

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**THURSDAY, 5 SEPTEMBER 1929**

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The SPEAKER (Hon. C. Taylor, *Windsor*)  
took the chair at 2.30 p.m.

QUESTIONS.

SAPPHIRES SOLD FROM LONDON STOCKS.

Mr. FOLEY (*Leichhardt*) asked the Secretary for Mines—

“1. What amount of sapphires have been disposed of from stocks held in London since 1st June, 1923?”

“2. What is the Government's policy regarding the disposal of the balance of stocks on hand?”

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. E. A. Atherton, *Chillagoe*) replied—

“1. £5,399 1s. has been received from sales made since 1st June, 1923, and more recently further offers to purchase total-ling £1,129 15s. 6d. have been accepted.

“2. Stocks are being sold at best prices procurable, having due regard to the prices advanced for the stones by the Government.”

COREENA PASTORAL RESUMPTION BALLOT.

Mr. BULCOCK (*Barcco*) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

“1. How many applications were received from persons desirous of entering the Coreena pastoral resumption ballot?”

“2. How many applications were accepted?”

“3. How many applications were rejected?”

“4. If any applications were rejected, what were the grounds for such rejection?”

“5. What qualifications, financial and otherwise, were applicants required to possess?”

“6. How many applicants were admitted to the ballot on the grounds of experience?”

"7. How many applicants were admitted who were devoid of experience?"

"8. What is the estimated value of the improvements on the resumed portions of Coreena pastoral holding?"

"9. Do any stocking conditions attach to the incoming selectors?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. A. Deacon, *Cunningham*) replied—

"1 to 9. The Coreena lands were opened at the Barcaldine Land Office on Monday, the 2nd instant, and the papers relating to applications have not yet been received at head office. I would ask the hon. member to repeat the question in a week's time, when the information asked for will be supplied."

#### INQUIRY INTO BOWEN RAILWAY DISMISSALS.

Mr. DUNLOP (*Rockhampton*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. In reply to my question in regard to an inquiry into the Bowen railway dismissals, which was answered on 28th August, will he be pleased to reconsider this matter in view of the fact that, because this question had been considered on two occasions by the late Government, is not his attitude very inconsistent, seeing that the late Government also passed several Bills and placed same on the statute-book and his Government have since reconsidered and altered same without even coming before this House?"

"2. If he did consider the Government's attitude inconsistent, will he now grant an impartial inquiry into this matter, seeing a grave doubt exists as to who is right and who is wrong?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. Godfrey Morgan, *Murilla*) replied—

"1. and 2. I have nothing to add to my reply of the 28th ultimo."

#### PRICE OF BUNKERING AND EXPORT COAL, MAY, 1927.

Mr. HANLON (*Ithaca*) asked the Secretary for Mines—

"What was the price of bunkering and export coal in May, 1927?"

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. E. A. Atherton, *Chillagoe*) replied—

"There was no difference in price for bunker and export coal from Bowen mine during May, 1927. The prices for coal were—Run-of-mine at pithead, 16s. per ton; screened at pithead, 20s. per ton."

#### TRANSFERS AND DISMISSALS, RAILWAY DEPARTMENT.

Mr. RIORDAN (*Burke*): I desire to ask the Secretary for Railways if he has an answer to the following questions which I addressed to him on 4th September:—

"1. How many tradesmen were transferred from Ipswich workshops to Rockhampton and other centres between 1st June and 31st August, 1929?"

"2. How many men were dismissed from the Railway Department between Charters Towers and Cloncurry during the period 1st June to 31st August, 1929?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. Godfrey Morgan, *Murilla*) replied—

"1. Five.

"2. Fifty temporary hands, owing to the completion of the work on which they were engaged."

#### PURCHASES FROM STATE COALMINES.

Mr. HANSON (*Buranda*): I desire to ask the Secretary for Railways whether he has an answer to the following questions which I addressed to him yesterday:—

"1. What was the amount of coal purchased from the respective State coalmines during last financial year and the average price paid in each case?"

"2. What was the total amount of coal purchased during the year?"

"3. What was the average price paid for coal purchased from collieries other than the State mines?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. Godfrey Morgan, *Murilla*) replied—

"1. —

---	Tons.	Average Price per Ton.
		s. d.
Styx Coalmine ..	43,389	24 0
Collinsville Mine ..	63,901	16 0½
Mount Mulligan ..	15,626	32 0

"2. 454,157 tons.

"3. The average price paid was 19s 2d. per ton, or 4s. 10½d. per ton less than the average price quoted by the State coalmines."

#### WOOD TAIN IN BUTTER.

Mr. JAMIESON (*Lockyer*), without notice, asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

"In view of reports received by traders in butter in this State, that the quality of some of the butter packed in boxes made from Queensland pine is considerably damaged by what is known as 'wood taint,' will he arrange at an early date for a conference of representatives of the Forestry Department, butter manufacturers, and officers of his own department, with a view to discussing ways and means of overcoming the problem of 'wood taint,' and at the same time conserving the interests of both the dairy and timber industries of this State?"

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. H. F. Walker, *Cooroora*) replied—

"The matter referred to by the hon. member has already been delegated to a committee representative of the various interests concerned. This committee is now functioning and certain experiments with boxes from different kinds of timber are under way. Arrangements have been made for officers of the Forestry and my own departments to investigate the problem, and determine, if possible, the causes of 'wood taint' and the means whereby its incidence may be eliminated from boxes made of Queensland timber. In the event of any of the interests concerned desiring that a conference be convened, I shall be pleased to do so, and to consider any suggestions the conference may offer."

QUESTIONS ADDRESSED TO MR.  
SPEAKER.

Mr. POLLOCK (*Gregory*), without notice, asked the Speaker a question relative to the putting of the closure motion the previous evening.

Mr. KEER: Schoolmaster tactics!

The SPEAKER said: I desire to inform the hon. member for Gregory that neither written nor oral questions can be put to the Speaker.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear! and laugher.

AGRICULTURAL BANK ACT AMEND-  
MENT BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

(*Mr. Roberts, East Toowoomba, in the chair.*)

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. H. F. Walker, *Cooroora*): I beg to move—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Agricultural Bank Act of 1923 in certain particulars.”

This is a very small Bill, which the Government have considered desirable to introduce as a result of experience during the last few months. One of the objects of this Bill is to provide for the granting of relief to necessitous clients of the Agricultural Bank in the payment of their instalments of interest and redemption. Usually borrowers are in a position to fulfil their obligations, but occasions arise when it is desirable to be in a position to extend as much leniency as possible. At the present time relief can only be afforded by the making of a fresh advance involving the execution of further securities, and always a certain amount of expense. This Bill will obviate this unsatisfactory position.

When the original Agricultural Bank Act was passed in 1921, the intention was that the Crown, as usual, should have priority over all other creditors; but, following on the passing of the Agricultural Bank Act of 1923, it was found that a purchaser buying a foreclosed property from the Agricultural Bank became liable for all arrears of rates thereon. This Bill will give the Crown's debt its usual priority over all other charges, assessments, etc., that may have been levied by various authorities. It provides, also, that local authority rates and other dues shall not be recoverable from the bank or the person who buys the foreclosed property from the bank. However, where sufficient moneys are realised on the sale of the assets the bank may liquidate such rates, etc., out of the surplus. That is the principal clause of the Bill, and the only one which you can say is of any great importance in it. This amendment arises from a decision given in a recent law case.

There is another small clause giving the manager of the Agricultural Bank or any officer of that bank the right to become an auctioneer to sell properties disposed of by the bank.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: Those are properties where the bank is in possession?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is so—properties of which the bank is in possession and which are about to be sold. This clause will place the manager or an

officer of the bank on the same footing and possessing the same power as is held by an officer of the Public Curator. That is the sum total of the Bill, which is quite a small one.

Mr. RIORDAN: Are you going to increase the maximum amount which a settler can borrow?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No.

Mr. RIORDAN: The amount is a very limited one. A selector taking up land is only entitled to an advance from the bank of £1,200, which is not of very much use to him.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: At the present time a borrower can borrow as high as £1,700.

Mr. RIORDAN: That is not much good if he has to fulfil the stocking conditions imposed on him.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The limit of the advance is 16s. in the £1; but in some cases applicants are advanced the full amount required. This Bill will not affect the advances made by the bank. I realise the hardship imposed on new settlers so far as finance is concerned on account of the tightness of the money market; but their lot has been eased somewhat by the smoothness of the working of the administration, although the advances specified in the Act at the present time cannot be altered because of the present position of the money market. I think the main objection with regard to the Agricultural Bank is due to the fact that the whole of its administration is from Brisbane, and its clients extend as far as the Atherton Tableland and even further north. Consequently, certain delays have taken place. I hope that, as time goes on and more capital is obtained, the bank will have more money at its disposal. That will enable applications for loans to be expedited, and obviate the delay arising in connection with making advances to clients.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*): I wish to thank the Minister for the comprehensive survey of the Bill which he gave. I congratulate him on the first Bill that he has introduced and for taking the Committee into his confidence. I realise that the important clause in the Bill is intended to make good the position that has arisen as a result of a certain decision of the Full Court.

For many years past the bank, in the administration of its affairs, has acted in a certain direction on the authority of advice given by the Crown Law Office. Counsel's opinion was also taken on the matter, and doubt was expressed as to the provisions of the Act as it existed. Prior to the election it was my intention, if necessary, to bring the matter before Parliament so that the whole position should be cleared up. There is no doubt that, as the result of the decision of the Full Court, the position of the bank would be precarious if any weakness in the provisions of the Act were allowed to militate against the advances made by the bank; so that, in remedying the defect in the Act, the Minister is doing a wise and proper thing.

The other provision with regard to the manager and inspectors being given certain power is largely machinery. Such power is necessary, particularly in cases where it is essential for the bank to enter into possession

*Mr. Smith.]*

and take charge of stock and implements that had been accepted as collateral security, because in many cases these movable assets have a habit of disappearing. The bank should secure the full benefit of any assets which enter into its possession under these circumstances.

I understand from the Minister that these are the principal provisions of the Bill; but I would also like to ask the hon. gentleman whether he has considered the advisability of reviewing the whole Act in the light of present-day development in agriculture and the need for the further development of agriculture in certain directions. Having regard to the importance of agricultural development to the State, we realise that new settlers should be attracted to the land. It is realised also that finance is a very important matter with these people.

One of the difficulties which I encountered during my term as Secretary for Agriculture—of course, the administration of the Agricultural Bank is in the hands of the manager, and no wise Minister interferes unduly with him in the exercise of his duties—was the great delay which takes place in dealing with applications for advances. The second difficulty—and this is more important—is that, when an advance is approved, it is made on the basis of a loan for certain definite improvements that have been approved of by the inspector or other officer of the bank, the advance being made by instalments to the selector. It may happen that the selector is situated in a remote part of the State, and considerable time may elapse before his advance is finalised, due to the large area which is under the control of the bank officer concerned, and to the additional fact that the officer has to refer the matter to Brisbane. The Minister might consider the question of increasing the number of inspectors and giving officers situated in strategic positions throughout the State authority to make advances on improvements effected. Of course, the whole matter would still be controlled by head office, but, to facilitate business, authority such as I have suggested might be given to certain officers, just as it is given to branch managers of ordinary banks. The matter is one of vital importance to the bank and vital to the proper administration of the Act. If the Minister will look up the file in the department, he will find that that matter has been considered very fully, and that certain recommendations have been made thereon by the Public Service Commissioner.

I think the time is opportune to review the whole ambit of the Act in the light of the present financial position of the State, and also in the light of the needs of the State and the desirableness of building up the agricultural resources of the State; and in order to give Parliament the opportunity of considering all phases of this Act, and of helping the Minister to devise a measure which will meet many of the problems with which he is bound to come in contact in the administration of this Act, I therefore move the following amendment:—

“Omit at the end of the motion the words—

‘in certain particulars.’”

The Minister realises the truth of what I have been saying.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is a matter of party politics.

[Mr. Smith.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: It is not a matter of party politics. It is, without doubt, desirable that decentralisation should be arranged for in the administration of this Act. It is, without doubt, desirable that the responsible officers of the bank should be authorised to make advances to farmers as they carry on the work of their farms. When an advance of £1,000 is authorised to a farmer, the position often occurs that that advance is made on certain approved improvements. The farmer commences carrying out that work, and sometimes is forced to lay off a number of men on account of not having the money to pay wages for the effective carrying out of the improvements. Development demands that these improvements be effected as early as possible; and it adds considerably to the cost of any work if any delay takes place during the progress of the work. That is one direction in which the Act could be very properly amended. There are many other directions in which I am prepared to assist the Minister in amending the Act.

The TREASURER: You were very slow in doing it when you were over here.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: The Treasurer amuses me. He suggests that we were very slow in doing certain things. I have often heard the hon. gentleman accuse me of doing things rather too quickly for his convenience. He cannot have it both ways. I point out, with all due deference to the hon. gentleman, that he cannot refer to what his predecessors have done. After all is said and done, the real thing that counts is: What do they propose to do? He reminds me a good deal of a schoolboy who, when accused of an offence, says, “So-and-so did something of a similar character, or something of a worse character,” and excuses himself in that manner. There is no doubt of the importance of the matter I am discussing, and I am sure the Minister appreciates what I have said. If he agrees to widen the scope of the Bill, there is no doubt that many improvements can be effected which will tend towards the proper development of the State and give better facilities for the settlers and selectors who come within the scope of the measure.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): In rising to support the amendment, as representing one of the largest farming electorates in Queensland and having had something to do with the Agricultural Bank Act, I am strongly in favour of a review of the whole system.

If we are going to have agricultural development and the settlement on the land that is desired to solve the unemployed problem, the bank will have to take greater risks in future than it has done in the past, and will have to expedite its work accordingly. Take the new settler who goes on the land. There is any amount of room for expansion in my electorate, and I am not afraid of the man on the land; and for that reason I am advocating the views which have been so ably outlined by the Leader of the Opposition. The delay that now takes place after an application is lodged, when the inspector visits and reports, and before the application is granted or rejected, is far too great, and, if some decentralisation scheme can be brought about, it will be better for all concerned. We must remember that I am 700 miles from the centre of my electorate, although we have a good mail

service between the North and the South. I am not so much concerned in raising the amount of the advance as I am in expediting matters and assisting men who may want to borrow anything from £200 to £500 to enable them to become successful settlers. The Minister would be well advised to withdraw this Bill. There is plenty of time to make laws between now and this time next year. I do not care if Parliament sits all the year round so long as it does its work well. That is nothing new for me to preach. I preached it when I was sitting on the opposite side of the House to my own party. I believe in doing work well. Work well done is lasting work. I think we have been in too big a hurry in connection with our legislation. I hope the Minister will withdraw the Bill and show some originality. Let him give us a new Bill—one right up to date, to meet the evolution which is taking place in connection with agriculture. If the Government do that, they can claim that they are a progressive Government, and not, as I told them the other day, a reactionary Government.

Mr. RIORDAN (*Burke*): My reason for asking the Minister if he intended to increase the maximum amount granted by the Agricultural Bank was in view of the closer settlement that is taking place in Western Queensland. I think it is prudent to allow the selector or the smaller man on the land to go to the bank for his finance. It should be the policy of the State to see that the people who have got land have the means of stocking it and putting it to some reproductive use.

The Agricultural Bank does operate to a certain extent in the pastoral industry in regard to improvements. A block of land may be thrown open, and the improvements estimated by the Lands Department at, say, £2,000. A man may make application for the maximum amount granted under the Act. The ballot may have taken place and the improvements have to be paid for. An inspector is sent out by the bank, and in some cases in Western Queensland, if a man has to report from the Cloncurry district, it would be anything from ten to twelve weeks before the selector would know whether he could get finance to enable him to pay for the improvements. If we are going to have our land put into use and not held on the off-chance of someone wanting agistment, we shall have to do something in regard to financing the people on the land.

If the scope of this Bill were widened, the Agricultural Bank could be made to serve a good purpose. It has served a good purpose in the past. The administration may have been a little careful, and may have been a little slow, but, if the State is going in for banking, it must realise that it must take the same risks as other banks. When the Agricultural Bank makes advances on improvements only, then immediately the borrower becomes involved to the extent of £1,600, he must go to somebody outside the bank in order to put his land under sheep or crop, and thus make it productive for the State. The State should give every selector assistance to purchase sheep or to get his land ready for cultivation, yet on a 15,000 or 20,000-acre block, where the improvements may be worth as much as £5,000, under the Act the bank is limited to an advance of £1,600.

Mr. EDWARDS: Are you sure that it is £1,600.

Mr. RIORDAN: It is between £1,600 and £1,700, but it is very hard to get the full amount permissible under the Act. Whether the limit is £1,600 or £1,700 does not affect the argument. To raise that point is only quibbling. My point is that, in the stocking of a pastoral selection such as those which are now being opened in Western Queensland, the Agricultural Bank should take the same risks as the private banks. Private institutions will find money to enable a man to purchase up to 5,000 sheep, costing anything up to £8,000 or £9,000. Private institutions can keep a check on the borrower through those sheep, and, if the wool were sold through the Department of Agriculture, the Agricultural Bank would have ample security. The men in charge of the Agricultural Bank, Mr. A. H. Smith and Mr. Deshon, are both very capable officers, and, if they employed pastoral inspectors who know the industry—such as are employed by private banks—there would be no danger. The Minister would be wise to remove the limit provided. I hope he will look at the question from the point of view, not only of financing agricultural settlement, but also of the development of one of our best industries by helping men who are going upon the smaller areas of land now being opened in the West. By so doing he will improve the Agricultural Bank, and render a service, not only to the agriculturists but also to the pastoral industry.

Mr. BULCOCK (*Baree*): It is gratifying to know that the Secretary for Agriculture has brought down a Bill to amend the Agricultural Bank Act; but it is not so gratifying to know that the amendments involve very little. They are really only machinery to consolidate the principal Act. What we want is an entire review of the operations of the Agricultural Bank. In other words, it should involve a review of the whole ambit of agricultural practice, more especially agricultural economics, in our State. If the Minister accepts the amendment, I believe that we can evolve a Bill that will give far greater satisfaction than the operation of the existing Act, both to the agricultural and to the pastoral community. When hon. members now supporting the Government were sitting on this side of the Chamber, they found quite a lot to say about the imperfections of the Act that we are at present seeking to amend. No doubt those criticisms had some foundation in fact, and it is inconceivable to me that those hon. gentlemen who found so much fault with the Act in past years are going to admit now that the Act, which is the legislation of this party, is letter-perfect in function and administration.

There is one very cogent reason why we should take into consideration the desirability of extending the Act. After all is said and done, the bank as established under the Act is more or less in the nature of a pawnshop. The time has come in our agricultural practice to go a good deal further than we have gone up to the present time. The establishment of a rural bank discharging the functions that are generally discharged by rural banks is an inherent necessity so far as the farming communities of Queensland are concerned. The average farmer is compelled to deal with the local storekeeper; the average sheepman is compelled to market his product through the same marketing

*Mr. Bulcock.]*

firm that finances him. I know of many instances both in the agricultural and pastoral world where, by virtue of the fact that a man has had a loan from an agricultural institution, he has been unable to take advantage of something that was being offered by that institution. One of the primary necessities in our farming constituencies is to remove the farmer from the clutches of individuals who are more interested in exploiting the farmer than they are in helping the farmer. Our own bank should help the farmer; our own bank should be maintained and so conducted as to give to the farmer the maximum amount of assistance possible. To show that there is some necessity to overhaul the whole of the machinery of this bank, I should like to point out that from 1902 to 1915 the total amount advanced in the form of loans to settlers was £1,166,543, and from 1915 to 23th February, 1929, the aggregate amount actually paid in respect of loans was £6,329,436. In dealing with such a colossal sum of money, it is very obvious that it is a big undertaking so far as the State is concerned. Hon. members who are returned to this Chamber from agricultural and pastoral constituencies realise the difficulties of agriculturists. I think both sides of the Chamber believe that the agriculturist, being the backbone of the State, should receive the fullest possible financial assistance from the State. We are on the verge of agricultural developments. We say, "Go on the land, young man!" and all we can offer under the present Act to the individual who desires to go on the land is a nebulous £1,700, which he may or may not get.

