

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 18 SEPTEMBER 1929

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WEDNESDAY, 18 SEPTEMBER, 1929.

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

QUESTIONS.

DEMAND FOR CANECUTTERS AND ROADWORKERS
IN BURRUM ELECTORATE.

Mr. HANLON (*Ithaca*) asked the Secretary
for Labour and Industry—

“1. Has his attention been called to
the statement of the hon. member for
Burrum in this Chamber that canecutters
and roadworkers were wanted in the
Burrum electorate?”

“2. What steps is he taking to supply
this alleged labour shortage?”

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY (Hon. H. E. Sizer, *Sandgate*) replied—

"1. Yes.

"2. On inquiry I find that the statement of the honourable member for Burrum referred to the week preceding the date of his speech—that is to say, the week ending 31st August. During that week there was, I understand, a demand for forty cancutters and fifty roadworkers from the Childers area which could not be filled. Since that date the shortage has been overcome."

STATISTICS IN RE COLLINSVILLE STATE COALMINE.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*) asked the Secretary for Mines—

"1. What was the total capital expenditure incurred in connection with the State coalmine, Collinsville, since its inception up to 30th June, 1929?"

"2. What was the capitalisation of the mine as at 30th June, 1929?"

"3. For each year ended 30th June since inception up to and including the year ended 30th June, 1929, what was—

(a) The production of coal;

(b) The total cost of production of coal raised, and the average cost per ton;

(c) The amount paid by the enterprise by way of interest to the Treasury;

(d) The amount written off for depreciation;

(e) The amount paid in royalties to the Mines Department;

(f) The amount of profits?"

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

"1. £102,937 10s. 4d.

"2. £82,641 15s. 11d.

"3.—

Period.	(a) Pro- duction.	(b)		(c) Interest to Treasury.	(d) Depreciation.	(e) Royalties.	(f) Profits.	
		Total Cost of Production.	Average Per Ton.					
	Tons.	£ s. d.	s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	
1-8-17 to 30-9-22	2,110	From Development	
1-10-22 to 30-6-23	49,620	33,600	0 11	12 1-6	..	1,022 2 3	1,024 5 7	5,489 18 8
1-7-23 to 30-6-24	74,866	61,600	17 4	16 5-5	3,635 6 0	1,967 18 3	1,894 5 4	383 11 4
1-7-24 to 30-6-25	80,135	57,964	17 4	14 5-6	4,061 12 7	1,966 0 0	2,016 4 1	8,141 14 2
1-7-25 to 30-6-26	119,785	84,119	11 4	14 0-5	3,694 12 9	3,166 12 8	3,166 12 9	14,368 1 10
1-7-26 to 30-6-27	106,481	80,382	4 5	15 1-2	2,836 9 1	2,765 9 5	2,754 16 1	6,079 14 6
1-7-27 to 30-6-28	114,802	79,191	7 0	13 9-3	2,516 9 10	2,961 19 1	5,528 15 2	8,070 2 6
1-7-28 to 30-6-29	129,100	90,345	3 4	13 11-9	2,250 13 10	3,227 10 1	6,455 0 2	4,718 17 10

NEW BOWEN JETTY AND INDEBTEDNESS OF BOWEN HARBOUR BOARD.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*) asked the Treasurer—

"1. What was the total cost of erecting and equipping the new jetty at Bowen?"

"2. What is the amount of the annual interest being charged by the Treasury to the Bowen Harbour Board in connection with the capitalisation mentioned in 1?"

"3. Has the Bowen Harbour Board met its obligations to the Treasury in this connection?"

"4. Has there been any increase in trade to the port of Bowen since the completion of the new jetty, and what is the estimated amount of such increased trade?"

The TREASURER (Hon. W. H. Barnes, *Wynnum*) replied—

"1. A loan of £217,597 1s. 11d. was granted to the Bowen Harbour Board.

"2. The annual instalment of interest and redemption on the loan is £13,560 5s. 8d.

"3. No.

"4. The revenue collected by the Bowen Harbour Board from all sources during the years 1925 to 1928 was as follows:—1925, £9,540 18s. 10d.; 1926, £11,723 7s. 5d.; 1927, £10,513 15s. 5d.; 1928, £12,442 5s. 2d."

PAPERS IN RE SLEIGH COAL CONTRACT.

Mr. PEASE (*Herbert*) asked the Premier—
"1. Did he send a telegram worded as follows to H. C. Sleigh, Sydney, on the 4th September:—

Your letter has been sent on to Minister for Mines, who sees no reason for correction. Papers will be tabled in Parliament.

(Signed) MOORE (Premier)?"

"2. If so, when will the papers be tabled?"

The PREMIER (Hon. A. E. Moore, *Aubigny*) replied—

"1. Yes.

"2. Honourable members have already been informed that the Sleigh agreement and all correspondence and other papers relating thereto may be perused at the Department of Mines. The honourable member for Bowen and other honourable members of the Opposition

have taken advantage of that offer. If the honourable member desires special treatment in the matter, I shall be pleased to have the papers brought to Parliament House for his perusal to-morrow afternoon."

RAILWAY REVENUE AND EMPLOYEES, CAIRNS DISTRICT.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Queenton*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. What was the railway revenue in the Cairns district—(a) 1927-28; (b) 1928-29?"

"2. What was the railway revenue, Cairns district, for the two months, July and August—(a) 1928-29; (b) 1929-30?"

"3. How many railway employees at Cairns have been placed on short time recently?"

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

"1. (a) £301,275; (b) this information will appear in the Commissioner's annual report.

"2. The information is not available, as railway revenue is only apportioned after the close of each financial year.

"3. The information is being obtained."

GOVERNMENT POLICY IN RE UNEMPLOYMENT.

Mr. HYNES (*Townsville*) asked the Premier—

"When does he propose to initiate promise No. 2, as made in his policy speech, 4th April, 1929, viz.—'Work and wages in place of unemployment doles and demoralisation'?"

The PREMIER (Hon. A. E. Moore, *Aubigny*) replied—

"In the near future."

RAILWAY REVENUE, CENTRAL QUEENSLAND, AND EXPENDITURE ON NEW RAILWAY STATION, ROCKHAMPTON.

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

"1. What is the railway revenue in Central Queensland Division for the two months, July and August, in the years 1928-29 and 1929-30, respectively?"

"2. The amount expended on the new railway station at Rockhampton, including the railway refreshment-rooms?"

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

"1. The information is not available, as railway revenue is only apportioned after the close of each financial year.

"2. £23,587."

EMPLOYMENT FOR APPRENTICES IN RAILWAY DEPARTMENT.

Mr. DASH (*Mundingburra*) asked the Premier—

"In view of the election poster he issued, 'Give the boy a chance,' does he not consider it his duty to see that the 199 railway apprentices who passed their examination in May last are placed in employment?"

The PREMIER (Hon. A. E. Moore, *Aubigny*) replied—

"The only election posters or pamphlets of the nature indicated in the honourable member's question of which I have knowledge, stated 'He can't get a job; change the Government' and 'Safeguard your child's future.' As a result of their bitter experience of the conditions brought about by the late Government, the electors very wisely decided to adopt those suggestions."

PAPERS.

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

Ninth report on the creation, inscription, and issue of Government inscribed stock.

Forty-fifth report on the creation, inscription, and issue of stock.

Report of the Department of Harbours and Marine for the year ended 30th June, 1928.

Twentieth annual report of the Manager of the State Advances Corporation (Workers' Dwellings and Workers' Homes).

WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

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

The TREASURER (Hon. W. H. Barnes, *Wynnum*): I beg to move—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Workers' Compensation Acts, 1916 to 1926, in certain particulars."

This is primarily a machinery Bill, and deals with some matters which will be of very great assistance in the administration of the Act. It will be a pleasure to those listening to me to know that the primary object of this amending Bill is to raise the amount of compensation payable to the basic wage. The Bill is another evidence of the desire of the Government to carry out a promise that they distinctly made that this would be done. The Government are particularly anxious that their promises should be carried out, and, what is more, they are going to see that they are carried out. Hon. members opposite have been a little dubious about what we are going to do. This is but another evidence as to what the Government intend to do.

Mr. PEASE: You know that 199 apprentices are waiting for jobs.

The TREASURER: They waited for nearly fourteen years for a job when the hon. member's party was in power.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The TREASURER: I am sorry to diverge from the rules of debate, but it is a great temptation to reply to such interjections.

Mr. KIRWAN: It was a temptation yesterday, but you did not take advantage of it.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The TREASURER: We purpose carrying out another of the promises we made. We are going to raise to the basic wage the compensation payable to an injured worker where there are three children in the family.

Mr. FOLEY: What is it going to cost?"

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The TREASURER: That has always been the reason why the poor worker has been left stranded by the other side. I do not think, at this stage, that the Chairman will allow me to follow that any further. The Bill will also make provision that, where seamen receive wages under the Navigation Act, they shall not receive compensation under this Act. One of the other principles which it contains is provision for reciprocity between not only all those who are resident within the Dominions but all who are outside the Dominions.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*): The Treasurer, when introducing the Bill, as far as I could follow him, having regard to the extraneous matter he endeavoured to introduce, stated that it was proposed under this Bill to provide the basic wage for an injured worker who had a wife and three children. I take it that is the proposal in the Bill. I would like to know from the Treasurer whether it is proposed to increase the amount payable to single men and other workers who may be injured in the course of their employment, and who come within the scope of the Act?

He stated that the party he represents was out to see that they carried out their election pledges. I hope that indicates a change of heart, at least on the part of the Treasurer, and that in the future he will, as far as possible, carry out his pledges. So far as the ordinary layman can judge, there was no mention in the pre-election promises of the Government about a man with a wife and three children; the definite pledge was that an injured worker would receive the basic wage.

At the present time single men receive a certain amount per week by way of compensation, having regard to the nature and the permanency or otherwise of their disablement. By an amending measure passed in the last Parliament a married man with six children could get up to the basic wage, an increased allowance of 5s. for each dependent child being paid. If I understood the Treasurer correctly, the proposal in the Bill now under consideration is a proposition that was under consideration on a previous occasion. Instead, however, of paying 5s. per week up to a maximum of six children, it is now proposed to pay 10s. per week for three children, with a maximum payment of the basic wage; so that, in the case of married people with more than three children, the position will be as it is, whilst for the injured worker with three or fewer children there will be an increase of 5s. per dependent child. The matter was investigated by the previous Government, and, speaking from memory, it was estimated that the proposal now contained in the Minister's Bill would cost the State approximately £3,000 per annum extra. That may be an improvement on the existing Act, but it certainly falls very far short of the election promise to give the full basic wage—not to a section of injured workers, but to all injured workers. I should like to know from the Treasurer whether it is proposed to raise the schedule of rates for men who do not come within the scope of the Bill that he has outlined; in other words, whilst it is quite clear that a man with three dependent children can receive a maximum payment of £4 5s. per week, what is the position in regard to that other section of the com-

munity who are not so blessed in their family relations?

