. MOORE: The basis of the tax is what I am objecting to.

The PREMIER: The general taxpayer contributes 60 per cent. The hon. member proposes to adopt our system, but to alter the incidence of taxation. It seems that is the only difference.

Mr. MOORE: It is a big difference.

The PREMIER: If the hon. member thinks it is as easy to accomplish as it is to make a speech about it, he will get a great surprise when he investigates the position. If we are going to have that, in a general way I would much prefer the nationalisation of all the hospitals and the building of hospitals only in centres so that they could be properly organised.

Mr. MORGAN: Why don't you do it?

The PREMIER: Because it would take away from small centres the opportunity which the people nobly take advantage of to-day of maintaining a small hospital in their centre. They carry the responsibility of that—and all honour to them—and that is why the hon. member says the people are generous. They are very generous—they have hospitals in places where, under any system of efficient organisation, no hospital would be situated. I know places where hospitals are only ten or twelve miles apart. That position does not exist in any other country in the world but Queensland. But while these people are willing to carry the burden involved under the voluntary system, the hon. member would step in and prevent them from doing what they voluntarily and willingly do. No Government would be justified in adopting that course. The system has grown up, and people are more heavily taxed in those districts than in places where the principal hospitals are situated. The hon. member does not mention the fact that in districts like Aramac, Muttaborra, Longreach, and in his own district, taking the pro rata basis of the cost of operating and the money given voluntarily, the taxation on those people is greater than it is under the Hospitals Act.

Mr. MORGAN: People are not complaining.

The PREMIER: People are not complaining; but the hon. member's party say that the people who pay £1 a year in taxation are complaining.

Mr. MOORE: The man who pays 2s. 6d. a year is complaining.

The PREMIER: Out of 7,800 taxpayers only seventy-four pay over £5.

Mr. MOORE: I do not think you should raise that class-prejudice cry—it does not count.

The PREMIER: 7,719, or 98 per cent., of those 7,800 pay less than £1. Under this compulsory system I make bold to say that in connection with the hospitals mentioned by the hon. member for Murilla almost everyone in those districts pays considerably more than £1 a year in an indirect way for the upkeep of the hospital; and the hon. member makes it an issue that this taxation is burdensome on the people who pay. In some of the Western districts it may cost some individuals £4 or £5 a year.

Mr. MORGAN: Yes. They have a day's pleasure there, so that it serves a double purpose.

The PREMIER: In centres that are "dis-tricted," where there is industry that is organised on a basis such that contributions can be received from industrial workers, that policy is carried out.

Mr. MOORE: They get a definite return for it. They get free treatment.

The PREMIER: They pay much more for that definite return than the hon. member's taxpayers. I paid for years into a hospital while working in mining districts. I paid much more than the hon. member's farmers are paying—1s. and 1s. 6d. a week.

Mr. KING: Was it compulsory?

The PREMIER: No—voluntary. It was as high as 1s. a week for hospitals, 3d. a week for sick fund, and 3d. for the ambulance.

Mr. COSTELLO: You reaped the benefit.

The PREMIER: I did; but, fortunately, while working for a number of years and paying those sums I never had occasion to make use of a hospital. And the hon. member says that I am unfairly treated because I paid £40 or £50 to the hospital and never had any treatment.

Mr. MOORE: I never said you were unfairly treated.

The PREMIER: Of course, I was not, and nobody can say that the hon. member's farming community are unfairly treated.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Of course they are.

The PREMIER: The raising of money by the taxation of wages only alters the incidence of the tax to some extent.

Mr. MOORE: That is all.

The PREMIER: If the employer in industry finds that his workmen are taxed directly—not voluntarily, which is a different thing—that industry will have to find that tax, because the basic wage is fully used in the upkeep of a man's family. You cannot put an additional tax on him without making provision for it in his wages.

Mr. EDWARDS: Does that not apply to the farmer, who does not get the basic wage?

The PREMIER: Wait until I get to the point. The employer will find that he pays the hospital tax on wages just as he pays it now on the land on which his industry is carried on.

Mr. MOORE: Only 25,000 persons directly pay the tax.

The PREMIER: Only 25,000 pay? The hon. gentleman knows that to carry out his policy is almost an impossibility. I am not one of those who say that a man who gets good wages should not carry his fair burden of taxation—hospital or otherwise.

Mr. KING: That is all we are asking for.

The PREMIER: I think that under the present system he does carry it. The whole community meets most of these charges. It is a well-known fact that the fairest system of taxation is taxation on land. The hon. member might argue that in individual cases this £1 is a hardship; but he does not argue that. He uses it for political purposes by saying that, when he gets into power, he will place this tax on the shoulders of somebody else.

Mr. MOORE: No.

The PREMIER: In taxation in respect of such things as hospitals, sewerage, and water supply, land is taken as the basis, because we

believe that from the land in each area all wealth finally flows.

Mr. EDWARDS: It is a pity you did not follow that out.

The PREMIER: The hon. member does not understand what I am talking about. Nobody, not even the Leader of the Opposition—who knows something of land taxation from a local authority standpoint—would suggest that the wages men in his district should be taxed for the use of the roads in it.

Mr. MOORE: I did not suggest it.

The PREMIER: They use the roads. Why does he tax this selfsame farmer for bridge work, for water supply, for hospitals, for infectious diseases?