Hon. members opposite in past times have complained—in bitter terms at times—about the difficulties associated with the obtaining of the maximum advance. If that is so, and I have reason to believe it is, then it is obvious that there are some difficulties in the Act which should be removed. The difficulties which we desire to survey will be surveyed by us when the Minister accepts this amendment. There are many new hon. members in the House fresh from agricultural constituencies—men who bring with them the fresh and ripe experience that they have gained by coming directly from agricultural constituencies. They had no say in the framing of the Act we are amending. It is reasonable to suppose that amongst these twenty gentlemen are some who have very definite ideas in relation to amendments that should be incorporated in the Act. Further than that, the expansion of agriculture is making it imperative that we should give more consideration to the financial side of agriculture. It is a significant thing that we can find aggregations of capital for every other enterprise but the oldest enterprise that mankind has probably known—agriculture. There is no difficulty in floating capital for industrial purposes or in other directions; but I know of no instance where groups of capital have been formed to farm specific areas. Farming has not attracted capital. Since that is so, it is the duty of the State to provide that capital which other institutions have not provided, or are reluctant to provide. Under those circumstances, I cannot believe that the Minister will not accept the amendment. After all, it is for the good of the whole State. It will enable us to survey the whole of our activities in the agricultural and pastoral arenas, and probably adopt a more

[*Mr. Bulcock.*

satisfactory system of financing settlers than we have at the present time. In relation to that there are other questions, more particularly associated with pastoral matters, such matters as those on which the hon. member for Burke touched. We all know we are on the threshold of new pastoral development in Queensland. We are hoping that the cattle industry is going to come into its own again. We believe it is. We also believe that the sheep industry at the present time requires as much assistance as can be rendered to it. It is futile to expect that an incoming settler should be able to finance his undertaking on £1,700. He cannot do it, and because he cannot do it, and because he recognises generally that it cannot be done, he does not go to the ballot-box. The net consequence of that is that, by financial limitations, you are debarring many individuals who would make desirable settlers, and who have an intimate knowledge of all matters associated with sheep-raising. The time is ripe for some consideration to be given to the establishment of a rural bank. If the Minister accepts the amendment, it will allow us to discuss all these questions. I make bold to say that the general tendency of the debate and the general conclusions we shall arrive at will be very advantageous to the farming and primary producing constituencies of the State.

Mr. POLLOCK (*Gregory*): I am supporting the amendment largely because I believe it is a very good thing to widen the scope of this Bill so that, when we come to the Committee stage, we may see the desirability of introducing certain amendments which we have in mind.

THE SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: What amendments have you in mind?

Mr. POLLOCK: One particular amendment I have in mind is based on the question raised by the Leader of the Opposition—that is, giving an opportunity to the man on the land to secure advances without going through all the red tape that the Agricultural Bank now puts him to.

Mr. KERR: Why didn't you alter it?

Mr. COSTELLO: You had fourteen years to do it.

Mr. POLLOCK: We are dealing with the legislation of this Government. The Government propose to amend legislation along certain lines. We ask to be given the opportunity of assisting them on this matter by making provision enabling settlers desirous of securing advances to secure such advances as quickly as possible. After all, if I am talking to men who are alleged to be business men, there is a sound business principle involved. Every bank in Australia gives authority to its branches to make advances on the spot in certain cases, and very frequently those advances are made, not only on the security that the applicant for the advance can offer, but also upon the personality and reputation of the man asking for the loan.

Mr. MAHER: How often is that done?

Mr. POLLOCK: Frequently. It is becoming more the case that institutions will advance to a man on reputation if they believe that his prospects are reasonably good.

Mr. WARREN: If he has the security.

Mr. POLLOCK: Not altogether. I have known any number of men to get advances who have not had adequate security to meet the advance. They had prospects, however, and the bank manager believed those prospects to be good.

Mr. MAHER: Would you advance your money against prospects?

Mr. POLLOCK: I have done so.

Mr. MAHER: Did you ever get it back?

Mr. POLLOCK: Yes. As an illustration, I put about £200 into the election on prospects. I admit that it did not turn out well. (Laughter.) It was a losing transaction. Similarly, members of the Government—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: A modest little bit on a "good thing"! (Laughter.)

Mr. POLLOCK: On form it ought to have been a good thing—but that is beside the point. This advancing on prospects and on reputation is no new thing.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: And on form, too.

Mr. POLLOCK: Reputation is form, because, if a man has a reputation for running square, doing the right thing, and paying his way, then he has form. In a case such as has been mentioned, the Government ought to have officials who can be relied upon to decide the matter when they visit a place and see a man's security for themselves. If the Government have not got those officials, they ought to get them. Other institutions can do so, and the Government can get them, if they try. I am not arguing this matter on the question of prospects at all. My point is that, when an official of the bank examines the security and finds it satisfactory, he should have authority on behalf of our bank—for it is the people's bank—to advance money for necessary purposes. Let me give an illustration why that should be done. Supposing a man desires to stock his place with 500 ewes immediately—and I instance the case of the small man because hon. members opposite profess to represent him in farming constituencies—that man may have a chance of purchasing those ewes at a cheap price. He may have the security, but has not the money which is necessary to clinch the bargain immediately. That man cannot get that money immediately under the present system, but may have to wait three or even six months in getting through a lot of unnecessary red tape. It should be possible for advances to be made immediately under those circumstances, if officers of the bank are given authority such as is given to officers of other banks. That is one of the ways in which the Government may deal with some of the unemployment that has arisen in Queensland, because if a man can finalise his business quickly and knows where he is in a matter of finance, he will be in a much better position. Unfortunately, the banking companies in Australia are, generally speaking, not advancing money for purposes that would mean increased wealth production for the community.

Go wherever you like to any bank, and you will find that they will give advances everywhere to people who want to erect picture-shows; to people who want to build pubs; to people who want to erect buildings that will cater for the amusements that

the public want; but ask these same banks to give you an advance of £5,000 to enable you to stock up a property in order to produce some wealth, and you are met with a flat refusal unless the security is very good. In my electorate settlers who have been hard hit by the drought are finding it almost impossible to get an advance as a result of the drought and on account of the fall in the price of wool. They are finding great difficulty in regard to finance, and it is only one in every fifty who is able to get sufficient money to enable him to put sheep on his property. But, when it comes to doing something that will enable the public to spend their money, you can get as much money as you like so long as the security appears to be good. In the last analysis that policy is wrong, and it is bound to bring this country to insolvency, because the only chance this country has of securing an adequate amount of wealth to pay its way is to have advances made on those projects that go to produce wealth, and not on those that involve the spending of wealth. I believe every Country Party member should be compelled to support the amendment, and, if any such member does not support it here, he will be called upon by his constituents to show why he has not supported it.

Mr. BRUCE (*Kenedy*): One can understand that one of the first efforts of the new Secretary for Agriculture should be in connection with an amendment of the Agricultural Bank Act. The amendment proposed by the Leader of the Opposition is to widen the scope of the motion in order to meet some of the requirements of the agricultural industry. It is not true, as stated by hon. members supporting the Government in their speeches on the Address in Reply, that hon. members on this side do not represent farming constituencies. I, for one, represent a constituency which is almost entirely made up of farmers and farm workers; and they are vitally concerned in an extension of the provisions of the Agricultural Bank Act. An inspector of a bank may be able to give a splendid idea of the value of an advance in so far as the pastoral industry is concerned; but that man may be entirely incompetent to give an opinion in regard to the sugar industry, which shows the necessity for the proposal to give direct power to the inspector in any particular district to make advances without all the red tape at present surrounding the department.

The question the hon. member for Gregory referred to is a vital one. It would be safer to make an advance to an industrious, hard-working, and capable farmer than to another man with less knowledge, but who may be on a more valuable piece of land. In the Rosewood electorate we have an example of German selectors who made homes on very poor land because of their industry and their knowledge of farming.

Mr. MAHER: That is the best country in the State.

Mr. BRUCE: Every hon. member says that in regard to his electorate. It would be wise to take into consideration the capabilities of a man rather than the value of the block of land he may be on, or the improvements that may have been effected on the land.

[3.30 p.m.]

The third point is in regard to the sugar industry. My electorate is almost entirely

*Mr. Bruce.]*

composed of people interested in the sugar industry. In the sugar industry there is one vital question. A man wants to plant his crop at a certain time. If he can get an advance from the Agricultural Bank at the time he wants to plant that crop, it is worth two or three times the value of the actual cash to him, because he can get his land under cultivation and reap a crop from it. But if, through departmental delay or red tape, he is unable to get the advance until after the time for planting the crop has passed, he is really carrying the burden of interest for another twelve months before he can utilise the money. In connection with the sugar industry, every effort should be made by the legal and departmental officers to see that, when applications are made prior to the planting season, the business is completed before the planting season has arrived.

It may be necessary also to extend the ambit of the bank in this direction: Take the world position recently with regard to wheat, which was at a very low price on the world's market. Fortunately, the Australian wheat crop was not ready for marketing at that particular time; and, before it went on the market, there was a rise in wheat prices throughout the world. We trusted to luck, and, through luck, the wheat-producers of Australia came out all right this season. It may be necessary to widen the ambit of the Bill so that not only individual farmers may obtain loans from the bank but that a fund may be established for the purpose of holding wheat or any other crop or commodity which it would be worth while to hold in the face of an unfavourable market, so that later on the primary producers may secure the best market for their product. That is undoubtedly one of the problems which will face Queensland and Australia as a whole sooner or later. Any one who has studied the wheat market during the last few months must be satisfied that I am correct in stating that, if our wheat crop had been ready for market a couple of months earlier than it was, we would have been selling at a deplorable price for the primary producers; but, through fortunate circumstances, wheat rose throughout the world, and we were able to strike a good market.

It is no use talking platitudes about the primary producer. We have to get right down to bedrock, and assist him not only in growing but also in marketing his product. We have already done so in regard to butter and sugar, but there are many other products beside butter and sugar. I am citing the case of wheat because it was an outstanding instance within recent months. The Minister will be well advised to accept the amendment with a view to widening the ambit of his proposed amendment of the Act.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): I have been watching the operations of the Agricultural Bank Act, and I would like to ask hon. members opposite how long it has been so useless as they say. Those hon. members went to the country a little while ago, and I never heard them say that the Agricultural Bank Act was so awfully bad.

Mr. BRUCE: It could be improved.

Mr. WARREN: I never heard that there was going to be any alteration; but hon. members opposite have come here with renewed vigour, with new zeal for the

[*Mr. Bruce.*

farmer, simply because they are now in opposition. That attitude seems to be not so much in the interests of the farmers as to obstruct business.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. WARREN: If the Minister were foolish enough to carry out some of the suggestions of hon. members opposite, even the Bank of England would not be able to finance the Agricultural Bank of Queensland.

Mr. COLLINS: Your electorate is only a pocket handkerchief electorate.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. F. Walker, *Coorara*): I have listened very carefully to the various speakers on this question, and, after hearing them, I am quite convinced that there is no occasion whatever for widening the scope of the motion, therefore I cannot accept the amendment. All the complaints that have been made to-day have been based on delays, or on what we might call unsympathetic administration. We are all aware that Queensland comprises an enormous area of land with a very small population. Settlers are miles apart, and, bearing in mind particularly the northern portion of the State and the difficulty of getting correspondence down here, we can easily understand that farmers are to some extent disappointed at the results that have been attained.

Only one practical suggestion has been thrown out—that of giving inspectors greater power. Already we have considered that question. I recognise that in the Cairns district, for instance, an enormous saving in time might be made by having an officer stationed in Cairns—which might be called the centre of the Tableland for the purposes of communication—who might exercise greater powers than the officers who are there at present whilst at the same time the Act might be administered just as effectively.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: It requires an amendment of the Act.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Not necessarily. We can give the man stationed there greater powers. Many of the suggestions which have been made have been embodied in amendments of the Act from time to time.

Another point to which the hon. member for Gregory referred related to the borrower as an individual. The bank is not in a position to gauge the borrower as an individual and determine whether he is of good character. It has to look at the man's written application and judge him on that—not on his past record in financial transactions, good or bad; consequently it has to exercise a greater degree of care than might otherwise be necessary.

I repeat that all the complaints which have been made to-day can be overcome by sympathetic administration. So soon as we got into power, knowing that the causes for these complaints existed, we got to work. We put on two inspectors in addition to those already employed.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: They had been advertised for before you became the Government.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We put them on, and we are going to consider the question of appointing more, recognising that delays have been very patent to members on this side of the Chamber and must not be allowed to continue any

longer. Inspectors have had enormous difficulties to contend with during recent years by reason of the fact that they have had so little data on which to go when giving advice for which they might be asked in respect of prospective borrowers, on account of the policy of leasehold tenure. Hon. members are aware that a leasehold with no timber and no water does not offer much security, but that a freehold gives the bank greater security. With the reversion to freehold tenure, moreover, applications to the Agricultural Bank will not be so numerous as in the past, because private banks are prepared to accept freehold titles as security for advances. That is common knowledge.

There has been a lot of red tape in the administration of the Act, but in some degree it has been a protection, as the Leader of the Opposition said. We do not, however, want unnecessary red tape, and, with the liberalising of the Act to permit of a maximum advance of £1,700, I think we shall be giving a very fair advance indeed.

One of the greatest troubles we have in Australia is that settlers very often have big debits at the bank and cannot manage to carry on with such heavy burdens. The financial responsibility is too great for them. One way of coping with that difficulty is to have a really good body of inspectors, who may help settlers with advice as to what they should do, pointing out that on no account should they build up enormous debits from which they will not be able to recover for many years. We all know that.

Now we come to the question of the amount of advances. It was increased by the late Government to 16s. in the £1. That is liberal enough for anything. In connection with the financing necessary in connection with discharged soldier settlements there is a provision permitting advances on certain improvements as high as 20s. in the £1, up to £625. You cannot get anything more liberal than that. Why delay this motion? We have all the power we require to-day. All that is necessary to make the legislation popular, effective, and useful to the prospective borrower is to have sympathetic consideration, and that is the policy of the present Government. We shall give effect to that policy, first, by the appointment of the two additional inspectors already in the field; secondly, by appointing others if necessary; and, thirdly, by granting to officers in the northern areas increased powers so that applications may be dealt with quickly and effectively. In this way we hope to overcome the whole of the difficulties in that respect from the point of view of the producers.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*): It is not my intention to delay the operations of the Bill. I assure the Minister that my amendment was not moved with any obstructive idea. I approve of the Bill that it is proposed to introduce, but I desire to give the hon. gentleman the benefit of years of experience, so that the Act can be improved. He agrees with the suggestion that decentralisation should take place; but I would point out to him that that cannot be done effectively unless it is laid down on a proper basis under the Act. Administration can do something, but if he consults Crown Law authorities, he will find that proper decen-

tralisation with regard to the authorisation of advances cannot be done effectively and adequately without legislation. The suggestion has been thrown forth as to why we did not do it. As a matter of fact, the figures quoted by the hon. member for Barcoo and the admission made by the Minister himself indicate that we did a great deal in improving that Act. Acts of Parliament of this nature can be improved from time to time, as circumstances warrant and the needs of the situation demand. There is no doubt at all that the suggestions I made are required for the effective and proper administration of the Act. They have been discussed with me by such authorities as members of the Council of Agriculture and others. This bank has been a great advantage. I have not suggested that the margin of 16s. in the £1 should be altered to 20s. in the £1; but I have suggested that it is worth considering whether the maximum amount of the loan is adequate, having regard to present-day conditions and to the needs and costs.

The Government, for example, have announced it as their policy that they intend to amend another Act controlled by the State Advances Corporation. It is proposed to increase the maximum amount that can be advanced for a worker's dwelling from £300 to £1,800, and to provide that such benefits shall be enjoyed by persons in excess of an annual income of £416, which is the present maximum. If it is a fair thing to increase the maximum advance to the worker or to the professional man, or to others in the city who come within the ambit of that Act, and to increase it by £1,000, is it wrong for me to suggest that the question of an increase in the advances to agriculturists, who produce the real wealth of the State, should be considered?

The Minister knows that for years past I have been in close touch with the settlers of this State. He knows that I understand something of their difficulties and the vicissitudes of their life. If he makes investigations from the department, he will know that it was the intention of the late Government at a favourable opportunity to amend and liberalise this measure in the directions that I have indicated. I have asked that the scope of the Bill be widened to enable suggestions to be made from any part of the Chamber that would improve the general administration of the Act. I realise that care has to be taken in making advances.

I have never put forward the foolish suggestion that one hears in some quarters—that any old advance can be made. This bank is in a different position from an ordinary trading bank. This bank has to pay interest to the Treasury on the money used, and the margin of percentage that it works upon for costs and risks is scarcely  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., whereas a trading bank charges a higher rate of interest justifying a greater risk, and it can also use a proportion of the money it holds at current account, which is never all in use at one time. Therefore, there is no real analogy. Care must be taken in regard to the control of the Act. The Minister knows as well as I do that the real security is the individual to whom you lend the money. There is a class of man to whom you can lend money to any extent, because you know the man is a worker and he will make a success of his venture. Therefore, you can back him to the limit.

*Mr. Smith.]*

There is another man with a better farm, so far as the quality of the land and climatic conditions are concerned, who may not be as good a security as the former. I agree with the Minister that care must be exercised in that regard, but what I am asking him to do is to make this Bill sufficiently wide in its scope to enable hon. members to make suggestions to improve the measure with a view to the further development of the State and the making for additional settlement.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): I have no doubt that the rural districts will very closely watch the actions of hon. members on the Government side who are always prating that they are the representatives of the rural districts. We are making an attempt to widen the scope of this Bill with a view to the further development of the rural parts of Queensland.

Mr. MAXWELL: Why didn't you do it yourself?

Mr. COLLINS: We can understand representatives of city constituencies, who are in a majority on the Government benches, not being interested largely in the development of the country, but what about the hon. member for Burnett and others who claim to be the representatives of the rural centres?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Why didn't you do it?

Mr. COLLINS: We did so much during our term of office that it will take you about nine years to undo it.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: They will not get the chance.

Mr. COLLINS: I do not think they will. If there were an election to-morrow, the people would wipe the Government out of existence. I am surprised at the Minister not accepting my suggestion. He said that there was only one practical suggestion in the whole of the suggestions offered from this side of the House, and that was the giving of greater powers to inspectors. I shall make him a good practical suggestion—a very broad one—and that is to withdraw the Bill and introduce one with greater scope.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: Refer it to a select committee.

Mr. COLLINS: I regret that the Minister has not accepted my suggestion.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted (*Mr. Smith's amendment*) stand part of the question—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 37.

Mr. Anuand	Mr. Kerr
„ Atherton	Dr. Kerwin
„ Barnes, G. P.	Mr. King
„ Barnes, W. H.	Mrs. Longman
„ Bell	Mr. Macgroarty
„ Boyd	„ Maher
„ Butler	„ Maxwell
„ Carter	„ Morgan
„ Daniel	„ Nimmo
„ Deacon	„ Peterson
„ Duff	„ Plunkett
„ Dunlop	„ Russell, H. M.
„ Edwards	„ Russell, W. A.
„ Fry	„ Sizer
„ Grimstone	„ Tedman
„ Hill	„ Walker, H. F.
„ Jamieson	„ Walker, J. E.
„ Kelso	„ Warren
„ Kenny	

*Tellers*: Mr. Boyd and Mr. Fry.

[*Mr. Smith.*

NOES, 23.

Mr. Barber	Mr. Hanson
„ Bedford	„ Hynes
„ Bow	„ Kirwan
„ Brassington	„ Pease
„ Bruce	„ Pollock
„ Bulcock	„ Riordan
„ Collins	„ Smith
„ Conroy	„ Stopford
„ Cooper	„ Wellington
„ Dash	„ Wilson
„ Foley	„ Wiustanley
„ Hanlon	

*Tellers*: Mr. Bow and Mr. Hanlon.

Resolved in the affirmative.

The House resumed.

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

Resolution agreed to.

FIRST READING.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. H. F. Walker, *Cooroora*) 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 Tuesday next.

BABINDA STATE HOTEL SALE BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

(*Mr. Roberts, East Toowoomba, in the chair.*)

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY (Hon. H. E. Sizer, *Sandgate*): I beg to move—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to enable the Commissioner of Trade to sell the hotel known as the Babinda State Hotel, to enable the purchaser thereof to obtain a license in respect thereof, and for other purposes.”

This is merely a formal Bill to carry out the policy of the Government. It was decided—wisely, I believe—on the mandate of the people, that the business of the Government is to govern and not to trade; and we can see no reason why we should retain the Babinda hotel when we are disposing of other State enterprises. Before we can dispose of the hotel satisfactorily, it is necessary that Parliament should agree that a license should be granted to the purchaser so that the hotel can be brought under the ordinary liquor laws of the State. That is the object of the Bill.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: Will other licenses be permitted?

At 4 p.m.,

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

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*): Unfortunately I cannot congratulate the Secretary for Labour and Industry, as I did the Secretary for Agriculture, on his courtesy to members of this Committee. The Secretary for Agriculture gave full information about his Bill; but the Secretary for Labour and Industry has refused to give a reply to the question I have asked.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: I said that it was to bring it into conformity with the liquor laws of the State.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: With regard to this hotel, or the whole area?

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: The whole area.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: As I understand the proposal outlined by the Minister, it is proposed, first of all, to give authority to sell the hotel with a license attached thereto—in effect to grant a license. This hotel will then be controlled by the individual who purchases it, and will be subject to the ordinary liquor laws of the State. Does the Minister intend that the various provisions of the Liquor Act shall be applied to this area in its entirety?