The information I desire is whether it is proposed to increase proportionately the compensation to other injured workers who come within the ambit of the Act. Whilst the Treasurer may preen himself on carrying out his pledges, the general view taken by the electors of the pledge made in this connection was to the effect that all injured workers would receive the basic wage.

Mr. STOPFORD (*Mount Morgan*): Whilst I am very pleased to have this miserable crumb of comfort—

The TREASURER: You are sorry! (Laughter.)

Mr. STOPFORD: I am not a bit sorry. My regret is that the Government are not going to fulfil in its entirety that election promise which stated, "We intend to make the basic wage our standard of compensation," without any reservations whatever. While the Treasurer was appealing to the community at large, he laid it down clearly that the basis of compensation would be the basic wage. No reservations were made as to the number of children in the family.

The TREASURER. How many times did you hear me?

Mr. STOPFORD: When I refer to the hon. gentleman I mean the Government, of course, because the Treasurer is really the Government so far as the Bill now before the Committee is concerned.

I am pleased to think that we are getting this measure from the Government, but, to my mind, it is not fulfilling the promise upon which they were returned to power. Knowing the hardships that would be involved by charging higher premiums in connection with workers' compensation, the late Government refrained from any window-dressing, and issued a clear, definite, and honest policy. But, from what I have read, hon. members opposite came forward with the promise that the basis of compensation would be the basic wage of £4 5s. per week without any reservations whatever. To-day reservations are included in this Bill. The Government may think that, by spreading the charge over other departments of the State Insurance Office or by other methods of insurance, they will be able to give greater benefits in workers' compensation without increasing the premiums. What benefits are they giving? I think the Leader of the Opposition said that the extra cost would amount to £3,000. There is a very important part of workers' compensation that I was hopeful would be amended when this Bill was introduced. The late Government appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into the mining industry. Hon. members opposite have frequently referred to the fact that the mining industry is carrying a very heavy burden in the way of taxation and other restrictions.

The PREMIER: Every industry is.

Mr. STOPFORD: The mining industry is languishing, and the Government claim that they are going to re-establish it.

The PREMIER: Don't you want us to wait for the report of the Royal Commission that your Government appointed?

Mr. STOPFORD: I do: I believe one of the most beneficial and humane Acts ever passed by this Parliament was the Workers' Compensation Act—I refer particularly to

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the sections dealing with industrial diseases. Those sections impose a limitation on the benefits conferred on the injured worker, although the injured worker is just as much a victim of his employment as the man who is injured in a swift and sudden manner. The Government passed the industrial diseases sections of the present Act, believing that it was something in the nature of an experiment, and I believe that the Mining Commission, when it does report, will report that that is one of the greatest burdens the mining industry has to carry. However, that does not lessen the value of that particular compensation or the justice of it. The mining industry is an illustration of how industries are interlaced. When Mount Morgan was closed down, it was estimated by people competent to judge, that 16,000 people were affected, although only 1,400 were directly concerned in the productive working of the mine itself. In view of the interlacing of modern industries, this burden specially placed on the mining industry should be spread over the general scheme of workers' compensation.

[3 p.m.]

The TREASURER: What are you referring to primarily—miner's phthisis?

Mr. STOPFORD: Yes.

The TREASURER: You know that money for that purpose has been voted every year.

Mr. STOPFORD: I know that; but that is not the point. The benefit under the Act is limited to £1 per week, and the full benefit to a man, his wife, and family is £2 10s. As the Government are amending the Act, if separating the funds with regard to compensation will enable them to give benefits without correspondingly increasing the premiums, I trust that will be done. I do not want to delay the Bill, and I would not speak now were it not for the fact that I shall be absent when the second reading comes on. If the mining report—as I think it will—points to this as one of the burdens the mining industry is carrying, I hope the Government will carefully consider the bringing of this particular form of compensation under the general scheme.

To pursue my argument, I claim that the interlacing of industries to-day makes it imperative that there should be a common burden on industry. Take, for instance, an industry where no accidents occur. How will it be affected? Large industrial concerns—the railways, engineering shops, the coal mining industry, stores, and merchants—all are affected, showing clearly that the decline of the mining industry has an effect on the whole industrial life of the community. That cannot be ignored. Yet this section of people, who are just as much the victims of their employment as any others, are penalised under our workers' compensation laws by having to receive a lesser amount than a man who is injured in a speedy manner and swept to his death quickly and painlessly.

I do not want to make a speech at this stage; but, as I shall be absent at a later stage of the Bill, I desire to draw the attention of the Treasurer to what I think is a burden on the industry. When this Act came into force, Mount Morgan was the only large mining company operating. The men had then gone from Charters Towers and Gympie, where huge dividends were paid; but the mines had ceased to exist. The result was

that the Mount Morgan mine had to carry the burden of this compensation for mining fields which created the disease amongst the men who eventually came to Mount Morgan. Now that Mount Morgan has gone back and Mount Isa is springing up, I can foresee that Mount Isa will be asked to carry the burden of the men who are afflicted with this disease who previously worked at Mount Morgan, Gympie, Charters Towers, or anywhere else, because compensation is based upon the wages sheet of the companies. I would not like to delay the passage of the measure in the least; but, if my prophesy is right, and the Mining Commission's report will indicate this as one of the burdens of taxation—a necessary one, I say—at present placed on the mining industry, then at some early date we shall at least see some measure of justice done to these workers.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed.

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

Resolution agreed to.

FIRST READING.

The TREASURER (Hon. W. H. Barnes, Wynnun) presented the Bill, and moved—

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

Question put and passed.

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

OFFICIAL INQUIRIES EVIDENCE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. N. F. Macgroarty, *South Brisbane*): I have already had something to say on this Bill on the initiatory stages, but I repeat that there is nothing novel about it. It is based entirely on the same principles practically as those contained in the Royal Commissions Act of 1902 of the Commonwealth Parliament, as amended by the Act of 1912.

In that connection, I would like to call the attention of hon. members opposite to the words used by the then Attorney-General of the Commonwealth, Mr. Hughes, as reported on page 1187 of the Commonwealth “Hansard” for 1912—

“The power of the Crown to issue inquiry is inherent in it, and does not differ from that possessed by a private individual. The Crown can inquire into any matter, whether it be of the public interest or not, the scope of its inquiry being limited only to the extent that it must not interfere with the course of justice, and that it must not do anything unlawful.

“Apart from the statute law, however, the Crown has no power to compel the attendance of witnesses. It is the custom of this country to have a general statute dealing with commissions of inquiry, and with the powers conferred by that statute every commission that is appointed is clothed.

“ . . . The existing Act of 1912 has proved, not only in the recent inquiry but in others, unsatisfactory. Our most recent experience shows that it

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is imperative that there should be an amendment of the law. As time goes on the right of the Crown to inquire becomes more and more important. The Crown is now inquiring into a subject-matter that involves the expenditure of very large sums of money . . . yet we have found that, in spite of the Crown desiring this information, notwithstanding the Legislature is anxiously awaiting the report of the inquiry, the commission is flouted and the whole machinery of Government rendered impotent by the action of certain persons whose interests are involved. . . . That the present law must be amended is clear, and the amendments must be effective."

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: The inquiry he was dealing with then was the 1911 sugar inquiry?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I think it was. This Act is on all-fours with the 1912 Commonwealth Act. In 1917 the South Australian Parliament passed an Act on the same lines as the Commonwealth Act, and on the same lines as we are adopting now, so that we have those two precedents to support us.

I am sure that hon. members of the Opposition will agree that, if there is to be an inquiry—and I repeat that from time to time inquiries are necessary—that inquiry should be complete in every way.

I shall endeavour to outline clearly the material provisions of the Bill. Section 5 of the principal Act sets out that, if a person served with a summons fails without reasonable excuse to attend a commission, he is liable to a penalty. It is proposed under the Bill to insert a definition of what is a "reasonable excuse." It will be a reasonable excuse if an excuse in relation to any act or omission by a witness or a person summoned as a witness before a commission would excuse an act or omission of a similar nature by a witness or a person summoned as a witness before a court of law. That follows the Commonwealth Act, and it is fair enough. The term "reasonable excuse" was a rather vague one; and Mr. Hughes, M.H.R., when holding the position of Prime Minister of the Commonwealth, made some reference to excuses that might be termed ridiculous excuses. He instanced that a witness might refuse to give evidence or appear before a commission until a member of the commission had apologised for something that was said. Who was to say what was a reasonable excuse? It is the intention of the Bill to make that perfectly clear.

The principal Act gives power to the commission to send for a witness to produce any matter material to the subject-matter of the inquiry. Here again the Act is very vague. Who was to decide what was material to the subject-matter of the inquiry? There was the likelihood of a dispute arising as to what was or was not material. Those words will be omitted from the present Act, and there will be substituted power to the commission to send for a witness and for documents which he is required by summons to produce. There will be no mistaking what a witness will be required to produce. He will be required to produce certain things, whether they are material or not. The Bill also provides:—

"Provided that it shall be a defence to a prosecution under this subsection

for failing without reasonable excuse to produce any documents, books, or writings if the defendant proves that the documents, books, or writings were not relevant to the inquiry."

In other words, the onus will be upon the witness to prove that such things are not relevant to the inquiry. It will be left to the commission to decide whether such matters are relevant or irrelevant to the inquiry. It is proposed to omit the following words from subsection (2) of section 5:—

"Provided that no such person shall be compelled to answer any question tending to incriminate him."

No such provision is contained in the Commonwealth Act. The matter is referred to later on, but it is omitted from that portion of the Act. The Bill also contains this provision:—

"Every witness who has been summoned to attend a commission shall appear and report himself from day to day unless excused by the president or chairman of the commission or until he is released from further attendance by the president or chairman of the commission."

That provision is reasonable. If a witness has to attend, then the commission should have power to decide whether he shall remain in attendance or whether he is free to go.