Mr. MOORE: He is getting a benefit. If he goes to the hospital he has to pay; the other man has not.

The PREMIER: Why not make wages the basis for local authority taxation?

Mr. MOORE: It would not be a bad idea.

The PREMIER: The hon. gentleman is not serious. He knows that many people who use the roads contribute nothing towards the upkeep of the roads. Land taxation is the only fair and equitable basis.

Mr. MOORE: Everyone receives a benefit from a road that is constructed.

The PREMIER: Why is the basis so unfair in regard to the hospital service?

Mr. MOORE: It is a different basis.

The PREMIER: It is not. I cannot see eye to eye with the hon. gentleman. I realise that it is quite popular for him to tell his supporters who are landowners that he will pass on the incidence of this taxation to someone else.

Mr. MOORE: Share it equally.

The PREMIER: You will not solve problems by facing them that way. The hon. gentleman and his party are prone to say that they are going to remove all taxation. I wonder sometimes whether they are serious.

Mr. MOORE: We did not say that we would remove income taxation.

The PREMIER: How they are going to carry on the services of the State and pay the interest bill without taxation is one of the things the Leader of the Opposition must explain.

Mr. MOORE: Nobody said such a thing.

The PREMIER: The hon. gentleman almost said so. The people in country districts are not forced into this position. They can come in or remain out.

Mr. EDWARDS: You force them in.

The PREMIER: The hon. gentleman does not know what he is talking about. Financial stringency forces them in. The system is purely voluntary. The question of hospitals presents a tremendous problem in a country like Queensland with a small population widely scattered, with 147 hospitals against 40 in Victoria; 147 doctors; 147 matrons; 147 cooks; and all the paraphernalia necessary for hospitals. If we are going to spread the incidence of this taxation over the whole of the people as the hon. gentleman suggests, I would certainly prefer a complete scheme of nationalisation. It would mean fewer hospitals, and it would mean—perhaps it would be a good thing—the nationalisation of health as well as of

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hospitals. If in a country district where a hospital has only ten patients in six months and the people are willing—and they are—to pay the cost of the upkeep of the hospital, then we should not stand in their way by having only one central hospital in the district. The Leader of the Opposition knows that in certain parts of Queensland there are four or five hospitals within a limited area with good rail communication, good road communication, and a good hospital service, when one hospital would serve the whole district. I believe that is true of his own electorate. It is true of my electorate. There are three hospitals in the Cairns district within a few miles of each other—three big costly institutions—served with a good motor road, good bridges over every creek and river, a railway line, and a rail motor service every two hours. Yet there are three hospital systems maintained within a radius of 30 miles.

Mr. MOORE: They were not built under present conditions.

The PREMIER: That is the difficulty.

There are two hospitals in the Ayr district 4 miles apart. Is that a good thing considering all the overhead expenses? The reason for those two hospitals is that a river runs between two towns and there are no means of transport between the two centres except by railway, and that only recently. I can go on over the whole of Queensland and show the hon. member that nationalisation under any definite scheme would mean government by a commission or board which would inevitably cut out many of the hospitals which are now grouped closely together.

Mr. FRY: It would make for more efficient management.

The PREMIER: That is so. The purchase of drugs and dressings, etc., could be done more cheaply and efficiently than to-day. The reason why this Government or any Government would hesitate to do it would be for the reasons I have stated—that they would not like to close hospitals which the people to-day willingly and voluntarily carry on. If the Leader of the Opposition attempted to put his scheme of taxation into operation, he would find that it could be more effectively done by the organisation we have in our Income Tax Department, and, if we adopted that organisation, we should go the next step and nationalise and place its control under the organisation that collects the money. The hon. gentleman does not agree with that proposal. He has never stood for the nationalisation of hospitals or health services. We have stood for that policy, but have hesitated to put it into operation for the reasons I have outlined. The only alternative scheme is to district the hospitals.

Mr. FRY: That is only a forerunner to nationalisation.

The PREMIER: There is no great hardship on the taxpayers at the present time. I honestly believe, and I say this seriously, that the hon. gentleman's Country Party are only concerned with this question as an election cry.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): The Premier talked for twenty-five minutes, and largely evaded the question raised by the Leader of the Opposition. He never once told us why one section of the people should be taxed twice. That is the question at issue. Institutions such as hospitals benefit every member of the community, and it is only right

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and just that every member of the community should contribute towards their maintenance according to his means. It is most unfair that one section of the community should be singled out and made to contribute twice towards their maintenance. That is what happens under the present system. Every taxpayer contributes his share of taxation to the general taxation of the country, and then you take the man who owns land and tax him again through that land. The Premier never once referred to that. It is not a question of board or anything of the kind. What about the professional man—the lawyer, the doctor—and the rich commercial man who do not own land?

The HOME SECRETARY: Where do they live? On the rivers?

Mr. SWAYNE: Very often in boarding-houses or hotels. They escape being taxed twice. All they do is to contribute to the consolidated revenue through the income tax. Every person should contribute towards the maintenance of hospitals in equal ratio according to his means. Although the hon. gentleman spoke for nearly twenty-five minutes, he never once attempted to prove that it was right that one section should contribute more than another. It is all very well to talk by and large on this subject. Even the imposition of £1 per annum is a hardship to people in outlying country districts who have many other charges to meet.

At 9.55 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN: Under the provisions of Sessional Orders agreed to by the House on 26th July and 27th September 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.