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY interjected.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: The hon. gentleman may be facetious. He may have what might be described as a distorted sense of humour, but I would suggest to him that responsible Ministers in this Chamber are expected to subdue their natural instincts and behave in a manner befitting their positions. I am asking for information about the purport of this Bill. We have got to the stage that the Government intend to sell the State hotel, and that, when sold, it shall have a license attached to it, and the licensee will be subject to the provisions of the Liquor Act. Is it proposed that the Liquor Act shall apply in its entirety to the whole of the Babinda area? For the information of hon. members, I may point out that under the Sugar Works Act of 1911 the Babinda sugar-mill was authorised to be constructed as well as another mill. It was also provided in that Act that a certain defined area should be the benefited area within the meaning of the Act, and that within that area the provisions of the Liquor Act should not apply—that a license should not be granted, and that, in effect, it should be a “dry” area. In order to give effect to that, the present Treasurer—who was Treasurer on that occasion—cancelled two licenses which existed in the area at the time of the passing of the measure, and compensation from the State revenue was given to those licensees. In the case of one I know of I understand that the compensation was in the vicinity of £2,000, and that hotel, so far as granting a license or exercising the provisions of the license was concerned, came to an end. Later on, after the building of the mill, the Government in power at the time decided, in accordance with their policy, to carry out the experiment of having a State-owned and State-controlled hotel in that area. In addition to that, owing to the development that took place at Babinda, inevitably as the result of the building of a mill and the growing of sugar-cane in the district, a demand was made for suitable accommodation.

A hotel was built at Babinda and has been run successfully, gaining the encomiums of all those who have been guests within it. In addition, it has provided adequate and substantial accommodation for a large number of employees in the mill during the crushing season. The hotel, therefore, has been a success both from the point of view of the convenience of the public and the point of view of an enterprise. However, the Minister has stated that it is the Government policy to dispose of that hotel to a private individual or individuals, and, in order to do that, he desires that a license may be granted.

Obviously, the hotel would be of little value as a boarding or accommodation house without the convenience of being able to supply the beverages covered by a license under the Liquor Act. I consider that it is a retrograde step to dispose of the hotel. Apart altogether from my belief in the principle of State enterprise as a matter of policy, a definite case can be made out in favour of the control of a hotel by the State. I do not propose to delay the Committee at this juncture by stating that case, other than to point out that during its operations, from the economic and social points of view and otherwise, the hotel has been a success, and I think it is a mistake to dispose of it now.

I now come to the question of the license. I hold the view that, if this area is going to be opened for a license for one hotel, then the area as a “dry” area should be abolished in its entirety and the whole district should come within the scope of the general liquor laws of the State. As a result of repeated requests, we omitted the South Johnstone area from the provisions of the Sugar Works Act of 1911 which had created it a “dry” area, like the Babinda area. The Liquor Act then automatically came into operation at South Johnstone, and the citizens were able to demand a poll on the question of whether or not licenses should be granted. I claim that that is the procedure which ought to be followed in this case.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It will be.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: It is proposed to give the people the opportunity to demand a poll?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: When the time arrives.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: If the hon. gentleman follows the position in its entirety, he will realise that now is the time to apply that provision, otherwise certain rights which people in other districts have will be denied to those in the Babinda area. In a word, my contention is that the whole area should be brought within the scope of the Liquor Act, and the people within the area should have the same right that is enjoyed by other citizens throughout the State of deciding whether there shall be licenses in the area or not. I am opposed to the motion.

Mr. POLLOCK (*Gregory*): I would like to have some definite information as to what the proposal of the Minister is. I do not propose to traverse the ground covered by the Leader of the Opposition, but I would point out that, if this hotel is sold and the provisions of the Liquor Act are not applied to the whole area, somebody will get a monopoly of a license in that area for at least six years. I take it that a local option poll cannot be held for another six years.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That applies to every hotel in the State.

Mr. POLLOCK: If this hotel is sold and the public are given an opportunity to apply for other licenses, it will mean the depreciation of the value of this hotel. We want to know, and we are entitled to know, what it is proposed to do. All we want is information. It is an astounding thing that the Minister refuses to give that definite information. He introduces the Bill, and he asks us to vote “Yes” or “No” upon it without informing us as to what we are doing. We were denied the right to secure information at the initiatory stage, and, if we do not

*Mr. Pollock.]*

secure the necessary information at this stage, we may find out at the following stage, after the Order of Leave has been established, that we are unable to move any amendment whatever against the proposals of the Government. I now ask for a plain and definite statement by the Minister as to whether a monopoly is to be given in this area by the sale of this hotel, and for how long that monopoly will continue.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: There will be no monopoly.

Mr. POLLOCK: If the sale of the hotel takes place within the next two or three months, what time will elapse before an opportunity is given to secure other licenses in the area?

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: Whatever the Liquor Act says.

Mr. POLLOCK: For the information of the Minister, let me tell him that the Liquor Act says that another license cannot be obtained for another six years. Therefore, in a prohibition area the Government are giving a license and a monopoly to a private individual for another six years.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That applies to every hotel in Queensland.

Mr. POLLOCK: We want the information definitely so that we may know how to vote. It is an extraordinary thing that the Minister would not give the information until it was literally dragged out of him.

In addition, I want to know whether this hotel is to be sold at a valuation, and who are to be the valuers. That is information that we, as a responsible Parliament, should know before we affix our imprimatur to the sale of a successful business such as this. I am asking that the Government should not give this business away. It is a successful business. We do not wish to see a monopoly given to a friend of the Government by any hole-and-corner method. Personally, I do not wish to see this hotel sold; but, if it is to be sold, then I want to see it sold so that the State will secure the full value.

Mr. MAHER: So say we all.

Mr. HANLON (*Uthaca*): I rise chiefly to refute the statement made by the Minister when moving the resolution that his party had received a mandate from the people to dispose of State enterprises. I have heard some rather remarkable claims made by hon. members opposite during the few weeks that I have been sitting here; but I think that is about the most remarkable one that I have heard. I think it shades entirely the claims made by the hon. member for Rockhampton the other evening. If the Minister will reflect for one moment, he will recollect that in 1918 his party went to the country on an anti-State enterprises programme. The abolition of State enterprises was the main plank in the Nationalist platform in 1920, again in 1923, and again in 1926; and on each occasion that platform was turned down by the people. The people wanted none of this programme of abolition of State enterprises.

The mandate which the hon. gentleman states he received from the people exists entirely in his imagination, exactly in the same way as the ghosts of the £2,000,000 and the 10,000 jobs. Those are the only things on which the Government received a mandate. It is not claimed by the Government that the programme which they submitted

to the people at the last election differed in any way from the programme submitted to the people at the five previous elections except in the matter of the £2,000,000 and the 10,000 jobs. The statement of the Minister is so ridiculous that it is hard to believe that it could be made by a man occupying the responsible position of Minister.

I sincerely regret that the Speaker is not present in the Chamber in order to hear the amount of information which the Minister gave to the Committee when introducing the Bill. The manner in which this resolution has been moved by the Minister has amply justified the claim made by the Leader of the Opposition that these Bills should be debated at a previous stage. The Minister indicated that the Bill was intended to do certain things, but he merely shook or nodded his head in answer to questions levelled at him by hon. members on this side of the Chamber who have endeavoured to elicit further information from him. The Committee will be just as much in doubt at the conclusion of this stage of the Bill as to what is to be accomplished by the Bill as when earlier in the afternoon we gave leave to introduce it. In common courtesy to the Committee the Minister should give details of what it is proposed to accomplish, in order that we might form some idea of what we are voting for. The Minister has not been courteous to hon. members, nor has he been fair to the people of Queensland. He is using the majority sitting behind him for the purpose of introducing legislation without giving the representatives of the people, and especially hon. members sitting on the Opposition side, who represent very nearly as many electors as hon. members sitting on the Government benches despite the disparity in their numbers, some idea of what is intended to be accomplished by this Bill.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): The line of debate adopted by the Opposition seems extraordinary to me. The business-paper indicates to hon. members that at this stage of the Bill they are only asked to say whether it is desirable to sell the Babinda hotel and issue a license in regard thereto. That is plainly and definitely set out in the motion we are now discussing. Surely the Opposition can make up their minds whether this hotel shall be sold or whether a license shall be withheld! If the Opposition are of opinion that no license should be issued in that area, they should say so, instead of attempting to sidetrack the issue as they did on the previous Bill, and have done for days past. It is not obligatory for the Minister to give information at this stage, but I am desirous of finding out where the Opposition stands in this matter. We know that under the Sugar Works Act of 1911, introduced by the Treasurer when he was Treasurer of a former Administration, the two hotels which were previously licensed in this area were delicensed and went out of existence. That Act remained on the statute-book when the late Government came into power in 1915, but, after having been re-elected in 1917, they turned around and established the State hotel at Babinda. They did not grant a license, as it was not necessary to do so, but they gave a permit for the sale of intoxicating liquor in the hotel. The Minister has stated that the policy of this party is not to retain State enterprises in any shape or form.

[*Mr. Pollock.*]

Mr. DASH: What about railway refreshment-rooms?

Mr. HANLON: What about the State Government Insurance Office?

Mr. KERR: Hon. members opposite should be the last people in the world to speak on this matter, because, when they permitted the sale of intoxicating liquor in the Babinda hotel, they unquestionably broke the law. I admit that railway refreshment-rooms and such places under Government control can do pretty much as they like; and perhaps the Babinda hotel came under that category. At any rate, it was in a shameless position, because the Crown could not prosecute the manager of that hotel for breaches of the liquor law, seeing that they would, in effect, be prosecuting themselves. There was nothing to say, for example, that Sunday trading could not go on.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: What about the Minister?

Mr. KERR: The Minister is some hundreds of miles away. Who is to see if Sunday trading is carried on? Apart from all other factors, it is only right that such an undertaking should be conducted by somebody other than the Crown. The State has an asset to sell, and to bring about that sale it is necessary that a license should issue, because, as an accommodation house only, the Babinda hotel might just as well close up. The Government do not intend to sacrifice the asset, and the question for consideration now is the desirableness of introducing legislation to permit the purchaser of that hotel to obtain a license. At the proper stage the Minister concerned will give hon. members any other information which they desire.

Mr. POLLOCK: We have heard those promises before.

Mr. KERR: The Government will honour any promise that they make, whereas the hon. member who has interjected followed a Government that did not hesitate to keep back information from hon. members then in Opposition. That hon. member, who poses as an authority on the Standing Orders, knows perfectly well that at the subsequent stages of the Bill all information will be given.

Mr. POLLOCK: That is not true.

Mr. KERR: Why waste the time of the Committee? Surely the Committee can decide now on the desirableness of introducing legislation on the two factors involved—(1) The sale of the hotel, and (2) the issue of a license to the purchaser? No more time should be wasted at this stage.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Queenton*): The hon. member for Enoggera has contributed his quota to the waste of time to which he has referred, although he has contributed nothing else to the debate. Notwithstanding what has been said, this is the time when information should be given; and the Minister concerned is distinctly unwise in the attitude he is adopting, particularly after we have heard so much about co-operation and sweet reasonableness. One of the reasons why stonewalling has taken place is that the Minister has refused to give information that was asked for.

Mr. KERR: Then you admit that you are stonewalling?

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: There is nothing more to tell the hon. member.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: If the hon. gentleman has told us all he knows and thinks that is quite sufficient, then I can only say that he does not know every much about his job.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What do you want to know?

Mr. WINSTANLEY: All the salient points in connection with that Bill ought to be explained now. Everybody knows that this was a prohibition area under the Sugar Works Act, and, when the Labour Party came into power, the conditions in the Babinda area were such that it was thought wise to establish in that area a State hotel. When that hotel was established, no doubt there was a good deal of uproar about it, and the present Treasurer on every opportunity that presented itself pointed out that, in his opinion, the Labour Party had broken the law. The Labour Government did not break the law. That area is still a prohibition area, and this hotel, under existing conditions, can only be sold as a monopoly. It is one thing to give the State a monopoly in that area and quite another proposition for a private individual to be given a monopoly. Under the present Liquor Act the individual who buys that hotel will get a monopoly in this area. If there is going to be a monopoly, it will certainly make a great difference in the price paid for the property from what will be paid if there is no monopoly. My contention is that there will be no opportunity for granting other licenses, as it is a prohibition area, and for a very long time I do not think any vote can be taken under the local option clauses.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It will be brought under the Liquor Act.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: The Secretary for Railways seems to know more about it than the Minister in charge of the Bill. If the hon. gentleman will look after the railways he will have as much as he can manage. From general information obtained from travellers, there is no question about the conduct of that hotel. It is frankly admitted that it is one of the best-conducted hotels in the State, and there is nothing in what the hon. member for Enoggera had to say about prosecutions. While it is the property of the State the individual in charge has no inducement to break the law, and certainly no inducement to work overtime. The conditions are quite different from what they would be under private enterprise. Further information should be given on the matter, but evidently the Minister does not know anything about it or else he does not care—I am inclined to think that he does not care. The hon. gentleman has been appealing to different classes in the community to be frank and straightforward—to put their cards on the table and co-operate with him in doing what he thinks is the best thing for the community—but his present attitude is the very antithesis of those speeches of his. I am quite confident that, if he continues his present method of conducting business in this House, he will find that his business will not go through very expeditiously.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: What does the hon. member for Queenton want to know?

*Mr. Winstanley.]*

Mr. WINSTANLEY: The hon. member for Enoggera said that this Bill is only carrying out the Government's policy to dispose of State enterprises. If they are carrying out their policy in some directions, I cannot understand why they are not doing so in other directions. For example, the railway refreshment-rooms are on exactly the same footing as this State hotel. They are not subject to the licensing laws, as they are run as a property belonging to the Crown. I do not think the Railway Department has any right to receive revenue from those institutions if the Government are going to carry out their policy of doing away with State enterprises and allowing private enterprise to have a "free go." It is the same in other directions. They are not going to abolish the Yarraman State saw-mill. I can understand the Government having a policy and carrying out that policy; but I cannot understand a milk-and-water policy like this. It is a kind of "shandy-gaff" policy. The Minister would be well advised if he gave the Committee the information asked for.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: What information do you want?

Mr. WINSTANLEY: I want to know what the position is in reference to this hotel—whether it is going to have a monopoly. My contention is that it is. Well, no private individual has a right [4.30 p.m.] to a monopoly in that area. If the Minister wants to get his Bills through the Chamber, he will be well advised to give the information which is asked for, and he will find that he will conduct his business much more to his own satisfaction, as well as to the satisfaction of members of the Opposition.

Mr. BRUCE (*Kennedy*): The hon. member for Enoggera stated that the Opposition should definitely say whether they are opposed to the Bill before us. We are opposed to it, because we are in favour of State control of the liquor trade as against private control. Then the question is whether a monopoly is to be given to the individual who is going to get the Babinda hotel. Everyone admits that, during the period of State control of the Babinda hotel, travellers, as well as local people, were well catered for in regard to accommodation. Not only that, but there was a restraint on the sale of liquor to those who had had sufficient, or more than sufficient, for their own personal good. Generally speaking, the Babinda hotel has been an example of what State control should be in regard to the liquor trade—a shining example as opposed to private control. If this hotel is to be handed over to a private individual who is going to have a monopoly of this area, and a free, open "go" there, then the general tone of the sugar-growing community, in whom the Labour members are so much interested, will be hampered by the sale of liquor under private control as opposed to State control, and, generally speaking, it will be another example, as in the case of the State butcher shops, of a reward for some person who was energetic on 11th May last in the interests of the Government.

Throughout the history of this hotel the advantage of retaining it under State control has been proved. It has not been a losing proposition. One of the arguments

[*Mr. Winstanley.*]

in favour of abolishing State enterprises has been that they have not been an asset to the State; but the Babinda hotel has been an asset to the State. If it were dealt with on the lines of other State enterprises which the Government are retaining because they are an asset to the State, there is every reason why the Babinda hotel should be retained. The Minister should give full information as to whether other licenses are to be granted in the area. I believe, contrary to the impression of the hon. member for Queenston, that further licenses were carried covering this area but were prevented from being given effect owing to the operation of the Sugar Works Act. If this hotel is going to be sold, are further licenses to be granted in the area? Under private enterprise the more hotels you have in a locality the better for the general public. When we had an increase in the number of licenses in the Ingham district, a portion of which I represent, and in the Mount Isa district, the newly-rising mining town in the far north-west of Queensland, the accommodation generally was wonderfully improved for travellers and others who had to utilise hotels as places of accommodation. Therefore, it is vitally important that we should know whether the issue of licenses is likely to be extended, and I can see no reason why this information should not be given by the Minister.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*): There is another matter on which I should like information from the Minister. It has to do with what might be called the dual purpose which is now carried out by the Babinda hotel. Under the Shearers and Sugar Workers Accommodation Acts the sugar-mill in that area is required to provide adequate accommodation for mill employees. By agreement with those concerned, the Babinda hotel undertakes that function for the mill, and the employees at the mill get board and lodging at the State hotel at certain fixed rates in accordance with the sugar industry award. There has been no variation in the price charged to those boarders since the hotel was built. Is it proposed that the purchaser of the hotel shall take on a similar obligation towards the mill management? Otherwise it will be incumbent on the farmers, who own the mill, to erect barracks to comply with the Act I have mentioned.

I want to emphasise another point which I made before. The Minister says that the Liquor Act will apply to the area on the passing of this Bill. There is not a lot of information in that, and the hon. gentleman tries to adopt a Machiavellian attitude when he gives that information and nods his head in an affirmative or negative fashion. About two years ago a poll was taken in the electorate in which the Babinda area is situated, and it was decided in favour of the granting of additional licenses. In accordance with the Liquor Act, new licenses have consequently been granted in that electorate. No vote, however, was taken in the Babinda area. None could be taken, because of the Sugar Works Act of 1911. The information the Committee want is whether, although the Liquor Act may apply to the Babinda area so far as the operations of this hotel are concerned, the purchaser, nevertheless, will have a monopoly at least until 1935. No local option poll on the question of whether additional licenses can be granted

can be taken in that area until 1935, unless this Bill makes provision for the holding within the Babinda area of such a referendum. Is it intended that that shall be done? If that is not done, apparently the Minister will give a monopoly to the purchaser of this hotel for six years. Our contention is that the Liquor Act should be applied there, and that, if licenses are to be granted in the area, they should be granted under the same conditions as apply to the electorate generally. I know the area quite well. It extends from Harvey Creek to the Russell River. There is room in that area for at least three hotels to provide adequate accommodation for the people; but, under the general liquor laws, the people themselves should have the right to decide whether those hotels shall be established or not. As far as I can gather the Minister's intention from his attitude, I assume that it is proposed to sell to an individual a license which will have the currency granted under the Liquor Act, and that in his operations the purchaser will be subject to that Act, but that he will have a monopoly until the next local option poll in 1935.

Mr. COOPER (*Bremer*): I should like to give the Minister an opportunity of supplying us with the information that we desire, and I am satisfied that, if a question is addressed to him, he will answer it. I would like to know whether the Bill provides that the purchaser of the hotel shall also be granted a license.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes.

Mr. COOPER: I am asking the Minister, whom I recognise as the authority on this matter.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: What do you think the Bill is for?

Mr. COOPER: I know the hon. gentleman is a good Australian, and I know that a good Australian will not say "yes" or "no," without asking further questions. I take it that the Bill does provide that the purchaser shall be granted a license.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: Read the title.

Mr. COOPER: Will the Bill also provide for the granting under the present liquor law of a license in the area without a local option poll? Is it right that in one portion of the State it should be possible to secure a liquor license in a manner denied to other portions of the State by the same liquor law? I think these are very fair questions that the Minister should answer to satisfy our search for information as to the contents of the Bill. I am satisfied that we are entitled to know that. I am satisfied that a big mistake will be made in disposing of a hotel that has been conducted so well and has been of such benefit to an area as the Babinda State hotel. Personally, I would prefer to see no hotel there at all; but, if liquor must be sold there, I prefer it to be sold by the State under the guardianship of the Minister rather than by private enterprise. Everybody who has visited that hotel knows of the wonderful way in which it has been conducted, and knows of the splendid accommodation that it has given to the sugar workers in that area—accommodation that is not procurable elsewhere for anything like the same money. It will be a standing disgrace to this Committee if it allows the passage of a Bill that will rob the men work-

ing in that industry of such a benefit. In addition, the farmers who are working the mill on a co-operative basis will have to incur a very big expense in providing accommodation for their workers. It may be that the Bill provides for that. If it does, then the Minister should save the time of the Committee by saying that it does. I ask the Minister if it makes any such provision. It is a great pity that we cannot secure the information, because I am satisfied that, if it is provided in the Bill, then we are simply beating the air, but, if it is not provided, then the Minister should take the opportunity now of widening the scope of his measure to allow it to be done, and thus relieve us of a great deal of anxiety. I sincerely trust that the Minister will depart from his present attitude of dumbness. Let him sit amongst the secretaries and presidents of the unions that he addressed a little while ago, when he asked them to display a spirit of co-operation with him in his desire to work hand in hand with one objective and to consult with each other to see what they could or could not do for the advancement of industry. Let me see if the Minister will do something now for the advancement of this Committee, by telling the Committee what he proposes to do. It was very excellent advice that he gave to those representatives when he met them the other day, and he should now take a little of his own advice for himself, which would be very excellent indeed. I trust that he will give us the information we desire. In view of the fact that the Minister declines to give the information we seek, I take it it is not contained in the Bill.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): I do not propose to deal to any extent with the question raised by the Leader of the Opposition, but to confine my remarks to that portion of the resolution which asks us to consider the desirableness of introducing a Bill to enable the Commissioner of Trade to sell the Babinda State hotel. I listened to the few words uttered by the Minister by way of explanation when he introduced the Bill. He stated that the Government believe in the doctrine that it is the duty of Governments to govern and not trade. That is a very old chestnut which I have heard for the best part of my life, but no Government up to the present time have been able to put that doctrine into practice to its fullest extent. The Minister will know that in Great Britain during the war it was found necessary to assume control of certain hotels and run them under the control of the Government.