Power is also given to arrest a witness for failure to appear, and a policeman can execute a warrant apprehending the defaulter; but the witness shall not be freed from any liability by reason of his non-compliance with the summons. In other words, he will still be subject to a penalty.

It is further provided that acts or omissions on different days shall constitute separate offences. A witness will not be compelled to disclose any secret process of manufacture.

The Bill also provides this:—

"A statement or disclosure made by any witness in answer to any question put to him by a commission or any of the commissioners or before a commission shall not (except in proceedings for an offence against this Act) be admissible in evidence against him in any civil or criminal proceeding."

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: That provision is to permit the Government to get in matter that would otherwise be ruled out.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: A commission must be vested with full power and authority to go on with its inquiries; but it is quite plain that any such statement or disclosure made by the witness cannot be used against him in any civil or criminal proceedings following.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: The effect is there all the same.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: A similar provision is in force with respect to examinations in bankruptcy. In the bankruptcy court witnesses are compelled to make answers to questions put to them; but the answering of such questions does not incriminate them in any way, nor can such evidence be produced against them in any subsequent civil or criminal proceedings.

A penalty is also provided in case of an offence committed after a previous conviction. If a witness fails to attend, or to

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produce any document, or refuses to give evidence or to be sworn, he or she is liable to a penalty which is being increased from £20 to £500. The penalty in regard to the second offence will be not less than £500 or more than £1,000 and imprisonment for such period not exceeding six months as may be deemed advisable.

The Bill will apply to commissions which have been created before the introduction of this Bill as well as to commissions or boards of inquiry appointed subsequently. Hon. members know that the Racing Commission was appointed before this Bill was introduced; but this clause will make these amendments operative in respect to this commission.

I do not know that I can give any further information about the Bill. It is a substantial measure. It has been introduced in the public interests, and the powers contained in it are reasonable and necessary. Nothing would be more abortive than the appointment of a commission of inquiry that was not able to complete its work. It is with a view to enable commissions or boards of inquiry to complete their work that we have introduced this measure. Moreover, we are doing nothing more than introduce a measure founded on a similar measure that was introduced and passed in the Commonwealth Parliament in 1912. I beg to move—

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

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*): I followed very closely the remarks of the Attorney-General in moving the second reading of this Bill. The measure is a simple one. It amends the Act of 1910, and the amendments which are to be read in conjunction with the principal Act are easily understood.

At a previous stage of the proceedings on this Bill I asked the hon. gentleman for information of a certain character. I pointed out that the Bill increased the penalties in one instance for failure to attend proceedings from £20 to £500. We can, of course, understand that, if a penalty provided in any Act does not act as a deterrent, the right and proper course to pursue is to increase the penalty—in other words, provide a penalty commensurate with the offence, having regard to the enormity of the violation of the particular section. On frequent occasions Parliament has been asked to provide for increased penalties, especially where there have been flagrant breaches of the law, and where it has been demonstrated that the existing penalty has not been a deterrent. The Attorney-General has not been able to furnish any information in that direction. The Act has been in operation since 1910, when the late Mr. Kidston was Premier. Many inquiries have been held within its ambit. I myself have initiated proceedings under it, and have arranged for inquiries under the terms of the principal Act. On no occasion was it reported to the past Government, either by a Royal Commission or the Crown Solicitor's Department that any of the provisions of the Act were faulty or had been violated.

We now come to the position that the Attorney-General justifies his action in taking this course by a Bill introduced in 1912 by the then Attorney-General of the Commonwealth. The hon. gentleman, however, is apparently not fully acquainted with the circumstances that gave rise to the intro-

duction of that Bill in the Commonwealth Parliament. The reason for the introduction follows closely the line of reasoning that I have adopted and the principles enunciated by me earlier. Some time before 1912 the Federal Government appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into the Australian sugar industry in all its ramifications. In that investigation, which was on a very comprehensive scale, evidence was taken in various parts of the State from various institutions, organisations, and individuals. The terms of reference set out the importance of the industry to the Commonwealth, having regard to the White Australia policy, the defence of Australia, and the necessity and advisability of peopling the northern littoral of Queensland. During the investigations of the commission—it comprised a number of gentlemen, three of whose names I can recall: Mr. Hinchcliffe, at that time a member of the Legislative Council of Queensland; Mr. Shannon, well known in this State; and Mr. (now Senator) Crawford—these gentlemen saw fit to ask the representatives of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, Limited, to give evidence regarding milling and refining costs. The management of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, Limited, point-blank refused to answer certain questions put to them by the commission, and the law as it then stood, so it was stated, was faulty and insufficient to compel the giving of the evidence that the commission thought was necessary for the full prosecution of the investigation entrusted to it.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Cannot that happen with us?

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: That is the basic reason why, in 1912, Mr. Hughes introduced amending legislation to take further powers to deal with a situation that had arisen under a previous Act of Parliament. That position has not arisen in Queensland; and it cannot be shown that the Act has been faulty, or that any situation has arisen similar to the one I have instanced. However, there is this important point to be made—much more important than the precedent quoted by the Attorney-General—that, if any Government desires information in the public interests and appoints a Royal Commission to obtain that information in the public interests, it is necessary and desirable that such a commission should be clothed with sufficient power to carry out its investigations to the fullest possible extent. That really is the basic principle of any investigation on which a Government may appoint a Royal Commission. Therefore, I have no fault to find in any respect whatsoever with the desire of the Ministry to clothe any Royal Commission now sitting or to be appointed at a future date with sufficient powers and authority to obtain all the information that it is necessary to obtain in the public interests.

Another interesting quotation that the Attorney-General made from the speech of the Commonwealth Attorney-General was that “basic principles of justice and the existing law had, of course, to be observed.” If the Government have good ground for assuming that a penalty of £20 is not sufficient, then the proper thing to do is to increase that penalty; but, so far as we are aware, no evidence has been adduced justifying such increase. At all events, no information on the subject has been made available to this House. It must be recognised

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by the Attorney-General and by hon. members opposite that there is a guiding principle that should be observed by all Governments, either in a Bill of this nature or in any other amendment of the law, and that is that in all free countries there is a principle of elementary basic justice which must be observed in all activities of a Government and in all instrumentalities established by a Government. Various efforts have been made under the law to secure information. In this case the Attorney-General proposes a penalty of £500 for anyone who refuses to give information. Different nations and different countries have adopted different methods of obtaining the information that they desire. In certain countries there is the "third degree." In other countries there is a penalty even to the extent of torture. But the point which any Parliament has to decide is the imposing of a penalty that has regard to those basic or elementary principles of justice that I have enunciated. Whatever may be desired by the Government, or whatever it may be in the public interests to achieve, no departure from existing principles of justice should be accepted by Parliament without sufficient cause being shown. In this Bill the Government eliminate a very important proviso in the principal Act, which reads—

"Provided that no such person shall be compelled to answer any question tending to incriminate himself."

That was placed in the principal Act on the suggestion of Mr. Blair, at that time hon. member for Ipswich and now Chief Justice of Queensland—a man learned in the law, and one who, I think, even the Attorney-General will admit is a capable and eminent jurist.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Quite so.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: On one occasion the Attorney-General mentioned that three of the Government's appointments to the Supreme Court bench were good, and could not be questioned. The hon. member forgot that the Government of which I was a member appointed every member to the present bench of the Supreme Court of Queensland; and I was wondering at the time what objection the Attorney-General had to the other members of the Supreme Court bench. However, this principle was introduced into the principal Act on the suggestion of that eminent jurist, Chief Justice Blair, who had this to say—

[3.30 p.m.]

I am quoting from "Hansard," volume cvii., 1910, page 3041—

"I desire to ask the Minister a question with regard to clause 5, subclause (2). I notice there that, if a person appearing as a witness refuses to be sworn or to make an affirmation or declaration, or to answer any question put to him by any of the commissioners touching the subject-matter of the inquiry, he shall be liable, on summary conviction, to a penalty not exceeding £20. The only provision with regard to the answering of questions is that witnesses are not bound to answer any questions which would incriminate themselves. It seems to me that if the clause goes through as it stands, although it is more a matter for Committee, it will compel any witness to answer any question, so long as it is relevant to the

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inquiry, but that might perhaps render the witness subject to prosecution. Anyone who has had any experience of these commissions, and of the questions put by commissioners, will know that a clause of that kind is absolutely too drastic, and would give more power than what the case requires. I hope the Minister will alter that when it goes into Committee."

He further states—

"He would like to hear what the Minister had to say with regard to the point he had mentioned. He noticed that it was in the discretion of the commissioners to put any question touching the subject-matter of the inquiry. That was in the opinion of the commissioner, and it might not be relevant in the slightest degree."

Under the Bill as it then stood the judge of relevancy was the Commissioner, and the witness was compelled to answer any questions asked by the Commissioner. Mr. Blair went on—

"Would the Minister not put in some protecting clause? The general law was that a witness was not bound to answer any question which might incriminate him. In the Police Offences Bill, where it was sought to compel a prisoner to answer all questions, even if not touching the subject-matter, a provision was included which provided that he should not be held liable. He suggested the following amendment, which had been provided at the request of the Minister, after subclause (2):—

Provided that no such person shall be compelled to answer any question tending to incriminate himself."

The Home Secretary at that time, the late Hon. J. G. Appel, said he would accept that proviso. He was in charge of the Bill, and was recognised, apart altogether from any party affiliations he might have had, as a man who had a thorough and complete understanding of the basic principles of justice. He immediately understood the purport of Mr. Blair's argument on that occasion, and accepted the amendment and embodied it in the Act. The hon. gentleman cannot deny that. Then what justification can the hon. gentleman put forward to the House for a departure from an accepted principle of justice, embodied not only in the principal Act but in the general law of the State?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The fact remains that he can refuse to give evidence.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: The Attorney-General will realise that, no matter how depraved a person may be, no matter how heinous an offence he may have committed, he is entitled to the protection of the law based on those principles of justice to which I have referred. No matter how revolting the offence may be, every accused person has certain protection. The old idea of the vindictive, revengeful application of the law has, I think, disappeared for all time; and, therefore, a departure from an accepted principle of justice such as I am describing requires some justification.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL interjected.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: I shall argue that later. The Attorney-General desires me to proceed to a further point, but I would

remind the hon. gentleman, who informed us yesterday that he was the senior counsel of the bar of Queensland at present, that I have the right to proceed with my speech in my own way, having regard to the rules of debate in this House; and that, whilst I am prepared to listen with great respect to any advice he may feel disposed to give me, I do not think he is yet in a position where he would be justified in advising me as to the method by which I should set out my speech.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I am not doing that.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: His methods might be better than mine, but I would plead that my methods suit me admirably, and I do not propose to change them even to suit the Attorney-General of Queensland.