Mr. KERR: In a time of emergency.

Mr. COLLINS: When the Bill reaches the second reading stage I shall deal with the question of the British Government controlling hotels at the present time when no state of war exists.

At 4.46 p.m.

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. COLLINS: The Babinda State hotel has proved a profitable undertaking, for altogether it has shown a profit to the State of £32,401. A short time ago I heard the hon. member for Burnett advocate the erection of new schools in his electorate. The profit earned by the Babinda State hotel in the year 1927-28 was £4,261 8s. 8d. That profit would build a good few rural schools

*Mr. Collins.]*

without any charge on the consolidated revenue.

Mr. KERR: Do you believe in the State selling beer in order to build schools?

Mr. COLLINS: Yes. The profit could not be put to better use. The profits could be used in our State schools to teach the children the advantages of prohibition. As one who believes in State enterprises, I oppose the introduction of this Bill, and I would not be worth my salt if I did not oppose it for all that I am worth. It has proved to be one of the most profitable of the State undertakings. All I am sorry for is that more State hotels were not built in order that the State should assume complete control of the liquor traffic ultimately. I had experience in the Babinda area long before the sugar mill was established, and when there was a privately-owned hotel there. I have travelled over a great deal of Queensland and have seen the conditions obtaining in many hotels, and, as one who has visited Babinda since the State hotel has been in operation, I can unhesitatingly say that a great deal of credit was due to the Labour Government for erecting the hotel in question.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: The Prime Minister said that it provided the best accommodation in Australia.

Mr. COLLINS: Quite true. I want to know who is the particular person or persons who are going to get this hotel? I read the "Trade and Finance" column of the "Courier" very carefully, and have noticed the enormous profits that are made in Brisbane and hotels owned by companies in the southern part of Australia. Anyone who knows the Babinda area as I know it knows full well that it is a growing area, and that in the future, instead of supporting the few hundred people it now does, it will be supporting thousands. We are asked to vote to hand over to an individual or individuals one of the most profitable assets from a profit-producing point of view that we have in the State. Hon. members opposite believe in profits, profits, profits. They agree that the State should carry out work which does not show profits, but are quite willing that the Government should hand over this particular profit-producing concern to private individuals in order to make more and more profits.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You are a losing party.

Mr. COLLINS: We are a progressive party. Instead of introducing a Bill of this description, the Government should be providing legislation to extend the principle. The Treasurer is talking about financial stringency; yet he does not want profit! Childlike, the Minister comes along with his new broom and tells men of my experience—(laughter)—that it is the duty of the Government to govern. Why all this cant and hypocrisy? The Government do not intend to do away with all the State enterprises; they are not game to do so. At any rate, I enter my protest against this Bill; and I do so as one who has consistently stood for State enterprises, and will continue to uphold them, because the principle of State trading is sound. Because there have been a few failures—

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: A few? (Laughter.)

Mr. COLLINS: We are not always going to have failures. Some of the most success-

ful things to-day were failures at one time. The Babinda State hotel enterprise was not a failure; and, if the liquor traffic throughout the State had been similarly controlled and disclosed a corresponding profit, then the Government would have found themselves with sufficient funds to honour their election promise to provide 10,000 jobs. I protest against the Bill, lock, stock, and barrel, because I consider it entirely wrong.

Mr. STOPFORD (*Mount Morgan*): The Minister is adopting a most extraordinary attitude. When I was Home Secretary, I gave the fullest information to hon. members on every measure I introduced, because I was acquainted with the nature of the legislation I was introducing. I am sorry the Treasurer is not in his seat at present. If that hon. gentleman supports this Bill, then he is taking nearly as big a somersault as he did when he swallowed the "Golden Casket." In 1911 the Government of the day, which supported the same policy as the Government of to-day, introduced a measure declaring for prohibition in certain areas.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You broke it.

Mr. STOPFORD: No! Let me tell hon. members the reason. Under private control, hotels in those areas that existed only for profit sold liquor which was more like poison to men who worked in Government sugar-mills—liquor which maddened those men to such an extent that they became almost uncontrollable. The Government were so keen on their policy that they spent over £2,000 in paying compensation to close the existing houses which were responsible for such an unwholesome state of affairs. So far as the Babinda area is concerned, the Labour Government recognised that, whilst that policy was a wise one, it had certain disadvantages in that it was difficult to keep men in such an area unless they had the comfort of a hotel, with its associations. Sooner than revert to the condition of affairs which justified an anti-Labour Government in passing the Sugar Works Act of 1911, the Labour Government took to themselves the right to provide accommodation and liquor that would be wholesome for the men who were carrying on industry in that area. The results have disclosed that it was a profitable thing.

Hon. members opposite say they want to dispose of this hotel in accordance with their policy. The policy enunciated by the Premier was that they would dispose of all State enterprises that were unprofitable. Now, this is a profitable State enterprise. Why continue the railway refreshment-rooms? I think this hotel is earmarked as a political sop to some of their friends. (Government dissent.) I am justified, after the Minister's attitude, in adopting any interpretation that I like. I gave the Minister an opportunity to inform the Committee as to what he intended to do. I sat and waited for him to disclose his views, but he has told us nothing. The Government are going to give a monopoly in this area for six years. Once they dispose of that hotel, they will have no further control, and they are going to profiteer inasmuch as they are going to get a price, if the sale is a fair one, higher than they would get if there was no monopoly. The fairest method would be to submit the question to a referendum of the people in the

[*Mr. Collins.*]

district. They have lived under the conditions there, and know what they are. I have been in Babinda, and I have seen the hotel closed at 8 o'clock sharp.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: The front door.

Mr. STOPFORD: I have seen men refused a drink after 8 o'clock because the manager had no personal interest in selling liquor after hours.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: They have a back door.

Mr. STOPFORD: There is no incentive to the manager of the State hotel to sell liquor after 8 o'clock. He is merely an employee.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Did he not sell after 8 o'clock?

Mr. STOPFORD: Certainly not. One of the most dangerous things we have to consider in the Northern portion of Queensland is the influx of a foreign element who are of a passionate nature, and who, if maddened with drink, as they will be once profiteers enter the Babinda hotel, may be capable of anything.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Does that not apply to other parts of the State?

Mr. STOPFORD: That is just the argument we want. Compare Babinda with Innisfail! Search the records in the court house! At Innisfail we have the same set of people—and look at the records!

I am pleased that the Treasurer has returned to the Chamber. I have been congratulating the hon. gentleman, first, upon swallowing the "Golden Casket," and now on breaking down that benevolent Act which the hon. gentleman assisted to pass in 1911, which provided that no liquor should be sold in the Babinda sugar-works area. Now, with a foreign element in the district, the hon. gentleman wants to revert to the old system of private profit. If the Government dispose of the Babinda State hotel, then they should close every railway refreshment-room and dispose of every other State enterprise.

If the Minister is going to adopt [5 p.m.] the attitude of sitting back, shaking his head, and attempting to look wise, he is going to strike trouble. I am sure the Treasurer would never go that far.

The TREASURER: Some hon. members on your side say that I am about the hardest man in the world to deal with.

Mr. STOPFORD: The hon. gentleman has a taking way. (Laughter.) If Ministers have nothing to hide and there is nothing in their Bills that they are afraid to disclose, they generally give information as early as possible. I hope the Minister in charge of this Bill will give us the information we are asking for.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: I have given it all.

Mr. STOPFORD: The hon. gentleman has given us nothing—that is his usual way. How does he propose to bring this hotel under the provisions of the Liquor Act? Is it intended, under the Bill, that this area shall automatically come under the Liquor Act, and that that Act is not to be amended to speed up the time when the people will be free from the evils of that monopoly? Under the Liquor Act it will be 1935 before the people can take a vote.

Mr. KELSO: That is your Act.

Mr. STOPFORD: That Act was passed in 1912. (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. KELSO: You altered the Act; you know that.

Mr. STOPFORD: Not the Act—we extended the period.

Mr. KELSO: I knew you extended the period—that is what I said.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: You did not say that.

Mr. STOPFORD: You will have a publican growing rich and fat in the next six years, and, when the matter is submitted to the people, you will have one of the wealthiest combines in that area ready to fight you. You will find the Minister in charge of the Bill—the Treasurer—and all the other people who are averse to drink joining hands with the monopolistic publican, and, if the people are defeated at the poll on that occasion, the monopoly will continue for another seven years. I want some information from the Minister. He is not going to evade the question as easily as he thinks.

Mr. POLLOCK (*Gr. gory*): I hope the Minister is not going to pose as one of those strong, dark, silent men we read about in an Elinor Glyn novel. I hope he is going to give us the information. We are only asking for information that we are entitled to. We have a right to demand and we are demanding to know the details of this transaction that the Government propose to carry out. I said in my opening remarks that I am against the proposal to sell the hotel. I have no difficulty in making up my mind that it is not desirable for any sensible man to dispose of a State asset that has been responsible for a very fine profit since it was established. I think there is something questionable in the proposal—and that is putting it mildly—to sell to anybody an asset of the State—

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: It will be sold by public auction or tender.

Mr. POLLOCK: I do not care how it is sold, it is a very questionable thing—

Mr. MAHER: You can put in for it yourself, if you like.

Mr. POLLOCK: It is a questionable thing for the trustee of a public asset—and in this instance the Secretary for Labour and Industry is trustee for the public of a property which has returned a very fine profit—to sell that public property to anybody.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: It is not going to be given away.

Mr. POLLOCK: I am not saying that it is going to be given away. I do not know. We cannot get any information. We have been here for a long time asking questions that the Minister will not answer. Are we not justified in assuming that he has something to conceal? If he has not, he will give us that information. I say now to you, Mr. Roberts, that there are some nasty rumours about the sale of this property—very nasty rumours—circulating in this district.

Mr. KERR: Why say that?

Mr. POLLOCK: That is true. I am not going to do what Mr. Vowles did when he was here—make charges I cannot prove, but I am telling the Government that there are

*Mr. Pollock.]*

some nasty rumours about the disposal of this property, and I say that, when there are nasty rumours, it is up to the Minister in charge of the motion to give information when he is proposing to dispose of a successful State enterprise. This is not an ordinary instance of the disposal of a State enterprise. It is a State enterprise out of which we are making a lot of money, and out of which the purchaser can make a lot of money in a growing district—an enterprise that is going to be more successful every month in this young district. What district will grow like a sugar area? I say that in a district such as this, when the Minister proposes to sell a successful business in a growing district, and to give a monopoly for six years to any one individual, he runs the risk of having nasty rumours circulated, and, when he goes further and refuses to give the representatives of the public information as to how he is going to dispose of it, and whether or not it is going to be a monopoly, or whether he is going to apply the provisions of the Liquor Act to it immediately to allow that competition by others which he so often professes to believe in—because, if he is going to give a license here, why should he not give other licenses to other people in the same area?—I say that, when he does these things, he lays himself open to the circulation of these rumours.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: You are circulating them now.

Mr. POLLOCK: I am not. I am giving the Minister the opportunity of saying what he is going to do.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: I say that it will be sold by public auction or public tender.

Mr. POLLOCK: We are getting something out of him at last. I am not going behind his back and saying that there are rumours about him. I am not going to conceal papers that ought to be read to the Committee, like some of his colleagues. I say that his attitude is calling for the circulation of these rumours in a business such as this, and, if he does not give this information to the Committee, he stands condemned as being afraid of something. I say point blank that it is his duty to give this information to the Committee, and, if the Committee does not insist upon it, the Committee at least does not know its business very well.

Mr. RIORDAN (*Burke*): When moving this resolution the Minister failed to give us the necessary information regarding the sale of this hotel. We know that, prior to the return of the present Government, the Labour Government were approached with a view to the sale of the hotel. During the first by-election for the Eacham electorate, at the time that the mill was handed over to the farmers, the ex-Premier was approached with a view to the sale of the hotel. He intimated that he was not prepared to dispose of the hotel other than to the farmers, to be conducted on co-operative lines, providing the best accommodation, the best liquors, and the best food to the people living in the district. We have it from the rank and file and the "small fry" of the Government that their election policy was the abolition of State enterprises. That was not their election cry at the last elections.

[*Mr. Pollock.*

Their cry was that they would abolish all non-paying State enterprises.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: No.

Mr. RIORDAN: During last session the Premier intimated that, if he were returned to power, certain things would be done. He was challenged to say whether he would destroy all State enterprises, and he replied that the only State enterprises that would be abolished would be those of the non-paying type.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: No.

Mr. RIORDAN: We are told by the Minister to-day that it is the duty of the Government to govern and not to trade. If that is so, then I suggest that he should compare his attitude with that of the Secretary for Public Lands when approached by representatives of the timber industry to dispose of the whole interests of the Government in sawmilling. That hon. gentleman steadfastly resisted the pressure of the timber kings, and supported his officer in charge of the Forestry Branch. If it is the duty of the Government to govern and not to trade, is it the intention of the Government to dispose of the State Government Insurance Office? The State hotel has returned good profits, and has rendered excellent service to the people in the district. Grant a monopoly, and the same position will be created in the Babinda area as existed in other areas where the people were not given the opportunity of conducting local option polls. Take the position of Julia Creek. What was the position there before local option polls were permitted, and more licenses granted? The unfairness of the position is that those who work unceasingly in the interest of a local option poll very often are not successful in securing a license. Prior to the initiation of local option polls a monopoly existed at Julia Creek, and no consideration whatever was given to providing accommodation for the travelling public, particularly for women and children. There was not sufficient profit in that aspect of the hotel business; the hotel depended entirely upon the bar trade. The travelling public who visited areas where a monopoly existed, particularly the women and children, found it impossible to secure accommodation in the hotel. That position exists in North Queensland at the present time, and did exist in Cairns prior to the granting of additional licenses.

Married people with families could not get accommodation in most of the existing hotels without having to invoke the aid of the police. A monopoly is a bad thing. The district served by the Babinda State hotel is a big area. It is a dangerous policy for the Government to give any individual a hotel monopoly in this area. If the Government are going to sell the Babinda State hotel, they should first initiate a poll for the granting or otherwise of additional licenses, so that, in the event of the new licensee of the Babinda State hotel not giving satisfaction to the travelling public, the licensing inspector for the time being would have the way open for him to recommend the granting of additional licenses. The hotel has had a big turnover; but the profits have not been great because service has been given to the people.

Mr. BEDFORD: At two-thirds of the price of Cairns accommodation.

Mr. RIORDAN: That is so. The accommodation is equal to anything of its kind in Australia, and the meals served are of the best.

Mr. KENNY: They will not be affected by the sale of the hotel.

Mr. RIORDAN: The hon. member for Cook says that neither the meals nor the accommodation will be affected by the sale of the hotel.

Mr. KENNY: The only change it will have will be to improve it.

Mr. RIORDAN: The manager of the Babinda State hotel has given general satisfaction to the travelling public by seeing that the best of liquors are dispensed, that nobody under the influence of liquor is served with intoxicating liquors, and that accommodation is supplied to the travelling public. A number of sly-grog shops operated in the Babinda area before the State hotel was established.

Mr. KENNY: And are still operating.

Mr. RIORDAN: They will also operate if this hotel is sold to private enterprise.

Mr. BEDFORD: They will operate more.

Mr. RIORDAN: The manager of the hotel does not open the establishment before 8 o'clock in the morning, because he will not get up at 6 o'clock in the morning when he receives a salary to open the hotel at 8 o'clock. Immediately 8 o'clock in the evening arrives, he sees to it that the back door of the hotel as well as the front door is locked, enabling him to take his wife and family to whatever amusements are offering. If a buyer comes along with £30,000—which sum it has been said has been offered for the hotel—it will be necessary for that buyer to make interest on his money as well as to secure the return of the principal invested. If a buyer can obtain the Babinda State hotel with its

present monopoly at that price, he will do well, because after a couple of years he will be able to dispose of it, together with the last five years of the monopoly, and receive practically what he paid for it in the first instance. The only desire of the Opposition is to protect the public in the area. Why the Government seek to dispose of something which has resulted in a profit beats me. The Secretary for Railways recognises the necessity of catering for the travelling public by way of refreshment-rooms, and he is compelled to keep the non-paying rooms going as well as the paying ones. The public travelling by the railways have to be provided with refreshment and meals while in transit. The Minister could undoubtedly get a good price for these refreshment-rooms—a much better price, perhaps, than the Government will get for the Babinda State hotel—but he can see that this profitable undertaking is a help to his department, for he has taken steps to remove the rooms from the control of the Secretary for Labour and Industry and place them under the control of the Commissioner for Railways.

With Mr. Allman in charge, the Minister has capable management, and the refreshment-rooms are equal to, if not better than, any railway refreshment-rooms in any other State of the Commonwealth.

Mr. POLLOCK: The railways will be making a little more profit.

Mr. RIORDAN: Good luck to the Minister, too, because the more of these enterprises the Secretary for Railways gets the better it will be for the position of the railways! It might even be a good suggestion for the Secretary for Railways to take over the Babinda hotel from the Secretary for Labour and Industry! (Laughter.)

The following figures show the extent of the business of the hotel in the years mentioned:—

	1924-25.		1925-26.		1926-27.		1927-28.	
	£	s. d.	£	s. d.	£	s. d.	£	s. d.
Bar .. .. .	20,015	11 5	20,114	9 6	17,745	15 2	20,098	6 5
Dining-rooms .. .. .	11,492	8 10	10,924	0 10	14,874	10 8	11,324	17 2
Bedrooms .. .. .	1,485	4 3	1,380	11 3	1,275	7 3	1,364	19 9
Total .. .. .	£ 32,993	4 6	32,419	1 7	29,895	13 1	32,788	3 4

Since 29th May, 1917, when the hotel was opened, until 30th June, 1928, the turnover (including value of staff meals) has been £283,276, and the net profit £29,393 ls. Yet the Government are going to hand over this profitable concern to some of their friends!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is not right.

Mr. RIORDAN: The clamour for the sale of the Babinda hotel comes from the big merchants, because they realise that private enterprise will get rid of more of their dope than the Government would—by trading outside the recognised hours. (Government dissent.) They will make a beer-selling "joint" of it, instead of a hotel capable of catering for the requirements and comforts of the public. The Minister might give us some information regarding the sudden desire of the Government to get rid of an enterprise—

Mr. EDWARDS: It is not a sudden desire.

Mr. RIORDAN: The sale of enterprises which were paying was never outlined in the policy of the Government; and on every occasion when hon. members opposite spoke they were emphatic on the point that they would retain paying enterprises. (Government dissent.) Do the Government intend to sell the Public Curator's business, for example? Hon. member opposite talk about hotel trading, quite overlooking the "Golden Casket." Hon. members opposite said that the policy of the Government was to retain all profit-making enterprises.

Mr. DUFFY: I never said that about the Babinda hotel.

Mr. RIORDAN: The hon. member never said anything about the hotel at Babinda. The whole issue at Babinda was a license for the Italian Club there.

Mr. EDWARDS: Surely you can take the hon. member's word for it!

Mr. RIORDAN: If he did say anything about it, it was a secret between him and

*Mr. Riordan.]*

his friends. The statement was never made publicly. I happened to take part in a couple of by-elections and the general election in the Eacham electorate, and I never heard the candidate for the Nationalist Party advocate the sale of the Babinda hotel, and, if the hon. member for Eacham had contested his seat on the question of the sale of the Babinda hotel, he would have been badly defeated in the Babinda area, and he knows it.

Mr. DUFFY: You are a bad judge.

Mr. RIORDAN: I am a good judge.

Mr. MAHER: He is here, and he advocates the sale.

Mr. RIORDAN: We will accept his word for it. It is a disastrous thing for the State to give away something that is returning a profit of £5,000 a year. That, added to the amount to be saved by the reduction of salaries, will mean £23,000 a year, and all these little bits added to what they get in other ways will yield a little more towards finding the £2,000,000 required to provide the 10,000 jobs for the unemployed.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY (Hon. H. E. Sizer, *Sandgate*): I rise for the purpose of replying to the hon. member for Gregory. If hon. members opposite do not know what the bringing of a hotel under the liquor laws of the State means, then I am sorry for them. I have told them in plain, simple language what the significance of this resolution is, and they say they do not understand it. The point I want to make is this: The hon. member for Gregory made a suggestion deliberately to create an atmosphere in regard to this Government which honestly cannot be created. Every enterprise which the Government sell will be sold openly to the highest bidder, and no person will have any influence in the matter whatever. No State enterprise will be sold behind closed doors like the Chillagoe butcher shop was sold.