With regard to the point with which I was dealing when the Attorney-General interrupted me, he is proposing to eliminate from the principal Act something which has been regarded as a cardinal principle in the administration of justice. It requires, in my opinion, some justification before that proposition is accepted by Parliament. Everyone is entitled to justice. Even Tories are entitled to justice, and on some occasions I have shown them mercy. (Laughter.) That is the position that I am putting before the House in all seriousness—that, no matter who the individual may be, irrespective of what offence he may be charged with, he is entitled under the law to the protection that it has been the practice for many years to give to such persons.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION interjected.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: I would remind the Secretary for Public Instruction that the Attorney-General is handling this Bill. He is not the Attorney-General, though he would have liked to be. But that is by the way. I am dealing with this measure in the same way as the Attorney-General dealt with it.

He then proceeded to refer to a further clause of the Bill which provides that, where evidence is given by a witness, that evidence shall not be used against him in any civil or criminal proceedings, unless for a violation of the Act—that is to say, the Official Inquiries Evidence Act. I take it that the Attorney-General meant that, in the event of any civil or criminal proceedings following on an inquiry under the Act, the evidence of the witness would not be admissible as evidence against him, assuming that he had made certain admissions. But I would point out again, with all due respect to the hon. gentleman learned in the law, that that provision does not give the protection that he evidently expected us to assume that it did. He knows perfectly well that such things become known. He is aware, for example, that in conducting a case a matter which he wishes to put before the court may be ruled out by the presiding judge, but he is often quite satisfied to get in a portion of it before the decision is given—it has its effect on the jury, and it remains in their minds. In that respect a court is to some extent like Parliament, where, having got something in, you can quite magnanimously withdraw—it also has effected its purpose. The protection that it is proposed to give in lieu of the protection taken away, therefore, is not adequate, and is not on all-fours with it. I would like to know what justification

the Government, the Attorney-General in particular, have for this serious departure from ordinarily accepted legal principles.

Another point that the hon. gentleman dealt with was the power taken with regard to documents, and so forth. He pointed out that under the present law there was not sufficient power for a commission to prosecute its inquiries in an effective way. In connection with the production of documents, he quoted clause [5G], which reads—

“A commission may inspect any document, book, or writings produced before it, and may retain them for such reasonable period as it thinks fit, and may make copies of such matter as is relevant to the inquiry, or take extracts from them.”

Having regard to what the Attorney-General said, it is quite clear what this Bill, in conjunction with the principal Act, would empower the commission to do.

At an earlier stage of the Bill the Attorney-General was asked by me if the Commissioner of Taxes, for example, could be summoned before an inquiry, and be called upon to give evidence with regard to matters that were in his possession or to produce documents. The Attorney-General, in reply, stated that the Bill did not take such power, and that there was no power under the Bill or the Act to compel the Commissioner of Taxes or any of his officers to produce papers in their possession or to be examined on their contents. I want to emphasise what I have already said that, in the public interests, it is necessary for a commission appointed in the public interest to get the fullest information. There may be nothing wrong with a section granting power to call the Commissioner of Taxes, provided it is surrounded with suitable safeguards and modifications. In any case, Parliament would be the proper place to discuss the advisability of all these things. But I suggest that the Attorney-General has accomplished the same purpose in a different way. A regulation has been promulgated under the Income Tax Act which gives the Treasurer certain powers. Under this Bill the Treasurer can be subpoenaed to produce all or any of the papers in the possession of the Commissioner of Taxes. Is that not so? That is the position as I see and understand it. Therefore, it is a matter of saying that the Act does not propose to do certain things, but the Government have the power to do it, and have taken the power to do it by another method. I mention that to indicate that we on this side of the House are fully cognisant of all the implications contained in any Bill introduced into Parliament. If it is a desirable and a good thing to introduce a measure of this nature, that is good and well; but what is decided in this Parliament is the will and the pleasure of the majority of this Parliament, and they take full responsibility for any Bill that is passed. In regard to the general question of commissions, it is quite true that to some extent in Australia—and I suppose elsewhere—a Government may appoint a board or a commission to deal with a matter that is pressing for the moment, and in that way shelve the problem at least for a time. In other cases, commissions can give very valuable information to Governments and to Parliaments. For example, the investigation that was made into the pastoral industry, resulting in the establishment of the Land

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Administration Board, was an economic investigation which was worth while, and was very valuable to Queensland—valuable not only at the time, but for the information that was obtained, and in countless other directions.

The Royal Commission which was appointed to inquire into the mining industry should also give valuable information for the guidance of this State. The use of this Act is in the direction of dealing with difficult problems and obtaining information for Governments and for Parliaments which can guide them in their future activities with respect to various industries and important problems which may arise affecting this State. I take it, also, that the retrospectivity of the measure applies not only to the Racing Commission, but to other commissions that have already been appointed under the principal Act.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That is so. It would not apply to a commission which had completed its deliberations.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: The further powers sought for under this Bill will apply to the Mining Commission appointed by the previous Government, which has not completed its investigations or presented its report.

The points I have raised are relevant to this Bill. I acknowledge that a Government has the right to clothe Royal Commissions with all the power and authority that are necessary in the public interests. I also claim that, in the exercise of that power and authority, the Government should have regard to the basic principles of justice that I have enunciated. Up to the present at least the Attorney-General has not justified the departures to which I have called attention, and with which I shall deal at a later stage of the Bill.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put and passed.

Consideration of the Bill in Committee made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

BABINDA STATE HOTEL SALE BILL,

SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Mr. HANLON (*Ithaca*): Before this Bill goes through, I would like again to express my opposition to the proposal, and also to express my disappointment and regret that the Government have not seen fit to carry on this enterprise. In view of the fact that the State enterprises already disposed of have been thrown away in a remarkably careless manner, we are justified in asking, even if the Government persist in disposing of the Babinda State hotel, that some precaution be taken to see that the State gets something like a just return for that enterprise.

No excuse on the ground that it does not pay can be found for parting with this enterprise. The Babinda State hotel has paid handsomely ever since its establishment. Besides rendering an excellent service, it has furnished excellent financial returns to the State—in addition to supplying a very badly needed convenience and comfort for the sugar-workers in the area, it has been a successful financial venture and asset to the State. I regret that there is no provision in the Bill fixing a reserve price at which the hotel should be sold. It is a pity that the

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enterprise can be disposed of at the sweet will of the Minister, irrespective of whether or not its true value is realised. At the very least, it should not be sold for less than the value at which it stands in the books of the State Trade Department. We had an exhibition recently of enterprises standing at a high value in the books of the department—enterprises which were not only returning interest on the money invested, but also showing a profit to the State—being sacrificed at something like half their book value. No one can say that that was anything else than a wilful sacrifice of the assets of the State, and I hope the same course is not to be adopted in the present instance.

A suggestion made at the initiatory stages of the Bill might be considered by the Government. This particular enterprise is worth several thousands of pounds per annum if a lease be granted, and I suggest that the property be leased and brought under the local option provisions of the Liquor Act. In that way, in a short period at least, the Government would receive nearly as much as they are likely to obtain from selling the asset in its entirety, because the return to the Government would be approximately £4,000 to £5,000 per annum. The Government should see to it that at least no loss takes place in the money that has been invested in the Babinda State hotel. Other enterprises have been sold with remarkable carelessness, the State cannery being an example of an asset which was thrown away for less than its market value. I hope the same course will not be pursued so far as the State hotel is concerned. It is rather a startling thing to hear hon. members opposite speak of the financial stringency of the State, deplore the recklessness and extravagance of the Labour Government, and at the same time throw away valuable assets. I am not insinuating that they are passing them over to friends, or anything nasty like that. I merely observe that, if you have something to sell, the ordinary business practice is to see that you get the true market value for the article. Unfortunately, that policy has not been pursued by the Government up to date. A rather remarkable thing took place in connection with the disposal of the State stations. Bear in mind, I do not want to insinuate anything unfairly with respect to the Premier or to the hon. member for Dalby; but, when one thinks back over the fact that, when the Government got into power, having in their programme the disposal of the State stations, they sent the hon. member for Dalby to inquire into and report upon the State stations. They were put up for auction presumably on his advice, and then the hon. member figures as a bidder at the auction sale.

Mr. W. A. RUSSELL: I never made a bid.

Mr. HANLON: I do not want the hon. member to take exception to what I am saying.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Then why do you say it?

Mr. HANLON: Because any intelligent person would say that it is very desirable that the Government should protect themselves from any charge of that kind. I hope the Government will not drift into a position from which they will find it difficult to retreat later on. In the course of a few

years the facts surrounding the disposal of the State enterprises will be forgotten, and any person not conversant with what is happening during the present year, looking back over history and finding that the hon. member for Dalby made a report to the Government on the condition of the State stations—

Mr. W. A. RUSSELL (*Dalby*): I desire to make a personal explanation.

The SPEAKER: Order!

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Ask him to withdraw.

Mr. W. A. RUSSELL (*Dalby*): I rise to a point of order. I deny the statement that yesterday I made a bid for any of the State stations, and I ask that the hon. member withdraw that statement.

Mr. HANLON: Certainly, if the hon. member says he never made a bid at the auction sale yesterday, I accept his denial; but I would point out to him that the daily press reported that he did make a bid. The hon. gentleman should be very careful to take immediate steps to contradict that statement in the press, because it is likely to give a very unsavoury taste to people outside this Chamber. I really believe the hon. member for Dalby to be a very trustworthy and highly respected individual in this business, and I would not like any hon. member in this House or any person outside this House to think that I am reflecting upon him; but I do say that these are opinions that are liable to be formed outside. The hon. member has not denied that he was sent by the Government to inquire into the condition of the State stations. Perhaps that also was a misrepresentation by the press. It was reported by the press that he, on behalf of the Government, was inquiring into the State stations, and then, after his report had been received—I suppose the Government would not dispose of the State stations without having received a report from the person that they sent to inquire into their condition—he was reported in the press as having made a bid. Unless the Government are very careful to see that they get a fair market value for their station properties, they are going to leave themselves open to very nasty insinuations. Hon. members opposite may think that, because the State stations are losing money to-day, that is going to justify whatever they may do in regard to them; but I venture to prophesy that the State stations will not be eternally a losing proposition. There is a prospect of a revival in the beef industry which will make them pay handsomely, and, if that revival should come within a year or two after the sale of these properties, the impression will go forth to the people that that was anticipated, and that the stations were disposed of at a cheap price knowing that an inflation was imminent. The Government should be very careful how they handle the property of the State, and not allow these impressions to get abroad.

Later on I am going to deal with the disposal of the State cannery. That also is a very unsavoury story. There is an impression at the present moment amongst commercial travellers and commercial people in the city that the sale of the State cannery was a "dummy" sale. The commercial people know very well that, at the very outside,

only one-half the value of that enterprise was secured by the Government. It is common talk around the town. Before the session closes we shall have time

[4 p.m.] to verify what is now common talk, that the sale was a "dummy" one. These things create a very undesirable impression outside. I hope nothing of the kind will happen in connection with the disposal of this State hotel. There is a distinction between the sale of the Babinda State hotel and the sale of other enterprises. Whatever is done with the other State enterprises is entirely a matter of the Government's own volition; they are doing it without consulting Parliament; and hon. members on either side of the House have very little responsibility in regard to it, as the Government are taking the onus on their own shoulders. In case any dispute arises, hon. members opposite will probably be able to say that they were not consulted, and that it was entirely due to the action of the Government. This particular enterprise, however, is being disposed of by means of the Bill which is now before us, and every hon. member has his own responsibility for the sale. Every hon. member has a responsibility to see that, when sold, it is at least sold for its full market value, and that the people of the State are not going to be deprived of what they should get from it. Perhaps at a later stage of the Bill we shall have something more to say. I intend to vote against the second reading of the Bill because I believe the enterprise should not be disposed of at all: firstly, because it is a handsomely paying enterprise for the State, and, secondly, because it is supplying a very much needed service to the sugar-workers in that area which they are not likely to get from private enterprise.

Mr. WILSON (*Fortitude Valley*): We all realise the very great importance of this hotel to the people who are living in the Babinda area. The hotel was established in 1917, and up to date has produced a fair profit, somewhere in the neighbourhood of £50,000. Listening to the remarks of the Treasurer and the Premier the other evening about financial stringency, it is difficult to understand why they are so anxious to get rid of a paying proposition like this, which has given satisfaction to the people living in the Babinda area. I have figures showing that the profit on the hotel was £32,401 up to 30th June last, and for the same period £11,914 was written off the assets, making a total sum of £44,315. I take it that the interest on that sum brings the value of the asset to somewhere in the neighbourhood of £50,000 in the period from May, 1917, to 30th June, 1929. In view of the financial stringency referred to, I would ask the Government if it would not be wise for them to take into consideration the retention of a proposition of this sort, which is yielding such a large return to the State.

The Minister in charge of the Bill had a good deal to say with regard to the property. It strikes me that since the election hon. members opposite have changed their policy. I have heard many of them remark that the only State enterprises they intended to get rid of were those that were not paying. Now they come out boldly, and say that they are going to get rid of all the State enterprises.

I really do not know whether the Government are going to interfere with the State

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Insurance Department or not; but there have been rumours outside to the effect that pressure will be brought to bear on them later—probably during the next or last session of this Parliament—with a view to curtailing some of the privileges now enjoyed by the State Insurance Department. Whether that be true or not, I do not know; we shall have to wait and see whether, as the Minister said, he intends to go on and get rid of that as well as of all the other State enterprises.

I am satisfied that, when the State butcher shops were started, in many cases the price of meat was at an exorbitant level, and it was almost impossible for the workers to buy meat at reasonable prices. Now the Government have decided to get rid of them, and, if they consider the interests of the country in the matter, they will see to it that nothing is done such as I have heard has been done in regard to the State butcher shops. I have heard, and know it for a fact, that in certain places in the metropolitan area, they have given instructions to the State shops not to supply any relief rations in the shape of meat to persons who are entitled to get those rations. I am told that something in the neighbourhood of £30 to £35 worth of meat per week has been taken away from the State shops and these orders given to a shop run by private enterprise. I can get one individual to say that meat was thrown at him in a "take it or leave it" manner in the shop that secured these orders. That does not make for the best results from State enterprises. If that is true—and I have every reason to believe that it is—it will bring values down to such a low ebb that the Government will not be able to get anything like an equitable return for the shops.

Mention has also been made of the railway refreshment-rooms. We all know that at one time all over the State they were in the hands of private enterprise. The late Government saw fit to bring them under the control of the Government, and they are now being carried on by the Commissioner for Railways. I had the pleasure of being the political head of the Department of Public Instruction for four years, and I am very pleased to know that the present Government are there following in the footsteps of their predecessors and altering none of their policy so far, while the Secretary for Agriculture has intimated publicly at meetings that the Leader of the Opposition did useful good work in the Department of Agriculture. It is a good thing to know that a Minister can see some good in the opposite side of the House: and I take the opportunity of saying that any measure that may be brought forward by the Government, having for its object the benefit of the people and the welfare of the State, will have my hearty support.

A great many persons are of the opinion that the late Government were perfectly justified in establishing State enterprises. Of course, time will tell whether we were right or not. I am inclined to think that next time we go to the country hon. members opposite will find that there will be a different feeling amongst the people. They have become very accustomed to the State butcher shops, for instance, and I am inclined to think that there will be a revulsion of feeling amongst the people when they have had some experience of being without

them again. With regard to some of the enterprises which the Government have disposed of, one hears so many things that he does not feel safe in taking much notice of them all; but I have heard it repeatedly said that one enterprise—the State cannery—was almost given away.

We sometimes find people opposed to the Labour Government who are willing to give credit to the Government for any good work that was accomplished. In that connection I wish to quote this extract, which appeared some time ago in one of the daily papers:—

"WHERE HONOUR IS DUE.

"Replying to a statement by Councillor F. J. Glasson (Chinchilla) at the Local Authorities' Conference yesterday that the Prickly-pear Act had driven people off the land, Councillor J. Sparkes (Wambo) vigorously defended the Act, which he maintained had kept people on the land. 'I have never voted Labour in my life,' continued Councillor Sparkes, 'but I recognise a good thing when I see it, and I believe in giving honour where honour is due. The Prickly-pear Act which was brought in by the Labour Government was the best Act ever passed in Queensland. (General chorus of 'Hear, hears.') Had the Act been brought in by a previous Government, the prickly-pear would not have been where it is to-day.' Councillor Glasson admitted that the present Act was a good one; he was referring to an earlier Act. It was a pity the Act had not been brought in twenty years before. Another speaker described the Labour Government's Prickly-pear Act as 'a splendid Act,' and this statement met with general approval."

This man was not a Labour man, but he was prepared to give credit for the good work done by the Labour Government. I do not know whether there is any prickly-pear in the Babinda area; but, if this hotel is transferred to private hands, I can quite realise that there will be experienced a considerable amount of prickly-heat. The Government are acting very unwisely in disposing of this hotel, which, so far as I can gather, was erected with the object of extending some comfort to the employees engaged in the Babinda sugar-mill and to other people living within the area. It has been pointed out by the Leader of the Opposition and by the Deputy Leader that the population of the area contains a large proportion of foreigners. I hold the view that, if the hotel is State-controlled, there will be some possibility of preventing any ugly disturbances within the area at a time when feeling might be running high. I simply rose to enter my protest against the disposal of this valuable State enterprise and, incidentally, to break the ice by making my first speech this session.

Mr. HYNES (*Townsville*): I desire to have my protest recorded against the passage of this measure. I take strong exception to the very wrong principle embodied in the Bill. The Government are prepared to sell a monopoly to private individuals. There is a vast difference between State control of a monopoly and private control of a monopoly. The one operates for the benefit of the community as a whole; the other is anti-social in its operations. Therefore, it is wrong in principle, to permit a private individual to have the sole right to

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sell liquor in the Babinda area for the period mentioned in the Bill.

I can see something further in this Bill which causes me concern. If it were the intention of the Government to retain control of the State refreshment-rooms, they would certainly have transferred the Babinda State hotel to the administration of the Secretary for Railways. The failure to do so is to me an intimation that the Government also intend to sell the railway refreshment-rooms at no distant date.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There is no truth in that.

Mr. HYNES: That would be a very wrong thing to do. I am satisfied that the community, and especially the community in the Babinda area, for whose benefit the hotel was principally established, will not receive the same service from a private monopolist as it does from the State. I have travelled rather extensively in North Queensland, and I know what a great benefit the Babinda State hotel is to the people of North Queensland. Take, for instance, the sugar-mill workers! As one who has had quite a lot of experience as a union organiser in dealing with industrial troubles, I found that there was less industrial strife in those centres where the workers received decent board and accommodation at reasonable rates. The establishment of the Babinda State hotel under the management of the State brought about that set of conditions for the workers in the Babinda sugar-mill area. Napoleon said that soldiers fought on their bellies, and I have always found that workers who receive decent food and accommodation show a tendency to be less discontented, and the inevitable result is less industrial unrest. The Babinda State hotel was established for no other reason than the preservation of industrial peace, and for that reason alone the State should retain control of it.

Some reference has been made to the sale of other State enterprises on the ground that they were not paying. If the benefits in £ s. d. accruing to the people of Queensland through the establishment of State butcheries could be determined, then the action of the late Government in establishing those butcher shops would be shown to have been fully justified. I regret very much that the State butcheries have been sacrificed by the Government.

Mr. MAXWELL: You sacrificed them in Toowoomba.

Mr. HYNES: I understand that the Treasurer is hard put to it to secure money to carry on the services of the State. The Premier last night informed us that such was the case; but I consider it a despicable thing for a Government to "raise the wind," if I may use a vulgarism, by selling State monopolies and State enterprises to private individuals. The principle is wrong. I also heard the Minister in charge of this Bill make the statement that the interests of the workers in the Babinda mill area will be protected in the Bill. I have carefully gone through the Bill, but can find nothing to indicate that it is the intention of the Government so to protect the interests of the men who in the past have been found board and lodging at the hotel for 30s. per week—a reasonable rate.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That will be contained in the contract of sale.