The hon. member for Gregory seemed to think that there is an ulterior motive in this matter. Let me say to the Committee and the public generally that the Babinda hotel will be sold publicly, and the sale will be controlled by responsible officers of the Audit Department and officers of my department, as other enterprises have been sold. There will be no ground for suspicion in any way. It is getting fairly low when the hon. member for Gregory makes these suggestions.

Mr. POLLOCK (*Gregory*): I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. gentleman in order in telling me that I am getting pretty low?

Mr. KERR: He said, "It is getting pretty low."

The CHAIRMAN: Order! If the Secretary for Labour and Industry used the expression attributed to him, he is out of order, and I must ask him to withdraw.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: I said, "It is getting fairly low" when imputations are being made such as have been made in the face of the declared policy and the declared statement of the Leader of the Government that all these enterprises will be sold publicly.

Mr. POLLOCK: We are justified in assuming anything after the tactics of the Secretary for Mines.

[*Mr. Riordan.*]

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: There is nothing more to be said in regard to the Bill. I can quite understand hon. members opposite objecting to the sale of the hotel.

Mr. POLLOCK: Why not give us the information?

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: You have got all the information.

Mr. POLLOCK: What about a monopoly?

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: The hotel will come under the liquor laws in the ordinary way.

Mr. HYNES: Will it be sold by tender or at auction?

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: I have already said that it will. Furthermore, let me say quite clearly that we intend to proceed with this proposal. I believe that it is better that the State should be rid of this enterprise because it is impossible for any State to administer a hotel.

[5.30 p.m.]

Mr. POLLOCK: Absurd!

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: The hon. member says, "Absurd"; but does he know that the hotel is not a public place—that a man cannot be arrested on the premises. Does he know that they ignore the law there?

Mr. POLLOCK: There has been no trouble in regard to the evasion of the law there.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: There has been, and on the second reading of the Bill I will produce the evidence and give the details.

Mr. HANLON (*Ithaca*): I am disappointed with the amount of information the Minister has given. I would like to put this suggestion to the Government. No sensible person would believe that, if that hotel is sold either by tender or by auction, the State is going to get anything near the true value of the hotel. We have found that we have not got anything near the true value of any of the State enterprises which have been sold, and we have no reason to believe that things will be any different on this occasion. That hotel is worth a very considerable amount of money. I ask whether, if the Government merely wish to be rid of the actual administration and handling of the hotel, there is any necessity for disposing of the freehold of the property. It will be quite easy for the Government to sell the lease of the property in the same way as freehold owners of hotel properties throughout the State do, and the six years' lease of the hotel will be worth from £3,000 to £4,000 a year to an intelligent publican. That amount, when capitalised, is a lot more than would be secured by the sale of the hotel at auction. It would be a wise and intelligent thing from the standpoint of business ethics for the Government to keep the ownership of the hotel; and, if they are determined not to be in any way mixed up with the actual sale of liquor, they could quite easily sell the lease for six years. There would be any amount of purchasers at a very good price indeed, and if at the end of the six years it was decided by a local option poll that no more licenses were wanted in the area, the person who purchased the hotel would not be in any way

robbed. The State would have got practically as much in return for the hotel as it is likely to get by the present suggested means of disposing of it. If the people in the area decided that more licenses were necessary, the lessee of the hotel would be on a level footing with other people in the district seeking licenses. There is nothing wrong with that suggestion and it is a very business-like point of view to take. Even allowing that there is something in the contention of hon. members opposite that they cannot successfully conduct a hotel, from the point of view of getting the best possible return for the State, it is not saying much for their administrative ability, after criticising the Labour Party for their inability to run a lot of State enterprises, if they fall flat, and the combined intelligence of the front Government bench cannot run a bush "pub." However, that is their own opinion—it is an hon. member opposite who gave that opinion on the matter—I have a little better opinion of the intelligence of the Government than they have themselves. If that suggestion were adopted by the Minister, we would then have a much better chance of disposing of the freehold of the hotel.

Mr. DASH (*Mundingburra*): I am opposed to the disposal of the hotel because it is doing good work in the Babinda area. The Leader of the Opposition pointed out that the sugar-mill workers there are supplied with meals and accommodation at a certain figure, and that service, if not provided by the hotel, must be supplied by the mill management. That is a factor which should be considered in connection with the disposal of the hotel. The hon. member for Ithaca made the very good suggestion that the Government should lease the hotel for six years and then take a local option poll. There is no doubt that the Government are going to get rid of the hotel; but, in fairness to the people who voted for new licenses in the area including Babinda, a monopoly should not be granted. A local option poll in the Cairns division of the Eacham electorate was decided in favour of new licenses; but the court could not grant any in the Babinda area because of the prohibition in the Sugar Works Act of 1911. If the Government wish to get a good price for the hotel—which I am against their selling at all—they should call tenders or put up for auction a six-years' lease or tenancy of the hotel, retaining the freehold and improvements for the Crown. My opinion is that they would get as much for a lease for six years as for the freehold and license together. The history of the hotel has been very good and favourable, and I cannot understand the Government, at this early stage of their activities in office—only four months after their return—wanting to get rid of an asset. They have got rid of some of the liabilities which they say were burdening the State. The Babinda hotel is in quite a different category.

The Government have established refreshment-rooms at Townsville and other centres of the State, and they are now being run by the Railway Department. If the Secretary for Labour and Industry cannot run the Babinda hotel with success, let him hand it over to the Secretary for Railways, and let him have a "go" at it in conjunction with the railway refreshment-rooms.

The Minister was asked by the Leader of the Opposition as to what arrangements were

to be made with the purchasers of this hotel with regard to the catering for the Babinda mill workers. That is a very important matter. I am surprised at the hon. member for Eacham not protesting in the interests of the sugar-mill owners, because he knows that, if an undertaking is not given by the lessee or purchaser to continue catering for the mill workers, the mill will have to put up accommodation costing many thousands of pounds—perhaps equal to half the amount that will be received for the hotel. I publicly protest on behalf of the workers in that area against the disposal of this hotel, if the hon. member for Eacham is not prepared to do so.

Question—That the resolution (*Mr. Sizer's motion*) be agreed to—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 35.

Mr. Annand	Mr. Kerr
" Atherton	Dr. Kerwin
" Barnes, G. P.	Mr. King
" Barnes, W. H.	Mrs. Longman
" Bell	Mr. Macgroarty
" Butler	" Maher
" Carter	" Maxwell
" Daniel	" Morgan
" Deacon	" Nimmo
" Duffy	" Peterson
" Dunlop	" Plunkett
" Edwards	" Russell, H. M.
" Fry	" Russell, W. A.
" Grimstone	" Sizer
" Hill	" Tedman
" Jamieson	" Walker, H. F.
" Kelso	" Warren
" Kenny	

Tellers : Mr. Daniel and Mr. Kelso.

NOES, 22.

Mr. Bedford	Mr. Hanson
" Bow	" Hynes
" Brassington	" Kirwan
" Bruce	" Pease
" Bulcock	" Pollock
" Collins	" Riordan
" Conroy	" Smith
" Cooper	" Stopford
" Dash	" Wellington
" Foley	" Wilson
" Hanlon	" Winstanley

Tellers : Mr. Bruce and Mr. Bulcock.

Resolved in the affirmative.

The House resumed.

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

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY (Hon. H. E. Sizer, *Sandgate*): I beg to move—

"That the resolution be agreed to."

Question—That the resolution be agreed to (*Mr. Sizer's motion*)—put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 36.

Mr. Annand	Mr. Kerr
" Atherton	Dr. Kerwin
" Barnes, G. P.	Mr. King
" Barnes, W. H.	Mrs. Longman
" Bell	Mr. Macgroarty
" Butler	" Maher
" Carter	" Maxwell
" Daniel	" Morgan
" Deacon	" Nimmo
" Duffy	" Peterson
" Dunlop	" Plunkett
" Edwards	" Roberts
" Fry	" Russell, H. M.
" Grimstone	" Russell, W. A.
" Hill	" Sizer
" Jamieson	" Tedman
" Kelso	" Walker, H. F.
" Kenny	" Warren

Tellers : Mr. Maxwell and H. M. Russell.

*Mr. Dash.*]

NOES, 22.

Mr. Bedford	Mr. Hanson
" Bow	" Hynes
" Brassington	" Kirwan
" Bruce	" Pease
" Bulcock	" Pollock
" Collins	" Riordan
" Conroy	" Smith
" Cooper	" Stopford
" Dash	" Wellington
" Foley	" Wilson
" Hanlon	" Winstanley

Tellers : Mr. Cooper and Mr. Hynes.

Resolved in the affirmative.

FIRST READING

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY (Hon. H. E. Sizer, *Sandgate*) presented the Bill, and moved—

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

Question—That the Bill be now read a first time (*Mr. Sizer's motion*)—put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 36.

Mr. Annand	Mr. Kerr
" Atherton	Dr. Kerwin
" Barnes, G. P.	Mr. King
" Barnes, W. H.	Mrs. Longman
" Bell	Mr. Macgroarty
" Butler	" Maher
" Carter	" Maxwell
" Daniel	" Morgan
" Deacon	" Nimmo
" Duffy	" Peterson
" Dunlop	" Plunkett
" Edwards	" Roberts
" Fry	" Russell, H. M.
" Grimstone	" Russell, W. A.
" Hill	" Sizer
" Jamieson	" Tedman
" Kelso	" Walker, H. F.
" Kenny	" Warren

Tellers : Mr. Plunkett and Mr. Warren.

NOES, 22.

Mr. Bedford	Mr. Hanson
" Bow	" Hynes
" Brassington	" Kirwan
" Bruce	" Pease
" Bulcock	" Pollock
" Collins	" Riordan
" Conroy	" Smith
" Cooper	" Stopford
" Dash	" Wellington
" Foley	" Wilson
" Hanlon	" Winstanley

Tellers : Mr. Bow and Mr. Riordan.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Second reading of the Bill made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

[7 p.m.]

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Mr. DUNLOP (*Rockhampton*): Mr. Speaker, I desire to make a short personal explanation.

The SPEAKER: Is it the wish of the House that the hon. member for Rockhampton be allowed to make a personal explanation?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. DUNLOP: You will remember that last night a division was about to take place—

Mr. KERR: Had already taken place.

Mr. DUNLOP: I was under a slight misapprehension when I crossed the floor. The

[*Mr. Dunlop.*]

Deputy Leader of the Opposition, as you remember, proposed an addendum to the Governor's Speech dealing with those subjects upon which I had not had the opportunity to speak owing to the fact that my time was exhausted, hence I objected to the "gag" being applied to the amendment. Seeing that the Standing Orders permitted an hon. member to speak on the amendment, I wished to take the opportunity of doing so, and I intended, as the outcome thereof, to exercise my vote with the Opposition on the matter, but not to agree to the adding of such an addendum to the Governor's Speech. That is a short explanation of my attitude, and it will explain the vote recorded in "Hansard," which was contrary to my real opinion.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

## DUCHESS TO MOUNT ISA RAILWAY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

(*Mr. Roberts, East Toowoomba, in the chair.*)

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. R. M. King, *Logan*): I beg to move—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Duchess to Mount Isa Railway Act of 1925 in certain particulars."

This Bill is a very short measure, containing only two clauses. It will be remembered that the Duchess to Mount Isa Railway Act of 1925 gave the Railway Commissioner a first mortgage over the mining property of the company and also a bill of sale over all the plant and equipment to secure to the Commissioner the amounts guaranteed by the company under the terms of the agreement embodied in the Act. That is, the Government of the day had a complete security over the whole of the assets of the undertaking. In November last the Mount Isa Mines, Limited, desired to issue £1,000,000 worth of 7 per cent. debentures to provide funds for a treatment plant, which was estimated to cost £1,300,000. The subscription to these debentures was guaranteed conditionally on their being a first charge on the company's property, and, after negotiations, the late Premier gave the company an undertaking that legislation would be introduced this session to amend the Act by repealing those provisions of the Act which gave the Commissioner for Railways a first mortgage and charge over the company's mining property and a bill of sale over its plant and equipment. This undertaking our Government agreed to honour, and the Bill which it is now proposed to introduce is for that purpose. A draft of the Bill has been submitted to the company, and has been approved by it. The position is that we simply desire to allow the Mount Isa Company to be in a position to give a first debenture over the whole of its undertakings.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: They could not raise the money in any other way.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Nobody has any objection to it, and it was agreed to by the present Opposition, when sitting on this side of the House. It is simply desired to carry out

that undertaking and to give the Mount Isa Company the right as stated.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: You yourself approve of the undertaking.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Of course we do—we would not introduce this Bill otherwise. We think it is a valuable undertaking for the late Government to give, and we want to honour the undertaking, believing that it should be carried. We desire to see this company progress and obtain sufficient capital, and it cannot do that until it is in a position to give a first debenture over its undertaking. We are introducing the Bill, therefore, to remove the security held by the Government to make the way clear for the company to do so.

Question 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 PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. R. M. King, *Logan*) 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 Tuesday next.

### CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

#### INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

(*Mr. Roberts, East Toowoomba, in the chair.*)

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. R. M. King, *Logan*): I beg to move—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Constitution of Queensland by further amending the Constitution Act Amendment Act of 1896 and the Officials in Parliament Act of 1896 in certain particulars.”

The Bill I propose to introduce is a very simple amending measure, and I feel perfectly confident that members on both sides of the Chamber will have no difficulty in agreeing upon the desirableness of its introduction. (Laughter.) It is quite apparent that members of the Opposition are laughing to keep up their courage.

The object of the Bill is to make a reduction of £250 in the salaries of members of Parliament, including certain officials whose salaries are provided for under the Officials in Parliament Act. Members' salaries will be reduced from £750 to £500 per annum; the salary of the Leader of the Opposition from £950 to £700 per annum; the salary of the Speaker from £1,250 to £1,000 per annum; the salary of the Chairman of Committees from £950 to £700 per annum. The amendment of the Officials in Parliament Act provides for a reduction of £250 per annum in the salaries of Ministers—from £1,250 to £1,000.

Mr. HYNES: Why do they not suffer the same percentage reduction as private members?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Hon. members are fully aware that the increase of £250 per annum was made by the Constitution Act Amendment Act of 1926—the first Act after the 1926 elections—by the late Government. Members of the present Government who were then in opposition protested against the increase on the grounds that the then condition of the finances did not warrant it, and they undertook to cancel the increase at the first opportunity. We are giving members of the Opposition a chance to follow the suggestion that was made by their leader, the ex-Premier, when the debate on the amendment took place in 1926. It is just as well to draw the attention of the Committee to the remarks that the ex-Premier made on that occasion. They will be found in “Hansard,” 31st August, 1926. He said—

“I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that, if Parliament agrees to the increase, every member is entitled to it, and should take it. If hon. members can convince the electors that we have done wrong, then the hon. member for Aubigny will have the opportunity of reducing the amount to £500 again, or to £250 a year, or to whatever amount he chooses. Of course, I do not think that will happen. The financial difficulty was one that I, as Treasurer, felt bound to point out to my party. If we had had a good season, if we had had rain, I would have been one of the first to say to my party, ‘The increase is justified’; but the whole of the argument has centred round the question of whether this is an opportune time for Parliament to grant it or not.”

The Government are simply carrying out the suggestion made by the ex-Premier when he was sitting on this side of the Chamber, and the present Premier has taken the very first opportunity of carrying into effect the protest that was lodged at the time by him and by the members of his party. Further, in accordance with his undertaking, the present Premier placed in the forefront of the policy which he put before the electors of Queensland in May last the intention to revert to the parliamentary salaries existing prior to the increase in 1926. Item 1 in the “Summary of Policy” reads—

“1. To repeal the first Act of the McCormack Government after last elections, known as the ‘salary grab.’ While we do not regard £750 a year as exorbitant for members of Parliament whose duties are honestly and competently fulfilled, we entirely disagree with any increase to members at a time when large numbers of the community are undergoing retrenchment and the sufferings of widespread unemployment.”

Conditions are practically the same now as in 1926, and I think hon. members will agree that it is only right that those in charge of the Legislature of the State should set an example of economy and patriotism during times such as the present, when the best efforts of all are so sorely needed to overcome the existing industrial stagnation and general depression.

The Opposition have shown a very keen desire to keep the Government up to their election pledges, although they themselves broke practically every promise they made at the election of 1926, so I feel confident that they will do all in their power to assist

*Hon. R. M. King.]*

in the passage of this measure and thus help the Government to give effect to the mandate of the electors.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: We have taken the very first opportunity to give effect to our pledge. I am sure that the Bill will be passed without any opposition.

At 7.20 p.m.,

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

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*): I intend to oppose this Bill at all its stages. (Government laughter.) The Deputy Leader of the Government, in introducing the Bill, said that the Government were carrying out one of their election pledges to the electors. That may be so. I personally—nor was any member of this party—was not affected by that pledge. I am taking this opportunity also of saying that I hope the hon. gentleman and his colleagues will be just as vigorous in honouring other important pledges that they made as they have been in this case.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: So they will.

Mr. KIRWAN: So they will not.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: I oppose this Bill, first of all, on the ground that I consider that existing salaries of members of Parliament, Ministers, and officials under the Officials in Parliament Act are proper salaries, having regard to their obligations and their responsibilities. I have always taken that view. I supported that view when the Government introduced the Bill which it is now proposed to amend. I make no apology for saying that members of Parliament who carry out their duties properly, earnestly, and conscientiously, are entitled to £750 per annum.

In certain quarters certain people have attempted to sneer at professional politicians. Let us consider for a moment whether that sneer is justified. If a man gives his whole time to the pursuit of a calling, is he not entitled to maintenance from that calling? People do not sneer at professional clergymen. Every denominational religion has its professors and clergymen who receive certain emoluments, salaries, and fees for carrying out their duties. The people who sneer at professional politicians must apply that sneer, if there is anything in that sneer at all, to every other walk of life. One does not sneer, for example, at professional lawyers; neither does one sneer at professional doctors. If a doctor carries out his duties properly, he can be one of the most honourable professional men in the world, and can give the greatest possible amount of service: but because doctors earn their living—some of them an excellent living from their profession—one does not sneer at them on the ground of professionalism. The day has passed and gone for ever when the pursuit of politics can be regarded as the hobby of men who carry on other business and other occupations. If one reviews the history of Parliament, one can only come to one conclusion—that men who were returned to Parliament in the earlier days of this Parliament looked after the economic interests of themselves and friends, and, by protecting their own interests, obtained an advantage for the services they gave. But,

[*Hon. R. M. King.*

with the development of modern industry and modern conditions of life, more and more is demanded of Parliament every year. Every Minister with experience realises that the task of government has become more complex than was the case some years ago. The ramifications of government extend to every form of human life and human activity; consequently the work of a Minister and of a member of Parliament carried out properly, is a much more serious responsibility than was the case in the past. Therefore, I say, when men are elected who understand that responsibility and equip themselves to carry out their duties conscientiously, they are entitled to an adequate salary, having regard to the position and the lack of security of tenure.

That is one of my reasons for opposing the Bill. There are a number of other reasons with which I shall deal at a later stage; but I make no apology in this Chamber or elsewhere for affirming the desirability and the right of members of Parliament, members of the Government, and members under the Officials in Parliament Act, to receive salaries commensurate with their duties and responsibilities.

There is another adequate reason for which I oppose the Bill. The Deputy Leader of the Government quoted certain remarks of the ex-Premier upon which he endeavoured to base a certain argument. I propose to quote from a speech of the present Premier when the Constitution Act Amendment Bill was under discussion in this Chamber. At page 349 of "Hansard" for 1926 the present Premier is reported as saying—

" . . . The bringing in of this Bill will certainly lend colour to the suggestion that Queensland is able to afford any increase asked for by any section of the community. In my opinion members of this House are not adequately paid for the amount of work they have to do and for the amount of subscriptions they have to meet. . . . It is not a question of £18,000 a year extra that is going to be spent, but the influence it is going to have in connection with the different industrial organisations of this State."

At the second-reading stage of that Bill the hon. gentleman also said—

" . . . We find that the claims made to-day by the various organisations could not be granted without Queensland going insolvent; and if we want to show that this cannot be done, the best thing to do is to make it a reality by pointing out that members of Parliament, instead of receiving increases, are prepared to accept a small decrease. . . ."

Nothing could be clearer than the statement made by the Premier on that occasion, and it has a definite bearing on the Bill now under discussion. The hon. gentleman argued on that occasion that the salary of £750 per annum for a member of Parliament is of itself quite all right; that there was nothing wrong with the basis or principle of that form of remuneration; but he based the whole of his opposition to the measure on the ground that he feared that other organisations and classes of workers throughout the State would make demands for increases in their standard of living.

In the second quotation which I made the hon. gentleman suggested that members of

Parliament, as an example to the rest of the community, should accept a small decrease in their salaries. The hon. gentleman clearly indicated that he was opposed—not to increases to members of Parliament—but to increases for those engaged in occupations outside. The further point emphasised—and it is as clear as any statement can be—is that he believes in a reduction to create a psychology in favour of similar reductions outside. (Government dissent.) The same line of argument can be applied to the Government in introducing this Bill, which they do as a prelude to the general reduction which they hope to bring about by various means in the standard of living outside.