Mr. HYNES: Why should such a provision not be embodied in the Bill? We all know that there was an arrangement between the Babinda mill directors and the department controlling State enterprises that the directors should pay to the department the difference between the rate allowed in the sugar-workers' award—that is 24s. 6d. per week—and the rate charged at the hotel for board and accommodation for the workers employed at the mill. The directors of the mill paid the difference—5s. 6d. per week—to the department. It would have been a simple thing to place such a safeguarding clause in this Bill. I am satisfied that the mill workers will not receive the same service for the same money when the hotel passes over to private management. Knowing as I do the opinions of the Treasurer of the liquor trade, I am rather surprised that he permitted this Bill to be introduced. I cannot understand a man who is opposed to the liquor trade, who is continually pointing out the evils of the trade, and who poses as a reformer in that direction, allowing a private individual to take control for some six years of this hotel, which holds a monopoly in a large area, especially when it is the accepted opinion that the evils of the liquor trade are intensified under private ownership.

Reference has been made to the fact that the liquor laws were not observed at Babinda under the previous Administration. At any time that I stayed at the Babinda hotel I can truthfully say that I did not notice any breach of the liquor laws.

Mr. FRY: You went to bed early that night. (Laughter.)

Mr. HYNES: I usually do if I have no work to keep me occupied. The hotel was conducted in a proper and orderly manner, and was a credit to the man in charge of it. But, supposing that the law was not observed by the manager of the Babinda hotel, that is no excuse for the Government to take to themselves the right to sell a monopoly to a private individual. That is the chief reason why I am opposed to the passage of this measure.

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*): The arguments advanced by hon. members opposite have led me to the conclusion that they are in favour, not of one hotel, but of many hotels.

Mr. PEASE: That is not true. We want to give the people local option.

Mr. FRY: At any rate, the remarks of hon. members opposite have led me to think that. If the Opposition can bring forward an argument sufficiently strong to justify my support of their contention, then I am prepared to exercise the privilege given to me as a member of this party and use my discretion accordingly; but up to the present I see nothing to warrant my voting against the passage of this Bill.

Mr. STOPFORD (*Mount Morgan*): The hon. member who has just resumed his seat reminds me of what I see in the morning when I open the back door of my residence and view the spectacle of a 14-stone man delivering a pint of milk. That man's appearance always appears to me to be quite out of keeping with his calling. The hon. member for Kurilpa is an optician, yet he professes to see no logic in the arguments advanced by hon. members on this side of the House. If one were to see an 8-stone

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man moving bales of wool on a wharf, it would strike one as being as incongruous as to see a 14-stone man selling milk. To be in keeping, their occupations should be reversed. Just in the same way, the hon. member appears to be following the wrong avocation for one with such defective vision. I am not going to protest against the Government's selling something they wish to get rid of; but I do protest against the action of the Government in selling something which they do not possess—namely, a right to allow a private hotel in the Babinda area to sell liquor.

There is no legal right to-day for any private individual to offer liquor for sale within that area. The Government are going to create a right that does not at present exist; and, in their desire to dispose of this hotel, they propose to give a monopoly for some years to a political supporter. It cannot be that they desire to remove from the Government the charge of being sellers of liquor. If that were so, logically they must follow this action by selling the railway refreshment-rooms. They are still going to be hotelkeepers; but they term themselves refreshment-room keepers. So it cannot be from any desire to avoid being branded as sellers of liquor that they are taking this action. It cannot be because they wish to give effect to the desire to dispose of something that the State has in the form of a State enterprise, because the State has only got an accommodation house in Babinda which, if they sell it as an accommodation house, would put the position back to that which existed when the Labour Government created a Government monopoly in regard to the sale of liquor in that area. What justified the Government in taking a monopoly in regard to anything? They were justified in taking unto themselves a monopoly in the Babinda area for the same reason that prompted their predecessors in taking action to prevent the private sale of liquor within that area. That reason was given by the present Treasurer when introducing the Sugar Works Bill in 1911. Under that measure the private sale of liquor within that area was prohibited, and later on the Government paid compensation for the termination of the existing licenses. What justified the action of the then Government? The justification was the danger of allowing private people to sell liquor for profit in an area where a huge industrial enterprise was being established. It was not because the hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill did not drink himself, or that the Treasurer could not physically enjoy it.

The TREASURER: You have forgotten to tell us that, while we arranged that there should be no sale of liquor within that area, your Government established a State enterprise for the sale of strong drink.

Mr. STOPFORD: The Labour Government reversed the action of their predecessors because they were faced with the stern fact that, if you are going to attract men to an outpost of the State, and where the presence of those men is necessary to carry on industry, you have to give them as nearly as possible the same comforts that are offered to men pursuing the same industry elsewhere.

The TREASURER: Another "Minister for Excuses!"

Mr. STOPFORD: I am glad to be associated with that remark. Men will not be denied, and will take risks for profit to

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supply that which the law says they shall not have; and sly-grog shops, not dispensing liquor under the control or direction of regulations with regard to inspection, but liquor which will make men mad, will

[4.30 p.m.] come into being. Viewing also the grave dangers owing to the cosmopolitan population in that district, and realising that the State at that time had expended something in the vicinity of £500,000; that numerous men had pioneered a new district and given of their best to carve out homes for themselves—men whose investments in labour, industry, and resources were dependent upon a safe and secure supply of labour to harvest the result of their work—the Government, still recognising the menace of the sale of liquor problem, trying to discharge their duty as pioneers of the district, sought the lesser of two evils, and decided that the sale of liquor should take place under conditions of regulation where the element of profit and greed would not enter. The Government placed themselves in the position of being responsible for the carrying on of that hotel, subject to any criticism that might come their way if the hotel was conducted in a manner that would lend itself to suspicion. That position has continued until to-day. No one can say that there has been any criticism of the conduct of the hotel. The Minister states liquor has been sold there after 8 o'clock. What we do know is that pure, wholesome liquor was sold there; that there was no speeding up for profit; no incentive first to rob a man of his senses and render him unfit to follow his occupation afterwards. What is proposed to-day? The Government may take unto themselves the power to do this. Parliament is supreme, but is Parliament only so long as the will of the people supports it. We found that out, and hon. members opposite will find it out—I hope it will be soon. (Laughter.) I am making my objection because Parliament gave authority for a monopoly to the State, and not a monopoly to any individual. That is No. 1 point. My No. 2 point, which I think to be just as logical, is that under this Bill the Treasurer usurps the function of a court. This Bill gives him the right to issue a license without consulting any court. If the licensing laws of the State are based on justice and sound premises, why should the Government, in order to enhance the value of something which they are about to sell, descend to the lowest and meanest methods of private enterprise and give a fictitious value for something they are going to accomplish—one of their objectives—that is, to get rid of a State hotel? Why give it a value it does not possess—a value that exists only by reason of it being a State hotel, because the words are used in the Bill, "Babinda State hotel"?

In order to enhance the value of this hotel, the Government are paying the price of breaking down the rights of the court or the rights of the people through the court; and this is the only occasion on which that has ever been done in the history of this State. Of course, the Government may think they are justified in doing it in order to get the money to help them to fulfil their election promises. Everybody knows that they cannot do that. The Government may have thought they could. I give them credit for honesty, accompanied by ignorance, for having that belief; but they were the only ones who did not know that they could not fulfil those promises.

Now, take the case of Mount Isa—a new area with a rapidly growing population. If the anticipations of those in charge at Mount Isa are realised—and I hope they will be—we may have a population there of 10,000 or 20,000 persons. Well, there is only one hotel at Mount Isa. Will that be sufficient to cope with the demand for accommodation that will be made upon it as the field progresses? If the Government are going to follow the practice of creating a fictitious value in the case of one hotel in order to get a good sale for the Babinda hotel, why not become hotel brokers? That would be a new State enterprise. The Government could sell hotels and make thousands of pounds. All they have to do is to pass a Bill constituting the Treasurer the licensing court—as they are doing under this Bill. Having secured that power, they could proceed to tie the hands of the court altogether—as they are doing in this case—for six years. Why could they not say to the people in a given district: “We are putting you under the Liquor Act; we are giving you the same right as was denied to you in the Babinda area when local option polls were initiated previously. We are giving you the right to initiate a poll; but we are going to depart from the provisions of the Act, the provisions of justice, by refusing to recognise the power of the court. If you say that new licenses shall be given, we, as the Government, will adopt the same attitude as we are taking at Babinda. Whereas the court may have determined that two or three or more licenses were required to meet the requirements of the district, we propose to do something else—we propose to make the Treasurer the court”? Of course, if the Government gave the right to the people in the Babinda district to take a poll under the Liquor Act, they might lower the price of this hotel; but the point I want to make is that, by giving this monopoly and making another few thousands pounds by that means, they are practically wrecking the Liquor Act as the only protection enjoyed by the people of Queensland, who under it are the only determining factor as to the creation of new licenses.

The hon. member for Kurilpa said he could not understand why there should be any opposition to this Bill.

Mr. FRY: I did not say that.

Mr. STOPFORD: I have him there. Why should there be any restriction of the rights of the people, any breaking down of their opportunity to say whether licenses shall be granted? Why should they not be placed on the same level as other people in the State? The Government propose to offer for sale a hotel in respect of which they have created a fictitious value. It is proposed to grant a monopoly for six years, placing it beyond the reasonable possibility of any individual to buy.

The TREASURER: The Labour Government created that monopoly.

Mr. STOPFORD: The Labour Government created the monopoly for the State; but that is no justification for the present Government disposing of it to a private individual. I think I have made that sufficiently clear. I pointed out that the State could exercise a monopoly that it would be unwise to give to an individual. The Government propose to hand over this monopoly for the enjoyment of an individual, and that

is my objection. Common sense dictates that the only buyer for a venture of this description could be the wholesale liquor people of North Queensland; and I for one object to their having something that will give them control over the liquor interest in a large area of our most fertile land. I do not suppose that our objections will weigh very much with the Government; but at least we shall be able to tell the public that the Government attempted to sell something that they did not possess, and, in order to obtain that benefit, they broke down one of the oldest traditions of British justice by interfering with the court and by allowing the Treasurer to issue a liquor license for a period of twelve months. The matter will then come under the review of the court.

The Government propose to tie the hands of that court for a period of six years. They propose to give to some lucky individual a monopoly for six years, which will enable him to exploit the public, make profits, and defy the court set up to deal with these matters.

Mr. BARBER (*Bundaberg*): There is one phase of this question which so far I have not heard discussed. As a resident of a sugar district for a large number of years, I want to point out to the Treasurer the ill-effect that the go-as-you-please methods of selling “booze” to workers have on industry. In the sugar districts in the old days, and to some extent at the present time, the interference with the operations of the sugar season was largely attributable to the quantity of drink that men could obtain on a Saturday night and until certain hours on every other night in the week. One of the great menaces which I believe will affect the industry if this hotel is sold to a private individual will be that the worker no longer will have protection. As you know, Mr. Speaker, most of our legislation is passed for the purpose of protecting the individual from himself. In the days to which I refer, when the mills commenced work at 12 o'clock on Sunday night, times out of number they were held up owing to the incapability of the men to get to the outside mills, their inability being caused by getting too much “booze” on the Saturday and often on the Sunday, which meant that the mills were held up on some occasions for half a shift, and sometimes for a whole shift.

It seems to me that, since the establishment of the Babinda State hotel, fairly effective protection has been given the workers because drink of a reasonably good quality has been sold. You know, Mr. Speaker, that I have no time for the trade at all. I am dead up against it in every shape or form. Some people say there is good “booze” and bad “booze,” but to me it is all bad “booze.” What surprises me is the frivolous manner in which the Treasurer—who is a brother “wowser” of mine—(laughter)—treats this matter. I was surprised at the light and frivolous manner in which he did so. I am sorry for the Treasurer. It may be that, having got into office again, he finds himself driven to distraction by the demands made on him by his new supporters—wizards of finance and captains of industry—for the extravagant expenditure of public funds. What is the result? First of all, the hon. gentleman attempted to inaugurate a verbal stadium, aided and abetted by the hon. member for

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Brisbane, at the opening function of the Canberra hostel. (Laughter.) His next slip—and when he gets on to the slippery-slip it is very easy to slip—was when he started to go to the races. (Laughter.) It seems to me that I shall have to start a special prayer meeting in the interests of the Treasurer. (Renewed laughter.) But that is by the way. This is a serious matter. I understand that since the establishment of this hotel men who will have their little “toddy” or “wee drap” have been able to get drink at the Babinda State hotel which is fairly passable, and do not do as was their custom when they purchased liquor from private sources. I have not been in that district since 1892, but I understand that around the mill, and not far distant from the hotel, there has been built up a very fine and prosperous town. A number of workers, particularly those who are permanent employees at the Babinda mill, have made their homes there; but one can conceive what is going to be the effect, following on the experience of the old days under the old system, when the monopoly for selling liquor in that area passes to a private monopoly! What is to be the effect, not only upon those men but upon their families and the township generally? Under the system operating at the present time these men are largely protected against themselves; but if the Government sell the hotel to a private individual who has nothing in view but his own personal aggrandisement on the “get-rich-quick” basis, and he will not be particular unless the “John Hop” closely supervises him, there will be a reversion to the conditions which obtained in the early days and to the holding up of the industry.

Hon. gentlemen sitting on the Government benches have always directed remarks to members of the Labour Party on the iniquity of dislocating industry. That industry should be hung up in any way is bad; and I am convinced that the act of the Treasurer, supported as he is by practically every member on the Government side, will simply mean placing in the hands of the person who purchased the Babinda hotel the right to sell full and plenty “booze” to the workers of the district, with the resultant effect that the efficiency of the workers will be affected. I protest against the measure with all the vehemence I can command. If there is one thing I am really sorry about, it is that a man like the Treasurer, with his boasted principles, should be compelled, at the behest of Government members, to place himself in the unpleasant position of selling a hotel which has been a great protection to thousands of men. I am shocked at the Treasurer's attitude; but much more am I disgusted with the action of the Government, whose methods can only mean a reversion to the conditions when “booze” was flowing like the Barron Falls. (Laughter.) It was then that men were unable to take up shift work at the appointed time—when the work in both the mill and the field suffered materially. I am shocked, yet I am sorry.

Mr. EDWARDS: You ought to be shocked at yourself.

Mr. BARBER: This hotel has saved hundreds of men from going adrift so far as “booze” is concerned. Had there been the free and easy “go” which the methods of the present Government are out to create, the sugar industry would have been irreparably damaged.

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Mr. BEDFORD (*Warrego*): The proposal to sell the State hotel is only one plank of the programme of getting rid of State enterprises at any price—the lower the price they bring the better the deal the Government is making. Now, if we consider the results of the State enterprises, excepting only the State stations, we find that all have paid interest and £122,361 6s. 10d. out of profits to Consolidated Revenue and Trust Funds, the analysed figures being—

	£	s.	d.
State butcher shops	35,000	0	0
Railway refreshment-rooms	82,361	6	10
Babinda hotel	5,000	0	0

In addition, the railway refreshment-rooms had a surplus of £13,244, and the State hotel at Babinda has a surplus of £3,915. Six out of seven State enterprises—State butcher shops, State Produce Agency, railway refreshment-rooms, State hotel, State fish supply, and State canery—showed profits as follow:—

Year ended 30th June—	£
1926	22,043
1927	24,500
1928	22,000

It will be remembered that the Treasurer was very much in evidence in 1911 in making the Babinda area a prohibited area for the sale of liquor. As the result of that, a condition of affairs accrued which the “wowsers” would prefer to the direct and proper sale of alcohol under proper safeguards and by the State.

With a certain class of “wowsers” the scandal is greater than the sin; and the result is that you find millions, or at least hundreds of thousands, of American prohibitionists who quite condone the fact that thousands of people sell bad liquor ranging from methylated spirits to embalming fluid, which latter killed fifteen men in Brooklyn on one genial Christmas Eve. Everybody knows that the general objections to the establishment of a State hotel were mostly voiced, not by the travelling public, not by the people who were going to patronise this hotel, but by the wholesale wine and spirit merchants, who were making a greater profit out of selling to the sly-grog shopkeeper. It is quite understandable that a large portion of the electorates have a fairly big vote in which the ideal candidate is one made on the lines of the Treasurer—a man made up of half a dozen texts, all the meaner virtues, 1 cwt. of sawdust, and three buckets of water. (Laughter.)

In the case of Babinda, the State hotel charges were 33 per cent. less than those charged in Cairns. The control of liquor was such that any worker who had a bad “hang-over” on the Monday was not served, in order that the work at the mill should not suffer. Mostly this is a general desire on the part of the Government to make even the best work of the late Government so bad that it will condone their inability to fulfil the numerous promises that they gave at the election; and this may also be part of the desire of the Secretary for Labour and Industry for a change of heart in many directions. After he decided that the change of heart should happen in such a way that the whole of the heart could not possibly survive, he was presented with a bunch of purple and white sweet peas and ferns, signifying his purity; and he went away looking

like the leading lady in a Parsee wedding in Bombay. If it is not a change of heart, at least the sale of the butcher shops meant a change of meat and a change of prices. In many of these State butcher shops which have been converted to private enterprise, where once meat of the highest quality was sold, you now see cow beef—stuff so black that they have to put rosy electric lights on it in order that it may affect the blush of innocent youth. Presumably also the Sec-

[5 p.m.] retary for Labour and Industry decided that a change of heart was possible to him because he knew that no mental betterment was possible. All we did in the way of providing public utilities for the people—which not only paid in themselves but which also yielded an indirect profit to the public by keeping down private enterprise prices—will justify us when we are returned to power in re-establishing them on such lines as they were established before, and we shall prove more abundantly than we have already done that Socialism is all right and practicable. We have benefited by the mistakes we have made, and we will re-establish these necessary utilities. We know that as soon as we return to power—because we must be returned to power as soon as the public become sane again—when we return to the Government benches, these industries will be re-established on a firmer footing than before.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY (Hon. H. E. Sizer, *Sandgate*), in reply: There are one or two points I think in fairness I should reply to—particularly those raised by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. They are really only arguments which are manufactured—there is no basis for them.

Mr. STOPFORD: Like the license you are selling.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: They are arguing that, because we contemplate doing something in regard to this hotel, the people of Babinda will be worse off. That is a weak argument, because, for all the years this hotel has been in operation, they never for one moment thought of the people in regard to giving them more facilities. It did not dawn on them that more hotels were needed—they had a monopoly. Here is the late Home Secretary saying that they do not think so now. We had the Leader of the Opposition interjecting that he intended to move an amendment, if it were necessary.

Mr. STOPFORD: You are doing an immoral thing by selling a State monopoly to a private person.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: The people in the Babinda area will be no worse off. If they complain, they will get an opportunity to have a poll. Had hon. members opposite continued with their policy, the people in the area would never have got a poll; but under our policy they will get a poll.

Another extraordinary statement the Deputy Leader of the Opposition made was that they could not control the foreign element—throwing aspersions on the foreign element. (Opposition interruptions.)

Mr. HYNES: I hope you will have a better sense of responsibility than trying to stir up racial strife at election time.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: He spoke of “the foreign element.” I never raised this question at all; but the Deputy Leader of the Opposition made a strong point of it. He said that the foreign element was an undesirable element.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: He never said that.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: He inferred it.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: What did he mean then, if he said that that element could not be controlled?

Mr. STOPFORD: Private enterprise would not stop at anything in selling liquor for profit.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: What did the Deputy Leader of the Opposition mean when he said they could not control the foreign element? It means that the hon. member regards those people as an undesirable body needing some special control. The hon. member has only just realised that.

Mr. STOPFORD: That is your interpretation.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: I say that we can just as effectively control every element in the community by exercising our powers under the Liquor Act as we can control them by a Government hotel. If we could not control them, why did the late Government not establish a State hotel in the Tully area when they had an opportunity of doing so?

Mr. PEASE: I told you why.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: There is a foreign element there also. The hon. member tried to make a strong point by saying that the foreign element in this area needed controlling; yet the late Government regarded it as necessary to grant licenses to private persons in another sugar area, where there are also large numbers of foreigners.

Mr. PEASE: We made it possible for the court to give them.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: Why did you not establish a State hotel there, if the object was to control the foreign element?

Mr. PEASE: I told you why. We could not finance it.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: The hon. member now advances the weak argument that they could not finance it. They were able to finance other schemes—wild schemes. A hotel would cost only a few thousand pounds; they financed other undertakings to the extent of millions of pounds. So that argument does not carry them very far. The simple fact is that they realised that in another sugar area, where there was also a foreign element, private enterprise could meet the demands of the people; consequently that area has a private hotel.

Mr. PEASE: A fine hotel.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: There is no argument in the hon. member's statement.