The TREASURER: There is no intention to reduce the standard of living.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: They talk about the necessity of reducing costs, and emphasise that sacrifices will have to be made.

The sacrifices that they wish to make are sacrifices in the wages and award rates paid to workers outside; and the justification for such opposition was that they wished to be in the position of saying that we set an example by reducing hon. member's salaries by 33½ per cent. I wish to point out that there is nothing in the nature of equality of sacrifice in the Bill, because in the case of hon. members, the reduction is 33½ per cent., whereas the percentage is considerably less in the case of Cabinet Ministers—in fact, only 20 per cent.

A further quotation is very interesting. It is from the speech of the present Treasurer, at that time the hon. member for Wynnun—one of the humorists of the House. The hon. member, is reported on page 385 of "Hansard" for 1926, as saying—

"I venture to say that there is many a member sitting in this House who to-day is not able to pay his way out of the £500 which he receives. I say that deliberately. I venture to say that there are many of us on this side who, if we made up our accounts, would find that we were in arrears. . . . I again say most deliberately that I do not think that members of Parliament are over-paid, and I repeat what I have said previously, that the newspaper criticism of hon. members has in many cases been absolutely unfair. . . ."

The TREASURER: Read the whole of what I said.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: At page 391, the present Deputy Premier said this—

"And I say that for a man who takes up politics as a profession, £500 is not sufficient, and he needs other means. . . . When I came into Parliament in 1920, Parliament had lately increased the salaries of hon. members."

Then he goes on to justify certain other deductions that he made. The only point in the hon. member's speech on that occasion is the recognition of the inadequacy of £500 a year, and the necessity for having some other profession. That is an opinion that he is entitled to have.

Another quotation that I wish to give is from the speech of the hon. member for East Toowoomba. That hon. member makes some very wise statements in this Parliament from time to time. On the introduc-

tion of the Bill, as reported on page 353 of "Hansard" for 1926, the hon. member said—

"If the question went before the Board of Trade and Arbitration, I have not the slightest doubt that hon. members would get at least £1,000 a year."

That is the view candidly and definitely expressed by an hon. member whom the Government have honoured by electing as their Chairman of Committees. That is the expression of opinion he gave on that occasion, which shows that he holds very sound views on matters of importance.

These are very definite reasons why we should oppose this Bill. First of all, we oppose it on the ground that it is unduly decreasing the remuneration of hon. members and bringing it below an adequate return for their services. I oppose it on the ground that I believe it is a prelude to a general lowering of the standard outside, and will be used as a pretext and justification for such action. In introducing the Bill the Minister engaged in a rather interesting line of argument. He appeared to think—or rather professed to think—that hon. members on this side would agree to the proposal for the reasons he set forth. Let me give this Committee a little history about this measure. When the measure that the Government propose to amend was introduced, hon. members opposite were very concerned as to whether the Government were going to increase salaries or not. They only decided to oppose the Bill in the House on the ground that the Government were going to do it anyhow, and it would be good politics to put up a semblance of opposition to it. Certain Ministers sitting on the front Treasury bench at the present time are not in favour of this Bill. If the Bill were left to members of Parliament to decide on non-party lines and according to the opinion of each individual hon. member, I am satisfied that the proposal would be defeated.

Hon. members opposite—at least a number of them—are just as much opposed to this proposal as I am myself. They have, however, been whipped into line, and will probably support the Bill on division. When we introduced the measure we

[7.30 p.m.] did not make it a party measure.

We told our members that, if they desired to vote against it, they had that right. One hon. member did vote with the Opposition against the Bill. He is not in the House at the present time. Hon. members opposite may indulge in recriminations as long as they like, but this is a matter which affects the standard of members of Parliament, and is one upon which hon. members should give a decision themselves without any party arrangements. Of course, we understand that certain arrangements are to be made on behalf of those more necessitous members on the opposite side of the House. The hon. member for Logan knows that quite interesting circulars are being sent around at the present time asking for subscriptions to maintain the Nationalist organisation at a high standard of efficiency. Several business houses have received those circulars, and the desire is to establish a fund from which they can assist members in different ways.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Did not you do that in your party?

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: Perhaps they may decide to adopt the methods of Lloyd George and company, who established quite a

*Mr. Smith.]*

large party war chest by the sale of titles, which gave them hundreds of thousands of pounds, and enabled Lloyd George and his Government to exercise a form of patronage which was destructive of the public life of the country. For the reasons I have stated I am definitely opposed to the Bill. It is a retrograde and unjust step, and is, in my opinion, a prelude to a general attack on standards throughout the community.

The TREASURER (Hon. W. H. Barnes, *Wynnum*): When dealing with another matter yesterday the Leader of the Opposition was most emphatic in stating that, if anything was to be quoted, whether in the House or in Committee, it was a fair thing to quote the whole of what was said.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: It might not be possible to do that under the Standing Orders.

The TREASURER: Did you notice, Mr. Speaker, how he slipped to-night?

Mr. BEDFORD: Read it all yourself.

The TREASURER: The Leader of the Opposition, who took that stand last night against certain things being done in Committee or in the House, and about statements being made that were not accurate, is the first one here to-night to get up and practically read only a portion of a member's speech in connection with an important matter. Here is an hon. member—the leader of what he says is a great party—and it is a party that has been wrecked by reason of its misdemeanours in the past—who comes along and makes a statement in the way he has done to-night. It is perfectly true that I did say that an allowance of £750 is not too much for a parliamentarian who does his job. I repeat that to-night. I say it is not too much, but may I read something else that I said, as reported on page 351 of "Hansard" for 1926? I referred to automatic increases, and the Premier interjected—

"They are all automatic increases—the result of a contract."

I then said—

"The hon. gentleman can deal with that. I say emphatically that, when one sees salaries increased from £1,000 to £1,050 and from £900 to £950 in every department, this is not the time to do that. I know there are men sitting on the other side who are just as tender in their hearts towards the worker as I am. Is it a fair thing that we should be put in a position of obtaining extra money whilst many workers are being turned adrift at the present time? It is a scandal. It is a sad reflection upon the Government of the day for them to come along and have the audacity to do such a thing. This is a question of morality which should exercise the Government at this particular time. I shall certainly vote against the proposal."

Mr. BEDFORD interjected.

The TREASURER: I do not know whether you have noticed, Mr. Maxwell, that on the other side there is one hon. member with a very big head and, perhaps, very small brains, who is very fond of interjecting. Hon. members can rest perfectly certain that this party is not out to get at the worker, as the Leader of the Opposition said. Have you noticed how, all this session, he has tried to belittle this Government? Why? Simply because hon. members opposite were

defeated. You know what happened. There were great preparations before the last election—even the Government motor cars, I believe, were cleaned up ready for a glorious victory that did not eventuate. (Government laughter.)

The point I want to emphasise is that, as a matter of fact, the true friends of the people outside are not those who are raising these points, and who are insinuating that there is going to be an effort to reduce the salaries of the workers. That is not so; but an effort is being made by hon. members on this side to take a stand to show that, when men are walking about without work, they are prepared to deprive themselves of some of the money that otherwise would be coming to them.

Mr. POLLOCK: Then what is the use of round-table conferences?

The TREASURER: The hon. member for Gregory talks about round-table conferences. Last night his attitude was that there should not be any round-table conferences at all.

Mr. POLLOCK: I did not speak last night at all.

The TREASURER: That was his attitude when he spoke of round-table conferences. The need for bringing in a matter of this kind is to show that there is a desire to bridge over some of those difficulties which exist to-day in the community. I want to say emphatically that one of the ways by which they can be bridged over is for men holding positions such as ours to show that we want to extend the hand of brotherhood to the man outside, and not to widen the gulf or increase the difficulties which we so often find exist. The Leader of the Opposition was mean enough to say that, when this matter was being discussed previously, some members on the front bench had gone round and urged members on the other side—

Mr. BEDFORD: So they did.

At 7.40 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

The TREASURER: I would not be at all surprised at anything the hon. member would do.

Mr. BEDFORD: I was in favour of it, and I took it. I did not say that I was not in favour of it, and then take it.

The TREASURER: Speaking for myself, I did not go round to any hon. members asking them to vote one way and then to act in the opposite way. I am prepared, and always have been, to take my stand on any subject and accept the responsibility for so doing.

Mr. BEDFORD: You accepted the increase.

The TREASURER: Yes, and, if it came again, I would accept it. In answer to the hon. gentleman, I would inform him that my services are worth more to the country than are the services of the hon. member.

Mr. BEDFORD: For the type of Christianity that is mixed up with Roma street?

The TREASURER: All I can say is that, if the hon. gentleman had had a little more Christianity, he would not have been such a big failure. The very fact that he is so short of that asset is one reason why he is so deficient to-day.

Mr. BEDFORD: Because you are a good Christian you are a fine commission agent.

[*Mr. Smith.*]

The TREASURER: I am very glad to hear the hon. member say so. As a commission agent I have the confidence and the trust of the people. May I drive that home? I am not the class of commission agent who buys a property, and, perhaps, has not paid for it and wants to sell it at an extreme price to someone else. If the hon. gentleman wants the truth, that is the position.

Mr. BEDFORD: You have stolen from the farmers all your life.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. C. Peterson, *Normanby*): I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member for Warrego in order in stating that the Treasurer has plundered from the farmers all his life?

Mr. KERR: "Stole," he said.

Mr. BEDFORD: "Stolen," I said.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Did the hon. gentleman accuse the Treasurer of having "stolen" from the farmers all his life?

Mr. BEDFORD: Yes, but I was wrong in saying "all his life."

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to withdraw those words.

Mr. BEDFORD: I withdraw the statement. He did not steal all his life.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. C. Peterson, *Normanby*): I ask that the hon. member for Warrego be called upon to withdraw unreservedly.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. gentleman to withdraw without any condition.

Mr. BEDFORD: I withdraw the statement that he had stolen all his life.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Stand up when you withdraw!

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I can deal with this matter myself. I ask the hon. member for Warrego once for all to withdraw unreservedly.

Mr. BEDFORD: You have it.

The TREASURER: I was about to say that it is perfectly clear that that was part of the policy submitted by the Government to the people. I was about to say, when the hon. gentleman interjected a while ago, that every hon. member on this side is committed to it. They are committed to it by reason of the fact that they are out to serve this great country; they are out to do their very best. One of the difficulties facing them above all others is that, by reason of the extravagant expenditure by hon. members opposite when they were in power in a way which has been detrimental to the best interests of the State, the position has been made more and more difficult for salaries of £750 per annum to be paid. That is the position to-day.

Mr. KENNY: The £13 a day the Leader of the Opposition got would have gone a long way towards it.

The TREASURER: I am here dealing with a question of the policy of the Government—a policy which I am sure commends itself to every citizen in the community, because the citizens will at least say that members of the Government and their supporters have taken the earliest opportunity of carrying out one of their pledges in connection with the campaign which recently took place, and which was fearfully disastrous to hon. gentlemen opposite.

Mr. DASH (*Mundingburra*): I intend to oppose this measure for all I am worth. (Government laughter.) As one of the strongest advocates of the increase, I do not intend now to go back on that advocacy. The object of the Government at this particular stage of their career is to endeavour to make it impossible for representatives of the working-class interests to take their seat in this Chamber. By introducing this measure providing for a reduction in the allowances of parliamentary representatives the Government believe they will make it impossible for us to carry on as representatives of the Labour movement in this Parliament.

Mr. KENNY: You did not get as much as you did when you came into Parliament.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: He got a good deal more.

Mr. DASH: The object of this Bill is to make it difficult for any member on the Opposition side to carry on; but I want to emphasise that the Labour movement will stand by its members despite what the Tory National Government may do to its representatives in this matter. Members of the Government Party know that they cannot carry on their duties as members of Parliament on a salary of less than £750 per year. We saw them when they entered this Chamber in 1920—the same year as I did. They looked just as hard-up as any member of the Labour Party. Although they voted against the increase when it was mooted in 1926, they were damned glad to receive it on pay day.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to withdraw that word.

Mr. DASH: What word is that?

The CHAIRMAN: The word "damned."

Mr. DASH: I withdraw. I want to say, Mr. Roberts, that the Deputy Leader of the Government, when making his speech, did not quote the whole of the remarks of the ex-Premier. He only quoted the portion that suited him to put before the public of Queensland as a reason why the salaries should be reduced.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I only quoted the advice that came from the ex-Premier.

Mr. DASH: We know that hon. members sitting behind the Government are not anxious for this measure, but they had no say whatever in the matter. They had no say in the selection of the Cabinet; they simply have to do what they are told by the Cabinet.

Mr. KENNY: You are used to doing what you are told.

Mr. DASH: When the Bill was introduced in 1926 by the hon. member for Cairns—the then Premier—the then Leader of the Opposition—the present Premier—is reported at page 375 of "Hansard," 1926, to have said—

"If a Government were composed of members who were prepared to assist in every possible way to encourage development and build up the country in the interests of the whole of the people and not in the interests of a section, then probably members would not be over-paid at £1,000 per annum."

On page 376 he is reported as having said—

"I have found out that the people are just and are prepared to pay what

*Mr. Dash.*]

they think a member is entitled to receive. People outside do not object to the £750 a year. I do not object to newspaper criticism of parliamentary proceedings, but I do object to leading articles stating that members of Parliament work only three months of the year, because that is absolutely untrue. I know what work members have to do. It takes the whole of their time if they do their jobs properly. I do not object to the increase to Ministers."

He was more concerned about the Ministers.

"I think they are entitled to be adequately paid for the work they do and the responsibilities they have to undertake, although I think we have every right to criticise them for the way in which they do their work."

The remarks of the present Treasurer on that occasion have already been quoted, so I shall pass on to a statement made by Mr. B. H. Corser, the present Federal member for Wide Bay, and then representing the Burnett electorate in this Chamber. That gentleman, at page 386 of "Hansard" for 1926, is reported as saying—

"I want to correct some impressions that have been formed as to the duties of hon. members. I want to be fair to all sides of the House. If hon. members carry out their duties to their electorates as is expected of them, they have little spare time at their disposal. The statements appearing in the press that hon. members work only four months in the year display not only ignorance of the duties of hon. members, but an ignorance of what is required of hon. members by their constituencies."

Later on, at page 388, we find this statement—

"The £500 received at present does not go into the bank. When members visit their electorates they probably are not able to live in their own homes. There are many calls upon members, and they are compelled to make many sacrifices. Some members, for family reasons, cannot bring their families to the city, and others have to give up little businesses that they have been carrying on and bring their families to the city. In many cases these sacrifices are not fully compensated for. I know there are some hon. members who claim to be so hard-up to-day that they are unable to meet many of the obligations devolving on a member of Parliament. It is not our intention to oppose the increase from the point of view that we do not believe in payment of salaries to hon. members."

On that occasion the present Deputy Leader of the Government said—

"I am in favour of giving a politician a higher rate of salary than we are getting now. I think I shall make it plain as I proceed, but I think hon. members on this side have already stated time after time that they are not against the amount of the increase. . . ."

Coming now to the hon. member for Enoggera—

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: You have not completed my remarks. You have not even finished the sentence. I went

[Mr. Dash.

on to say. "but they feel that the time is not opportune to make any increase."

Mr. MAXWELL: What about misquoting now?

Mr. DASH: I am not misquoting. The hon. gentleman quoted a portion only of the remarks of the ex-Premier. This was the statement made by the hon. member for Enoggera—

"Last year I had the very great pleasure of giving to at least forty fetes in the Enoggera electorate, and each fete cost me, on the average, £2 10s. . . . I sympathise with them, because the salary of a member of Parliament is totally inadequate to meet his expenses."

Mr. KERR: Quite true, but I voted against the increase.

Mr. DASH: The hon. member for Toowoong had also something to say on the matter, because at page 395 we find this—

"A Minister ought not to go about in a broken-down four-wheeled buggy or a sulky; he ought to do his work in a proper, decent, respectable way in keeping with the dignity of the position he occupies."

Mr. MAXWELL: Hear, hear!

Mr. DASH: The hon. member was concerned about how a Minister went around and about upholding the dignity of the position.

Mr. MAXWELL: You can uphold a lot of dignity on £13 0s. 3d. per day!

Mr. DASH: Nothing is said about the ordinary members of Parliament and about the position which they have to uphold. The Nationalist Party are concerned only with the question of trying to make it impossible for members of the Labour Party to remain in this Chamber.

Mr. FRY: That is not correct.

Mr. DASH: The object of this Bill is to give a lead to the Employers' Federation. Let me now refer to the opinion expressed by the hon. member for Warwick. What was in his mind was that, if the increase of salaries were granted to members of Parliament, it would be an inducement to these outside to do likewise. As reported on page 397 of "Hansard," the hon. member said—

"Surely, if we increase members' salaries, it will be used as an argument outside why wages should be increased everywhere."

That is the reason behind the Bill. According to the Government policy, they are going to amend the Industrial Arbitration Act and the Basic Wage Act at present on the statute-book. They know that by giving this lead it will be an incentive to the Employers' Federation to take up the good work outside. Although the members of the Nationalist Party are agreeing to a reduction of salaries, what is happening in connection with this House? To-morrow I will put them to the test as to whether they believe in a reduction in expenses or not.

Mr. KERR: We won't be here to-morrow.

Mr. DASH: A meeting of the Parliamentary Building Committee will be held to-morrow, and I have given notice of motion that no member of Parliament be allowed to sleep on the premises, and that the bedroom furniture be sold and the rooms be made into offices for members of Parliament. I shall

put them to the test as to whether they want to save money for the people of this State. They say the object of the reduction of salaries is for the purpose of relieving the Treasury of a certain amount of expenditure. The upkeep of the bedrooms in this building is a charge on the Treasury of Queensland, and, if the Treasury is relieved of that charge, it will mean more money for the taxpayers of Queensland. If hon. members opposite support that motion, it will show that they are honest in agreeing to a reduction of salaries.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: That motion will very likely be carried.

Mr. DASH: That will be a test of the sincerity of hon. members opposite, and, if they do not agree to the resolution of which I have given notice, it will show that they are not sincere in what they are doing at the present time. I know different members opposite are going round ascertaining if any more beds can be put into different rooms.

Mr. KERR: Have you been spying?

Mr. DASH: I am on the Building Committee, and I know. I am opposing this reduction of salaries because I realise that members of Parliament are entitled to £750 a year, if they do the work of their constituents in a proper manner. Those of us who represent electorates outside the metropolis, and even members representing metropolitan electorates, have to put their hands in their pockets from day to day to assist those in need. It is nothing new to see people coming here from day to day from country electorates and from city electorates, and calling on hon. members, pointing out the bad position they are in and asking for £1 or 10s., or whatever the particular member can give them, to relieve their distress for a few days. Although hon. members received £750 a year during the last three years they are not in any better financial position than they were when they were in receipt of £500 per annum. The only difference has been that hon. members are able to look after their electorates a bit more than was possible in the past, and they are able to do justice to the position that they hold. If people living in the country come to Brisbane, they generally want to see over Parliament House and various other public buildings, and they call upon the member for the district to show them around. He is a very mean and miserable member if he does not treat them as a member should treat them when they visit Parliament House.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Put in in the book.

Mr. DASH: An hon. member interjects, "Put it in the book." If he is so used to putting it in the book and leaving it there,

I am not. A reference to the [8 p.m.] refreshment-room records will show who puts it in the book.

Just to show that the members of the Government, even on the Ministerial bench, are not sincere in this motion, when we got the £750 per annum, one of them, the Secretary for Railways, came on a deputation to the ex-Premier with members of his party who were receiving a country allowance, and he was not satisfied with the £750; he wanted a further allowance to enable him to carry on the work of his electorate.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Not a further allowance, but the same amount as they were getting.

Mr. DASH: He wanted an increase on the £750. He realised that even £750 was not sufficient for a country member with a large electorate to do the work that was expected of him. Yet we find hon. members opposite introducing this Bill knowing in their own hearts that £750 is not too much for a member of Parliament who carries out the work of his constituency.

Mr. EDWARDS: We don't expect you to be cheerful about it.

Mr. DASH: The hon. member is smiling to keep his courage up.

Mr. EDWARDS: There are plenty over there who are smiling to keep their courage up.

Mr. DASH: I hope hon. members will see the wisdom of what I say. They know that this is only political propaganda. When the Bill was passed in 1926 we did not find any of them going to the Treasurer saying, "Mr. Treasurer, we do not want the increase." They went along as eagerly and as early as any member of this party.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): When we increased our salaries—or our parliamentary allowances, to be correct—in 1926, I made my position quite clear, so that the electors whom I have the honour to represent would know the position I took up in regard to the increase of the parliamentary allowance. I can understand the object that is behind the movement on the part of our Tory friends sitting opposite in regard to the reduction of the parliamentary allowance. They are following in the footsteps of those who have gone before them—that is the old Tory Party. I hold in my hand a book entitled "Queensland Politics during Sixty Years," by Mr. C. A. Bernays, a gentleman who is well known to most of us in the House, and who deserves great credit for this splendid compilation. (Hear, hear!)

We have had sixty years of politics here in Queensland. I am afraid we have gone back about sixty years! In this book Mr. Bernays gives the history of the pastoralists when they governed Queensland. In the course of that history he has the following paragraph:—

#### "PAYMENT OF MEMBERS.

"As a Government measure, the Payment of Members Act became law, and under it members were paid on the basis of £300 a year, with a mileage allowance for travelling expenses."

That was done in 1889! As you know, Mr. Roberts, there were not many Labour men in Parliament in 1889. Later on there was an influx of Labour men into the Queensland Parliament, and what did good old Toryism, that had plenty of cash behind it—as it has now, I suppose, judging by the appearance of their representatives—those who now sit on the Treasury benches—do? Good old Toryism, in 1892 under Sir Samuel Griffith, in order to prevent an influx of Labourites into this House, moved to reduce the payment of members. Mr. Bernays, in his book, says—

#### "RETRENCHMENT AMONGST MEMBERS.

"Hon. members were faced with a grave calamity this year when, by an amendment of the Payment of Members Act, introduced by Griffith, their salaries were reduced to £150 per annum."

*Mr. Collins.]*

I remember that later on Sir Samuel Griffith received £3,500 per annum as Chief Justice. The Deputy Leader of the Government knows that is true. Yet, to prevent the advent of the working class to this Parliament, Sir Samuel Walker Griffith introduced a measure reducing the salaries of members to £150 a year, and my old friend Andrew Fisher, who afterwards became Prime Minister of the Commonwealth, represented in this Parliament the workers of Queensland for a period of three years on that salary. Even though hon. members opposite wiped out salaries altogether, they could not kill the Labour movement; yet that seems to be their object at the present time. It is all right for our wealthy friends opposite with big incomes; it is all wrong when men like myself come into Parliament. "The idea of giving Labourites £750 a year!" I hear them say.

I made my position quite clear during the election. I said that, apart from my work in making laws for the State of Queensland, I was worth more than £750 to the electors I have the honour to represent in this Parliament, for I keep a record of the number of letters I send out, and last year I sent out over 4,000. Will anyone say that I have not done good work in many cases for those electors? I represent a Northern electorate, which, as a rule, I visit on two occasions each year. I have to travel to and fro in that electorate. Will anyone say that I have accumulated a fortune during my fourteen years as representative of the Bowen electorate? We have to meet the charges of up-to-date hotels that we stay at, and why should we not stay at those hotels? I say we should stay at first-class hotels. If I am good enough to be sent into this Parliament, am I not to uphold the dignity of the position I hold as a representative of the people?

When the Premier was in the country during the election, as Leader of the Opposition, he said that the £18,000 this proposal would save would pay the interest on £300,000, which could be used to give relief to the unemployed. Why, that is only a drop in the ocean in dealing with the unemployed problem! Why should we seek to belittle ourselves? Most of us on this side represent large areas of country.

Mr. MAXWELL: We represent the people.

Mr. COLLINS: Some hon. members opposite talk about their country electorates. My electorate has an area of about 10,800 square miles, and it is really one of the small electorates in North Queensland. I enter my emphatic protest against this reduction of our parliamentary allowance. I do so for another reason. I have devoted practically the whole of my life, either in Parliament or out of Parliament, in trying to bring about better conditions for the workers of this State.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You have not succeeded.

Mr. COLLINS: Have not succeeded! When I look back over my forty-six years' residence in Queensland—when I realise the position that the workers occupied less than twenty years ago, and see the position that they occupy to-day—the comparison is: Hell in my time; Heaven to-day. There is no getting away from that truth. We have accomplished wonders. Having devoted the whole of my time to bringing about better

conditions for the mass of the workers of this State, I always said that, when opportunity came in 1926 to increase my salary to £750 a year, I did not hesitate in voting quite cheerfully for it. What is wrong in that? We see from time to time—I regret it—reports appearing in the press about professional men evading income tax—some of them with incomes of £3,000 and £4,000 a year! These gentlemen do not want to pay their just dues to the State. If these gentlemen, whether they be doctors, lawyers, or any other professional men, are allowed to exploit the people to that extent, what is wrong with their paying the representatives of the people a fair parliamentary allowance to enable them to carry on their work?

I remember that the late hon. member for Albert put up the best argument that I have listened to in my life when the salaries were increased from £300 to £500. He pointed out that it was necessary to place members of Parliament above want, so that they could not be corrupted. The hon. member was on sound lines when he used that argument. Every member of Parliament should be placed above want so that he will not fall into temptation.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: You do not apply that principle to the judges.

Mr. COLLINS: The judges are well paid. I should like to know from the Deputy Leader of the Government if it is the intention of the Government to apply this principle of reduction in salaries in the same proportion to every person in the employ of the State. He shakes his head. Is that "Yes" or "No?" I was never taught the meaning of a shake of the head. Is it the intention of the Government to apply the reduction to the highly-paid officials of this State. Mr. Roberts, you represent the people, like myself. Imagine approaching one of these departments where the Under Secretary receives £1,000 per annum—in some cases £1,100 per annum—the Assistant Under Secretary, say, from £600 upwards per annum, and the chief clerk receiving more than you will receive under the proposal by the Government! We are supposed to be the bosses, are we not? I shall have to interview men whom we employ, men whom we pay, men receiving twice the salary in some cases that we shall receive if this measure becomes law. Why, it is not common sense! I represent 7,000 odd electors in Parliament.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Misrepresent them.

Mr. COLLINS: I would advise the hon. gentleman not to be so foolish. I remember the time when he got up a round robin against the Denham Government. I am keeping my eye on him, because there might be another round robin.

My point in this matter is that my people do not desire to see my status as their representative lowered. They have no desire to see me on the poverty line. They desire to see me just as well dressed as any other citizen of the State, and to travel through my electorate as I ought to travel.

Again, compare our position with the position of the public servants. A public servant receiving more than £300 a year receives a travelling allowance, no matter where he goes in this State. Why should representatives of the people not receive the

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same consideration? What about the hon. member for Cook when he travels through his electorate? It is 90,000 square miles in extent. It would take the whole of his £500 to take him through the whole of his electorate if he did so properly. It is a mistake to reduce the allowance of the representatives of the people, because we were able to give better service to the people on the increased allowance. By way of illustration, let me mention one little place in my electorate, Mount Coolon, which is 86 miles from the railway line. Who pays the motor-car hire to take me to that centre? There is no travelling allowance set aside to enable me to visit that centre. I have to pay it out of my own pocket.

Mr. KENNY: I cannot do my electorate in a motor-car. I have to take a horse.

Mr. COLLINS: That is so; and most of us had to walk in the early days. It is ridiculous to state that the salvation of Queensland depends on a saving of £18,000 on the salaries of members of Parliament when the Treasurer this year will be dealing with over £17,000,000. I have never heard of a more ridiculous proposal. I am surprised at hon. members opposite, especially those who represent large areas in the North, supporting this motion. I can quite understand some of the city members, to whom £750 a year is like a drop in the ocean, supporting it.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: The rich men are all on your side.

Mr. COLLINS: No. At any rate, I am entering my protest against this proposal. Having devoted all my time to securing better conditions for the masses of the people, surely I am entitled to a fair remuneration for the services I have rendered them, for the service I am rendering my electorate, and for the service I am rendering to the State of Queensland in helping to make the land prosperous and its people happy and contented.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BRUCE (*Kennedy*): There is not the slightest doubt in my mind that this question has been introduced for the purpose of gaining political capital. So far as I am concerned, the Government are entitled to all the political capital they can get out of it. We must exclude the new members from our criticism, as they were not in the House when the increase was made. The increase originated only by members of the then Opposition approaching members of the Labour Party, suggesting that a round robin be prepared and signed for presentation to the Government asking that the salaries be reviewed. I notice that the majority of those hon. members who suggested the round robin are not in this Chamber to-night. They have thought it wise to keep out of the House while this debate proceeds. The fact remains that there were strong representations made by members of the present Government, then sitting in Opposition, for the signing of a round robin, to dodge the public, in order to secure an increase in salaries—not to £750 but to £875 or £1,000. That was the proposal made by members of the present Government, when in opposition.

Mr. EDWARDS: You ought to be made to name them.

Mr. BRUCE: But the Labour Party said, "We will make it a party matter; we will undertake the whole responsibility; we will go into the House and tell the people that we are going to increase the salary to £750."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: We are going to decrease it now.

Mr. BRUCE: Yet every member of the then Opposition opposed the increase, although they had made these earlier approaches to the Government of the day. I am speaking to-night because I supported this matter in the party deliberations when it was originally brought about. I think it only honest, therefore, to explain my attitude when the matter is before this Chamber. Previously, I had occasion to refer to the cry for greater production, on which occasion I stated my experiences when I was working much harder than I am to-day, when I was getting from those wonderful employers who always encourage us to work hard £160 per year, or, to adapt the lines of Goldsmith, "I was passing rich on £180 a year." The proposed reduction, therefore, will not be a button off my waistcoat, so to speak, to the conditions that existed then.

What was the position in the old squatter days—in the days of the first Parliament of Queensland? No salaries were paid, and hon. members sacrificed themselves on the altar of duty! But at the same time they presented themselves with some of the choicest land as a recompense; and their salaries were actually much greater than those which have been received since. Later, salaries were allowed, and these were gradually increased as time progressed, with the result that workers were enabled to secure direct representation in Parliament. Now the desire is to lower those salaries with the object of making it more difficult for hon. members to represent their electorates. One hon. member has already said that, as compared with 1914, the purchasing power of the sovereign to-day is only 12s. My constituents in the Kennedy electorate raised no objection to the increase to £750 per year. They are intelligent people, and they know that, if they want a capable man to represent them, he has to be paid an adequate salary. If the £500 now proposed were a definite salary payable to hon. members, everything would be quite all right; but there are numerous incidental expenses attaching to the office of member of Parliament. In my own case, on a very low estimate, it costs me £100 per year to visit my electorate, which, with the expenditure entailed in entertaining, etc., is increased by £50 a year; and there are numerous other expenses. Indeed, on a salary of £500 per year, the net amount accruing to the member will be somewhere in the vicinity of £250.

In raising this question, the Deputy Leader of the Government quoted a speech made in 1926 by the ex-Premier, saying in effect that, because the ex-Premier said that, this Government would carry it into effect. It is obviously not because the ex-Premier said anything against increasing salaries, but for the purpose of creating the right atmosphere outside, for we have not heard of any other Bills being introduced to give effect to what the ex-Premier may have stated.

There is not the slightest doubt that, had those hon. members been worrying about the poor workers outside, as some of them

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have professed to be during this debate, they could have taken the £250 and given it to some of the charitable institutions or some of the poor workers they are so worried about. Did they do that? Of course they did not.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Some of us did.

Mr. BRUCE: You can tell that to the kindergarten. They took that money and put it in their own pockets. As a matter of fact, hon. members who opposed the increase in this House nearly killed some of their comrades in their rush to the Treasury to collect it. If the Opposition at that time were opposed to the increase because they wanted to assist the workers, they could have pooled the whole lot, capitalised the fund, and thereby kept hundreds of workers from starvation and want. They did not do that; and now they come here and wet their whiskers with tears trying to tell the people that they were opposed to taking the increase of £250 because of the position of the people outside.

Again, we have some of the wealthiest men in Queensland and some of the wealthiest men in this House living here at 36s. a week—living here in bedrooms with splendid appointments and food supplied at a cost to them of 36s. a week. They are the people who get up and say, "We want to cut down expenses because there are poor people outside who are unemployed." That is the rottenest kind of hypocrisy that could possibly be practised. They are well able to go to hotels in the metropolis and pay their way. Instead of that, they are living, battenning, and fattening on the people of Queensland in this building at a cost of 36s. per week.

Mr. EDWARDS interjected.

Mr. BRUCE: You are one of them. The hon. member for Nanango is supposed to be a hardworking farmer, and he tells us of the trials and tribulations he endured in the old bark hut. He is not living in a bark hut now. He is living in a bedroom at Parliament House at 36s. a week, with clean sheets every second morning. Yet these hon. members have the cheek to come into this Assembly and state that their object in reducing salaries is to assist the poor people outside. They should know the cost of different things. When I visit my electorate, I have to visit approximately fifty different places, and in some of those places I have to hire cars, while in other places I travel on horseback. At the lowest estimate that costs me £100 a year. Then it costs me another £50 a year to entertain visitors who come to Brisbane from my electorate. As I said before, so far as the proposed reduction is concerned, compared with the £180 a year these wonderful employers gave us when we were doing our best to increase the production of the State—well, it is not a button off my waistcoat. I am satisfied that I shall go on living quite all right, and it will hurt me a lot less than it will hurt some hon. members opposite.

The suggestion has been made that we should have approached the Arbitration Court. The most dishonest thing that any Government could have done would have been to approach the Arbitration Court, because we are the creators of the Arbitration Court. We appoint the members of the court, and we fix their salaries; and, if we were to go to a body whom we appointed and ask them to fix our salaries, I have

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not the slightest doubt that they would give us £1,000 a year, and that a fortnight afterwards they would ask us for an increase of their own salaries.

The honest, fair, and reasonable thing to do was to do it in the way the Labour Government did. If I thought for a minute that this reduction would in any way assist the unemployed, I would support it, if Ministers would agree to a reduction of one-third of their salaries. When you are dealing with figures you must deal with them on a percentage basis. The ordinary member of Parliament is to have his salary reduced by 33½ per cent.; Ministers are reducing their salaries by approximately 20 per cent.

If they are honest, if the Treasurer was worrying about the poor unemployed workers outside, would he not say, "one-third of my salary must go"? Would he hold on to that extra percentage? No. He [8.30 p.m.] has got a wonderfully kind heart, but a wonderfully big pocket, and he loves to fill it. His pockets will always be fuller than his heart. If they were always honest on the front Government bench—if they have a spark of honesty—they would say to the people of Queensland, "We, together with other members, are going to reduce our salaries by 33½ per cent." They are not honest.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY interjected.

Mr. BRUCE: The Secretary for Labour and Industry is a product of that mild and melodious race that forms the subject matter of "Uncle Tom's Cabin." I hope he will not interject any further. Hon. members opposite will not be honest. It is the attitude we expect from them as rulers of this Government, and it is the attitude which we have anticipated and which will be proved to the people in the future.

Mr. DUNLOP (Rockhampton): I have pleasure in rising to say a few words on this important subject, not wishing either side to think for one moment that, like some hon. members, I am inebriated with the exuberance of my own verbosity. (Laughter.) I wish the Opposition to realise that, when they are alluding so emphatically to hon. members on the Government side—through a flaw in the constitution of the Assembly, there is no place for the Independent member or to the leader of my party, namely, myself—I hope they will not misrepresent me when they are alluding so drastically to the Government side of the House, because I have heard a smattering about the Sleigh agreement and the policy of the Premier. My policy—whatever it is—they can rest assured is "fair-dinkum," and I am not going to be dragged into the mess they are in or have my honour besmirched. I go straight forward, or get out, and I am rising just to make known my policy. (Interjections.) I am here to make my own speech and to take no notice of anybody else. (Hear, hear! and laughter.) When I have finished, I think I shall have proved, as one of those who were twenty-eight years in the Government service, that we earned our little bit—and I want the Secretary for Railways to realise that, as old railway servants, we were expected to earn our bit. I am going to prove that we as parliamentarians do not honestly earn what we are about to get. (Loud laughter.) I am really coming down to the same salary as I received as Mayor of Rockhampton—an

allowance of £500 per year—and I am supporting the reduction of members' salaries to £500 to be true to the principle I stood for as mayor. My reason for the attitude I take will be something solid, and the Opposition will have no cause to complain like they have cause to complain of some hon. members on the Government side who, according to them, try to get under, over, or through the fence. (Laughter.) The Opposition will remember the Labour Convention which was held at Emu Park. There they refused to give the basic wage to the workers whom they are supposed to represent.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear! (Opposition dissent.)

Mr. DUNLOP: I challenge contradiction of that, and if hon. members opposite can prove to the contrary, I am prepared to resign my seat. The basic wage was £4 5s. If you turn up the division list at that convention—it may not have been at Emu Park, but it was at one of the Labour conventions, and I was there throughout the piece—you will find that very few other than the then hon. member for Fitzroy, Mr. Harold Hartley, and one or two more, stuck up for that basic wage of £4 5s. The convention declared that it was only in favour of giving £4; yet they are supposed to represent the workers! I am prepared to prove as an Independent member that I do represent the worker, irrespective of who he is. Yet those same members, when they came back to this House a few months afterwards, increased their own salaries from £500 to £750. (Opposition interruption.) I challenge contradiction of that. I maintain that it was only right and honourable that, before the salaries of members were raised, the people should have been told what they proposed to do and that they considered the country was in a financial position to stand it. If any Government members wish to raise salaries contrary to that principle, they are not consistent with what they propose to do now. I say quite frankly that, if the duties of a member of Parliament are carried out as they ought to be carried out, £750 is none too much, especially for members who have to come from Gregory, Cook, and other distant parts of the State. If any differentiation in salaries is to be made, I agree that they should get more than I do, who come only from Rockhampton, whilst I should get more than the man representing a metropolitan constituency, who only needs to take a hop, step, and jump to enable him to reach Parliament House from his home. On the other hand, I have to live away from home. I intend to set an example, at any rate, in one respect, which is quite new for a politician from Rockhampton. If Rockhampton was a good enough place to put me in, it is good enough for me to have my home there, and out of my £500 I shall maintain my home there and pay my expenses here and go home only when it is urgently necessary for me to do so. (Laughter.) I am afraid hon. members have misconstrued me. (Laughter.) When I said that I would not go home except on urgent matters, I am afraid that hon. members have allowed some misconception to percolate through their minds, and are trying to put a "Winning Post" construction on it. (Loud laughter.) I want to be at my post here to attend to my duties.

The late Premier said on one occasion during the election campaign that, if he was returned, he would divide the House on

this question, and that those who voted for £500 would get only £500, and he and those of his party who voted for £750 would get £750. That shows what a poor knowledge of legislative work the late Premier had, because all hon. members have to be treated alike. Hon. members are looking well after the prescription I administered in my maiden speech. I then concocted a suitable dose of medicine for them, and on this occasion I have to swallow a dose myself. I have to take it standing or sitting, and of course I am going to take it.

It is no use trying to get away from the fact. If the salary has been increased unconstitutionally, then I want to start afresh. Let us raise our salaries at the right time and at the right place—before we are elected. I do not believe in any half-way house business. I speak with the mind of an independent member. I hope that it is not the intention of the Government to apply the pruning knife to the necks of the workers merely because the salaries of parliamentarians are being reduced. If there is to be any retrenchment, then my vote on the floor of this Chamber will always be in favour of starting with the higher-paid officials and working downwards. The Secretary for Railways and everyone else discuss the railways. If a railway worker were seen talking for five seconds, he would be told that, if he did it again, he would be suspended. I have grown quite fat on this job. I have put on weight since I have been here; and, if this is the life that I have to live for £500 per annum, then I do not think I shall be able to get into my clothes, and my wife will not know me when I get home at the end of the year. We assemble in this Chamber on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, working an average of eighteen hours a week. Comparing our salary of £500 per annum and the hours that we work with the wages of the worker, it is a disgrace to the country, and there is no wonder that the country is not paying its way. We, as parliamentarians, work eighteen hours a week for £750 per annum or £500 per annum. I am honest enough to advocate that, if we are to receive £500 per annum, then we should introduce a Bill to commence work on Monday morning, finishing on Saturday, like any ordinary worker. That is the policy for which I stand. It is no use trying to dodge the issue. Put as much jam as you like between the slices of bread; whether they be independent slices or not, it makes no difference. We have to swallow the medicine. There is only one man that I can remember in my career that I believe they could not hang. That was Mr. Lee. Three times the bolt was drawn and three times the trap-door refused to go down. But I am satisfied that on this occasion the Treasurer has seen that the bolt has been well greased, and, metaphorically speaking, the black cap has been drawn over our faces; and when the bolt is drawn, the trap-door will drop; and, when we seventy-two members stand on that trap-door, we must all go the one way, whether we like it or not, and bang will go a "fiver" a week. (Laughter.)

Mr. BRASSINGTON (*Balonne*): I listened with a great deal of interest to the speech made by the Deputy Premier in dealing with this matter; and I paid careful attention to his outlining of the case for the Government, giving reasons why this reduction should be brought about. He failed to

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inform us that it was the intention of the Government to reduce the salaries of the Ministers by 33½ per cent. Why penalise private members of this Chamber, whilst members of the Ministry are permitted to sit on the front Government bench and enjoy a fine high salary? If they were consistent, they would at least apply the same principle to themselves. I view this question from a serious angle. I think it is one of principle, and one that concerns the people of this State.

If the State is to receive the services of its best men as representatives in this Parliament, then it must pay those men a reasonable salary. A salary of £750 is not excessive. During the course of the election campaign from many platforms I told the people very definitely that, if I were returned to this Chamber, under no circumstances would I vote for a reduction in salary. My point is that the people in my electorate understood my views, which were very definite, and, notwithstanding that, they returned me with a record majority. Consequently I am on safe grounds in expressing my views upon this proposal. It is not the question of a salary of £750 that matters, for in the last analysis it is a question that rests with the people. It is for the people to say who shall represent them here. If the people sent the right type of representative here, that representative is worth £750. As they returned me to this Chamber on 11th May, I contend that I received a mandate from them on this question and that they considered I was worth the salary then paid to me.

I desire to trace the history of this campaign to reduce the salaries of members of Parliament. During the election campaign the Premier made a promise to the people—a promise which he did not realise he would so soon be called upon to fulfil. He was backed up by other hon. members opposite, who, in turn, went round the country vilifying the Labour Party for increasing the salaries of hon. members. A very important point is involved here to which I desire to call the attention of the Deputy Leader of the Government. Hon. members opposite are always preaching the beauties of constitutional government, and stressing to the people that Parliament should be respected; but the propaganda indulged in by them during the campaign tended to reduce the dignity of Parliament to a very low level in the eyes of the people. Hon. members opposite who are so ready to rise and sing, "God Save the King" in a spirit of patriotism for the purpose of securing a political advantage over my party have deliberately broken one of the principles they stand for.

It is worth while to recall the history of this salary increase. We remember the speeches on the question made by hon. members opposite. Many of them, when addressing this Chamber, offered the opinion that £750 was not too much to pay a member of Parliament, but, when pressure was brought to bear upon them, they voted against their convictions. It is a fact that immediately the Bill was passed hon. members opposite could not reach the Treasury quickly enough in order to collect the increased salary. If they were sincere in their convictions then, the only honest course for them to have pursued, especially after voting against the measure in this Chamber, was to have refused to accept the increase.

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They collected the increase, after having condemned the Government for making it available. But the matter did not end there. Shortly after this a deputation of hon. members in this Chamber decided to interview the then Premier on the question of travelling allowances.

Mr. COLLINS: The Secretary for Railways was amongst them.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: That is so. They had "hide" enough to approach the then Premier, after condemning the increase in salary, and suggest to that gentleman that they should be granted a travelling allowance. Is there any consistency in their action? What did the late Premier say? He said to the Secretary for Railways, "There is the door; get out or I'll put you out." It was a very fitting answer to his request.

Hon. members opposite say one thing in public for the sake of catching the eye of the people and quite a different thing in private. A greater example of political hypocrisy than that would be difficult to find. The Secretary for Railways claimed that during the last election campaign he did not make an issue of the increase in salaries. He told the people that he was not against an increase in salary.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What you said about myself and the Premier is not correct.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: The Home Secretary is another who claimed that the salary now paid is not too high. I know, too, that the hon. member for Nanango and other hon. members honestly believe that the salary should not be reduced.

Mr. EDWARDS: Who told you that?

Mr. BRASSINGTON: You told me yourself. If these gentlemen are honest—

Mr. EDWARDS: You are not telling the truth.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: Let them cross over to this side of the House and record their votes against the proposal of the Government.

Mr. EDWARDS: You are devoid of an argument when you bring up a thing like that. You are getting down low.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: I listened to the hon. member for Nanango when he addressed this Chamber last night, and, if I had ever heard a lower political speech delivered, I certainly would apologise to him. I say definitely that, if hon. members opposite do possess a member to ventilate grievances through the sewer, then the hon. member for Nanango is the man.

The result of this move to reduce salaries will seriously affect members on this side of the Chamber, for the reason that all of us are serving a great movement which demands our best service at all times. We are unable to pursue a profession or go into business; consequently we have to rely solely on our parliamentary allowance, and, if this measure is passed, it will place us in a very awkward position, for we shall certainly find it very difficult to carry on with £500 a year. When the Deputy Leader of the Government was addressing this Chamber this afternoon, he did not tell hon. members these facts.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: What facts?

Mr. BRASSINGTON: He did not say, firstly, that many hon. members opposite,

although they will be losing £250 per annum as the result of the reduction in salary, will save a considerable amount as the result of the Government's policy. I venture to say that, as the result of the sale of State enterprises—the sacrifice of State enterprises—many members will make much more than £250 annually. I am going to ask the Treasurer a question—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. R. M. King, *Logan*): I rise to a point of order. The statement made by the hon. member for Balonne is a direct reflection on the members of this side of the Chamber. If it means anything at all, it is an imputation of bribery and corruption. I ask that the hon. member be made to withdraw that statement.

The CHAIRMAN: I understand that the hon. member for Balonne made a statement that the members sitting on the Government side would receive easily £250 per annum from the sale of State enterprises. I must ask the hon. member to withdraw that statement.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: If you will permit me, Mr. Roberts, I will make myself clear. I intended to convey that, as the result of the disposal of State enterprises, business concerns outside would now have a chance to exploit the people of this State.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: You said nothing of the kind.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: I also added this fact—that many members opposite were business men, and they would enjoy benefits as the result of the sale of State enterprises. I claim that there is nothing wrong in that statement, and I do not think that I should be called upon to withdraw.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I press my point of order. The statement just made by the hon. member is not in accordance with fact.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Mr. Brassington.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: Continuing my argument, I would ask the Treasurer a question: During the past few years we have heard that hon. member and other hon. members debating the question of State enterprises. Repeatedly we have heard them assail the State Produce Agency. I offer the opinion that, the State Produce Agency having been sold to private enterprise, those firms conducting businesses similar to the business conducted by the Treasurer will no longer have the opposition of the State Produce Agency, and, consequently, that will mean quite a lot to them. Will the Treasurer deny that. The Deputy Premier also failed to inform this Committee that the Attorney-General is credited with receiving over £3,000 a year by minuting briefs. If that is so, it is little wonder that hon. members opposite are in favour of a reduction of salaries. Let me carry my argument a bit further. Those hon. members opposite who are not in business, but who are making a living on the land certainly will enjoy benefits as a result of the suspension of the rural workers' award. Under that award they were called upon to pay a certain rate of wage, and now that the award has been suspended, they can employ rural workers at 10s., 15s., or £1 a week, and I say their concession for the salary reduction comes in there. Last, but not least, I am told on good authority that those hon.

members who have no business will lose nothing by this proposed reduction. I understand that during the election campaign the big insurance companies and other business interests promised the Nationalist-Country Party the sum of £2,000,000 to relieve unemployment. (Government laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: That is something new.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: These big business concerns also told hon. members opposite that they could have that money to relieve unemployment or that it could go into the party's fighting fund. (Government laughter.) It is a well-known fact that out of that sum of money will come the £250 necessary to make up the salaries of hon. members opposite who are suffering a decrease as a result of the passing of this measure. There is no gainsaying facts.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It is not a fact.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: A reduction of salaries will hurt hon. members on this side alone, and hon. members opposite will enjoy greater benefits. This spirit of self-sacrifice is quite all right as a gesture to the public outside; but in the last analysis hon. members opposite sacrifice nothing, while they make hon. members on this side sacrifice £250 a year in an endeavour to cripple the Labour Party.

Before I conclude I want to refute a statement that has been made in this Chamber on many occasions. It has been said that £750 a year is too much for a member of Parliament. I want to place my own position before the Committee, and allow hon. members to judge for themselves. I say without fear of contradiction that I endeavour to give the best service possible to my electors. I attend in detail to every inquiry, and I hope I shall never be absent from this House while public business is being conducted. I represent the fifth largest electorate in Queensland, containing an area of 44,000 square miles. The boundary of that electorate commences at Talwood and runs westward beyond Hungerford, the loneliest place in Queensland. The northern boundary ends at Surat, 150 miles north of the border. Most of the leading towns in the electorate are far removed from a railway.

[9 p.m.]

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Did you not get the £50 country allowance?

Mr. BRASSINGTON: I did not. I was one of those who were unlucky enough to come here and receive no allowance at all. If I desire to tour my electorate, I have to pay a large sum of money for motor-car hire to reach St. George, Surat, Yeulba, Bollon, and Hungerford. Hungerford is 134 miles from the railway. I have to pay special rates to travel by car. During the last twelve months I traversed my electorate on two occasions, and I kept a careful account of my expenses, and it cost me £120 on each occasion. To take two trips into the electorate annually costs £240. Deduct that amount from £500, and it leaves £260, out of which must come taxation, other incidentals, donations, and so forth. It is a well-known fact that hon. members on this side are somewhat generous. We believe in standing up to the parliamentary custom of assisting sporting bodies, charitable institutions, and other concerns

*Mr. Brassington.]*

throughout our electorates. After going over my expenses, I find that, if this proposed salary reduction is put into effect, I shall only get about £150 per year. I ask hon. members opposite if that is a fair proposition to a man who represents a Western electorate?

Another aspect which is continually overlooked is that a member of Parliament saves his constituents far more than his salary annually. During the last two years I have sent out over 7,000 letters. If the matters I attended to and the inquiries I made went through the hands of a lawyer or an agent, it would cost my constituents considerably over £1,000 annually in that direction. I submit that, as the result of that saving I have effected for my constituents, I have justified the salary I am now receiving.

In conclusion, I want to comment on the allowance which is proposed under this Bill. We have not seen the Bill, but I sincerely hope that, when the measure is brought before the House, it will contain provision for a decent allowance for country members. I honestly think that, if my salary is to come down to £500 a year, I should at least have a travelling allowance of £100 per year to enable me to get over my electorate. If this salary reduction is put into effect, the work I am doing in my electorate will be seriously upset, and my electorate will suffer. An hon. member yesterday, by interjection, accused another hon. member of only visiting his electorate once in three years. How can that hon. member justify that interjection when he to-night supports the proposed reduction in salaries? He finds fault with members not going to their districts; yet he proposes to make the position so impossible that most of us will not be able to visit them more than once in twelve months.

Mr. EDWARDS interjected.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: I attend to my electorate better than the hon. member for Nanango. At least my constituents do not demand that I live in the electorate—they are not suspicious of me, like the constituents of the hon. member for Nanango are of him. I ask the Committee to consider the position of country members. The Government should be fair and just to Western members, and give us an allowance that will enable us to travel our electorates, meet our people, ascertain what they require, and come here and give our very best services.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. Godfrey Morgan, *Murilla*): I listened very attentively to the speech of the hon. member for Balonne, and I am sorry to say that he spoilt an otherwise very moderate speech by not being accurate in many of his statements.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: I was very accurate about that deputation.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member said that I was one of a deputation that waited on the late Premier with reference to travelling allowances. That is perfectly true. I waited on the Premier, along with several others, at the invitation of the hon. member for Burke, and, after two gentlemen had expressed their views and given their reasons as to why country members should retain the travelling allowance, the Premier said that he did not intend to allow country members to have the allowance; yet, after we left that room,

[*Mr. Brassington.*]

some members of the party opposite were very much annoyed. They threatened the Premier with all sorts of pains and penalties. Now I have discovered that six members of the Labour Party received the allowance.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: You are wrong. I challenge you to show that there were six.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: If the hon. member wants to know the names of those men and the amount they drew, it is only necessary for him to ask a question. Amongst those members, I understand, was a Cabinet Minister, who drew £1,250 as salary, £2 2s. a day during the period he was travelling in his electorate, and expenses; yet he received the travelling allowance in addition.

Mr. POLLOCK: That is not correct.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member can ask a question in the House, and find whether it is correct. He can be supplied with the figures. The hon. member for Kennedy said that a number of country members on this side of the House occupied rooms in Parliament House at a cost to them of £1 16s. a week. Why not be fair? The hon. member knows just as well as I do that just as many Labour members, if not more Labour members, occupied bedrooms last session than members of this party this session. He knows perfectly well that one of those members was a Minister of the Crown, who drew £1,250 a year and lived continually in this House as a home. He knows perfectly well who the Minister was—I do not want to mention his name. Why was he not fair? He knows, too, that the hon. member for Gregory lived here continually.

Mr. POLLOCK: I was entitled to do so.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member was entitled to do it, and so were the others. They occupied bedrooms by permission of the Speaker and the committee constituted for the purpose of looking after this House. Members of the party opposite who occupied bedrooms were just as many as, if not more than, the members of this Government Party who do the same thing. When hon. members opposite make statements in this Chamber, they should endeavour to be fair. The hon. member for Kennedy wished the inference to be drawn that it was only members on this side of the Chamber who occupied rooms in this building. That is not so at all. We can point to the fact that not only those who were entitled to rooms—that is, the Ministers and the Chairmen of Committees—but also several other members of the late Government Party made their homes at Parliament House continually—not just during the session. Many of our country members occupy rooms only during the week when Parliament is in session. They do not live in Parliament House all the year round. I think hon. members should, at any rate, play the game; but the hon. member for Kennedy did not play the game in this matter.

Everybody knows my attitude on this question. Every elector throughout the *Murilla* electorate is familiar with my views, because I said on the platform during the last election that, if a reduction was to take place in the cost of Parliament, I was in favour of reducing the number of members, and not salaries. That opinion is known

throughout the whole of the Murilla electorate and practically the whole of Queensland. I have nothing to hide or fear in regard to this particular matter; but I do think that hon. members should try to play the game, one with the other. It was unfair for the hon. member for Kennedy to make the insinuations he did to-night, and it was unfair for the hon. member for Balonne to say what did not actually occur. I do not know whether he was present at the meeting; but, if he was not, then he should have endeavoured to ascertain the facts before making the misstatements he did to-night. I do not wish to hide the fact that I was one who went to the Premier and advocated that country members should receive a travelling allowance. If £750 was a proper salary for city representatives, then it was not a proper salary for country representatives; and the same remarks apply to the salary of £500 per annum. I still say that it is only right that country members should receive an allowance in accordance with the distance of their electorates from the seat of Government. I am still of that opinion, and do not wish to escape from it. The country member is entitled to a travelling allowance because his expenses are heavier than those of a member living in the city. I have represented the Murilla electorate for twenty years, and at one period I received £300 per annum. My home and my family were in the Murilla electorate. I did not bring them to the city, but I returned practically every week end, travelling 240 miles by train and 30 miles by road with a horse and gig. I represented the electorate on £300 per annum, and later on £500 per annum. When I received £300 per annum, I paid 5s. a day for my board at the Albert Hotel, where the tariff is now 15s. a day. When the salary was increased to £500 per annum, it merely covered the additional expense incurred, and, when it was increased to £750 per annum, it merely covered the additional expense incurred. Whatever may eventuate, it is my definite opinion that a country member is entitled to a travelling allowance to enable him to visit his electorate at least once a year.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. R. M. King, *Logan*): I intend to be very brief. Some years ago we had a very learned judge in Queensland, who, whenever a case was being argued before him by a certain barrister who was quoting from reports invariably followed the practice of insisting on having a copy of the report and closely following the barrister who quoted it. He did that because he believed that barrister was not to be trusted, and he wanted to see that he quoted correctly. He said that it was dishonest advocacy; and we have had a specimen of such dishonest advocacy in this Chamber to-night.

Mr. BRUCE (*Kennedy*): I rise to a point of order. Is the Minister in order in saying that the advocacy of this party is dishonest advocacy?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Exactly.

Mr. KERR: That is quite all right.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Secretary for Public Instruction.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Mr. Roberts—

Mr. BRUCE: Your advocacy is lying advocacy. Lying advocacy!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: What does the hon. member say?

Mr. BRUCE: Lying advocacy!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I did not say "lying advocacy." I said, "Dishonest advocacy."

Mr. BRUCE: I know; but I say that your advocacy is lying advocacy. You are lying all the time you are standing up there. Lying advocacy! Lying advocacy!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It is not "lying advocacy."

Mr. BRUCE: It is lying advocacy.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The hon. member for Mundingburra purported to quote from certain speeches that were delivered in this Chamber in 1926.

Mr. BRUCE: You could not be honest. You could not be honest if you tried.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: That may be the opinion of the hon. member, but I would be very sorry to be judged according to his standard.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member for Kennedy is trying to make the duty of this Chair almost impossible.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The CHAIRMAN: I have displayed a certain amount of leniency to-night. I have heard the remarks the hon. member applied to the Deputy Leader of the Government, and I now call upon him to withdraw.

Mr. BRUCE: I said he could not be honest, but that was not quite correct. He could not be honest if he tried.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member for Kennedy to withdraw.

Mr. BRUCE: I withdraw, but the Secretary for Public Instruction said that this side indulged in dishonest advocacy.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member for Kennedy definitely to withdraw without any comment.

Mr. BRUCE: I withdraw the statement, at your order.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I want the statement withdrawn absolutely with no comment.

Mr. BRUCE: I withdraw it with no comment.

The CHAIRMAN: I call upon the hon. member to withdraw the statement without any comment whatever.

Mr. BRUCE: Without any comment whatever I withdraw it.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BRUCE: I am doing definitely what you are asking. What more can I do?

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member to withdraw the statement.

Mr. BRUCE: I withdraw the statement.

*Hon. R. M. King.]*

Mr. POLLOCK (*Gregory*): Mr. Chairman, I rise to a point of order.

Mr. HYNES: What a farce! (Interruptions.)

Mr. POLLOCK: The Deputy Leader of the Government definitely accused members of this party of "dishonest advocacy." If it is correct that the hon. member for Kennedy should be called upon to withdraw, then it must be equally right that the Deputy Leader of the Government should be called upon to withdraw his statement.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Who is running this House?

Mr. POLLOCK: I submit that there cannot be one ruling for this side of the House and another for the Government side. I say that with all due respect to you, Mr. Roberts.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Deputy Leader of the Government.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. R. M. King, *Logan*): The hon. member for Mundingburra stated that he quoted from a speech which I delivered in 1926 when the Constitution Act Amendment Bill was before this Chamber.

Mr. DASH: Did I quote the correct words?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It is a specimen of dishonest advocacy by the hon. member, because I am going to quote the whole of a sentence which the hon. member began but did not complete.

Mr. DASH: Did I quote the correct words?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The hon. member did so as far as he went, but I shall show the Chamber what I mean by dishonest advocacy.

Mr. DASH (*Mundingburra*): Mr. Chairman, I rise to a point of order. Is the Minister in order in saying that I was dishonest in quoting?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. R. M. King, *Logan*): I said it was dishonest advocacy.

Mr. DASH: Cheap lawyer tactics! Snide lawyer tactics!

Mr. POLLOCK: One law for the Government and another for us.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The hon. member for Mundingburra quoted me as follows:—

"I am in favour of giving a politician a higher rate of salary than we are getting now. I think I shall make it plain as I proceed, but I think hon. members on this side have already stated time after time that they are not against the amount of the increase."

He stopped at that point, where there was a comma. The rest of the sentence read—

"but they feel that the time is not opportune to make any increase."

Mr. DASH: But you didn't mean it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I said exactly what I meant.

Mr. DASH: It was dishonest advocacy.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: That is a specimen of the practice of hon. members opposite of misquoting, and we know it perfectly well. When the Secretary for Mines was quoting

[*Mr. Pollock*,

here the other night, what a howl went up from the Opposition because he only quoted portion of a report!

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: He said that he was quoting from a document when he was doing nothing of the sort.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: He, at any rate, finished the sentences. Then we have another little specimen of incorrect quoting. The hon. member for Mundingburra quoted the hon. member for Toowong as saying—

"I am one of those members of Parliament who think that the position of Minister of the Crown is one whose dignity should be recognised. A Minister ought not to go about in a broken-down four-wheeled buggy or a sulky; he ought to do his work in a proper, decent, respectable way in keeping with the dignity of the position he occupies."

He did not quote this, which immediately followed:—

"What I do object to is that the whole of the expenses of a Minister should be paid, and that at the same time he should receive two or three guineas a day as well. What for? For doing work that they are already paid for. To me, that is politically dishonest."

Here is another garbled quotation, to the extent that it was not fully quoted. The hon. member for Mundingburra quoted the hon. member for Warwick as follows:—

"Surely, if we increase hon. members' salaries, it will be used as an argument outside why wages should be increased everywhere."

He stopped there.

Mr. DASH: Did he not say that?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Why did the hon. member not continue and quote the next sentence?

Mr. DASH: Why did you not read the whole of the Premier's speech?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: This is what the hon. member did not quote, and it follows on immediately after the part which I have just quoted:—

"We know quite well that the country cannot stand increased wages."

Does not that put a different complexion altogether on the position? If that is not dishonest advocacy, I do not know what is. I am referring particularly to the hon. member for Mundingburra. The remarks of the other hon. members I do not take much notice of, because it is all "hot air"—something to go out to the public to show their professed sympathy for those on the bread line.

Mr. POLLOCK: You are in out of the wet, anyway.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Thank God, I am not depending on Parliament to be in out of the wet! The Leader of the Opposition was quite modest in his remarks, and I have no great fault to find with them; but he, too, quoted something and did not finish the quotation.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: So did you!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I finished the quotation to give the full sense of the remarks.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: So did I.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The hon. member did not finish the quotation.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: I did.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I stand corrected. I did not take particular notice of what the hon. gentleman was saying at the time. I give him credit for doing a thing reasonably; but I think the hon. member for Mundingburra was unreasonable. The Leader of the Opposition raised some question about professional clergymen, professional lawyers, and so on being entitled to charge for their services.

The CHAIRMAN: Under the provisions of the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 22nd August 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 Tuesday next.

The House adjourned at 9.26 p.m.

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