Mr. PEASE: There is none in yours, and you are a responsible Minister.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: The hon. member asked me if I had read a book called “Revelry.” He also said that the State hotel had a

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white chalk line drawn on the floor of the bar—presumably as a test of sobriety. Is there any connection between “revelry” and a white chalk line in a State hotel? That reminds me that I have heard that, when the State hotel was opened at Babinda by the Home Secretary of the day, Mr. Huxham, it was the biggest “shout” ever known in Queensland. There was an open bar for a few hours to celebrate the Government’s entry into the hotel business, so perhaps that is where “revelry” and the white chalk line come in—the police came along, and after the revelry the revellers had to toe the line.

Another argument that hon. members opposite have used is in connection with the meals supplied by the hotel. Everybody who has studied the figures knows that the only profit that is made at the Babinda hotel is made out of the sale of liquor. It is certainly not made out of meals. Hon. members opposite, who were so solicitous about the people getting meals, probably only used that argument as a salve for their temperance views; and they ought to know that, if we had to rely on meals to make the venture pay, we would have to increase them three or four fold.

Mr. PEASE: That is what private enterprise will do.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: The hon. member knows that whatever will be done in this hotel will not be any worse than is done in an area where his Government permitted private enterprise to conduct a hotel. Another point to which I would like to refer is the argument I have heard one or two hon. members on the other side use—that the State hotel sold wholesome liquor. Does not every hotel sell wholesome liquor?

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: No.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: Then why not prosecute them? Hon. members were in power and had the opportunity of doing so. I am only using that argument to show how empty are the arguments of hon. members opposite. All I can say is that, if the electors of Mount Morgan or anybody else sold extraordinary concoctions, they could be made to pay the penalty just the same as anybody else. The fact is that all liquor legitimately sold is wholesome because it is according to a standard and subject to inspection, and that inspection will continue to be made.

Then I heard a very extraordinary argument advanced in connection with the sly-grog business. How do hon. members opposite holding temperance views reconcile their arguments with those advanced in connection with the sly-grog business? Did the late Government fail to enforce the law? Did they display negligence in their administration of that branch of the law?

Mr. WINSTANLEY: You cannot enforce the law in Brisbane, where there is a lot of sly-grog selling going on. Never mind the Babinda area.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: It is extraordinary to suggest that there will be an extension of the sly-grog business merely because the Government propose to transfer the control of this hotel to someone else. I have shown conclusively that the disposal of the hotel will not be a menace to the community. Provision is made for other hotels to be established in the area.

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Mr. STOPFORD: You are granting a monopoly for six years.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: The present law was fostered by the hon. gentleman.

Mr. STOPFORD: I never gave a Treasurer a liquor license.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: The arguments of hon. members opposite amount to hollow criticism. At the pre-sessional meeting of the Opposition Party, the Leader of the Opposition announced that the party had decided to oppose the legislation of the Government; and that was done before they had any idea of the character of the legislation we would introduce.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: You are talking absolute arrant rot and nonsense.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: I am not talking rot. I can produce the statement, and I will produce the statement. The Leader of the Opposition simply said that the Labour Party intended to oppose the legislation of the Government; and he made that statement before he knew the nature of the legislation. He said, in effect, that, if we said a thing was right, they would say it was wrong, quite irrespective of the will of the community.

I listened also to the rather humorous member for Warrego. I rather enjoy the hon. member, because I think he is always worth listening to. He is fortunate, because some day he may find it necessary to employ his humour as a means of livelihood. I have paid considerable sums of money and have been frightfully disappointed with very much less at a theatre. The hon. member made the astounding statement that in the future the Labour Party proposed to prove that Socialism could succeed. My word, it does need a new effort! Their first attempt cost the State millions of pounds.

Mr. PEASE: The first attempt was the Commonwealth Bank.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: The first attempt, to my knowledge, was when a gentleman of the same calibre as the hon. member for Warrego went to Paraguay; but that venture proved unprofitable and they got out. That was why the hon. gentleman did not go. The Labour Party certainly need something to bolster up their pet ideal, because it has been a tragedy to this State. They all know that it has been a tragedy; and, if the second attempt is to be anything like the first, then I am sorry for the people of Queensland. We now have a definite assurance from the Opposition that they will not be deterred by their past failures, but at the first opportunity will “make it a wetter,” and will waste millions of pounds of the people’s money in an endeavour to revive their sorry failures of the past fourteen years. It is very illuminating to have that statement—one that will assist in keeping this Government in power for many, many years to come.

There is nothing in the argument which the Opposition have raised that every section in the Liquor Act will be smashed at Babinda when the State ceases to control the hotel. The observance of the law there was a farce. The late Government made it a farce. We are placing the Babinda hotel on a basis whereby it will operate with all other hotels

in the State, and be amenable to the liquor laws of the State. The hotel will pass into the hands of the highest bidder. There will be no political sop in its sale.

Another point raised by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was that it was necessary for the State to have control of the hotel in times of industrial upheaval: but—and he knows it—the State can deal effectively with every hotel in times of industrial upheaval. We do not need to have State control to make a hotel amenable to the desires of the Government. All that is necessary in times of industrial trouble is for the Government to issue a proclamation, and all hotels, whether controlled by the State or otherwise, must obey. Therefore, there is no argument on that point. The Opposition are opposing this measure because they see that, with its passage, another of their socialistic idols will have gone by the board—and the sooner more have gone the better it will be for Queensland.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 38.

Mr. Annand	Mrs. Longman
„ Atherton	Mr. Macgroarty
„ Barnes, G. P.	„ Maher
„ Barnes, W. H.	„ Maxwell
„ Bell	„ Moore
„ Brand	„ Morgan
„ Clayton	„ Nimmo
„ Costello	„ Peterson
„ Daniel	„ Plunkett
„ Deacon	„ Roberts
„ Dunlop	„ Russell, H. M.
„ Edwards	„ Russell, W. A.
„ Fry	„ Swayne
„ Grimstone	„ Tedman
„ Hill	„ Tozer
„ Jamieson	„ Walker, H. F.
„ Kerr	„ Walker, J. E.
Dr. Kerwin	„ Warren
Mr. King	

Tellers: Mr. Kerr and Mr. Maher.

NOES, 19.

Mr. Bedford	Mr. Jones
„ Bow	„ Kirwan
„ Bruce	„ Pease
„ Collins	„ Smith
„ Conroy	„ Stopford
„ Dash	„ Weir
„ Foley	„ Wellington
„ Haulon	„ Wilson
„ Hanson	„ Winstanley
„ Hynes	

Tellers: Mr. Bruce and Mr. Hanson.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Consideration of the Bill in Committee made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

RAILWAY SUPERANNUATION INVESTIGATION BOARD BILL.

SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. Godfrey Morgan, *Murilla*): In introducing this measure the Government are fulfilling a promise made to the electors during the recent campaign. For fifteen years or more the railway employees of the State have been very anxious to obtain the benefits accruing from a measure of this description, but, unfortunately, owing to varied reasons, up to the present they have been unsuccessful. The previous Government had this matter before them continuously, deputation after deputation waiting not only

upon the then Secretary for Railways but also upon the Premier of the State; and in almost every instance something was done with a view to preventing superannuation for railway employees becoming an accomplished fact.

At 5.25 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. T. R. Roberts, *East Toowoomba*) relieved the Speaker in the chair.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I think it would be only right for me briefly to recapitulate what has happened during the past fourteen or fifteen years in connection with the desire on the part of railway employees to secure a superannuation scheme.

This question has been raised from time to time during many years past, and various schemes submitted by employees or their representatives have been submitted, but rejected as being actuarially and financially unsound. In September, 1911, the then Commissioner appointed a committee of railway officers to draw up a scheme, and on 4th March, 1912, the Commissioner submitted the committee's scheme, which was similar to that operating on the New South Wales railways, but it was decided that the matter must be held over until the Public Service Superannuation Bill then under consideration was presented to the House.

In July, 1915, the matter was again urged by a deputation from the various trade unions, which waited upon the late Hon. J. Adamson (then Secretary for Railways), and Cabinet decided that the question must "remain under consideration for the present." In March, 1916, a deputation waited upon the Premier (the late Hon. T. J. Ryan) who replied that he was aware of the benefits that would accrue from superannuation, which tended to retain the best men in the service, and he promised to consult the Secretary for Railways. Cabinet then decided to refer all the papers to the newly-appointed Insurance Commissioner (the late Mr. Goodwyn) with a request that he would receive a deputation from the railway service. Mr. Goodwyn subsequently suggested that a small committee be formed, but later recommended that the several schemes put forward be referred to an outside actuary. Mr. Bremner, of Sydney, was chosen, and he reported that all the schemes submitted were unsound, including one similar to that of the London and North Western Railway Company, which Mr. Bremner stated had been reported by one of the company's directors to show a deficit in 1905 of £1,200,000.

On 1st August, 1917, a deputation waited upon the late Hon. J. H. Coyne, who was then Secretary for Railways, who stated that it might be desirable for the railway and public service to come under one scheme: but, as the public service scheme was thought too exacting, he had no objection to the railway proposal being submitted to an outside actuary.

On 9th September, 1919, a local deputation waited upon the Hon. J. Huxham (Home Secretary) when in Rockhampton urging the matter, and Mr. Huxham stated—

"He wanted to see a contented service, and if the scheme tended towards satisfaction, the Government would grapple with it."

Hon. Godfrey Morgan.]

On 20th October, 1919, the then Secretary for Railways (Hon. J. A. Fihelly) received a deputation from various unions stressing the need for superannuation; but Mr. Fihelly stated that, while the Government were sympathetic, he did not see the utility of appointing an actuary until the Government's probable liability had been decided, but that a scheme would be welcomed whereby men who had reached advanced years would retire in comfort.

On 7th July, 1920, the Hon. J. Larcombe received a deputation and stated the matter would be placed before Cabinet, and Mr. Goodwyn, Insurance Commissioner, was asked to formulate a scheme. Mr. Goodwyn subsequently reported against the railway proposal, and recommended that an outside actuary's advice be obtained, stating, *inter alia*, that—

“Schemes drawn up by inexperienced persons having no actuarial knowledge or experience of pension funds are extremely dangerous, and their adoption would be liable to land the Government in very heavy financial responsibilities.”

[5.30 p.m.]

On 9th August, 1920, a deputation from the Guards' Association waited upon Mr. Larcombe at Rockhampton, and was informed that, when a scheme was drawn up, the matter would be considered further.

On 18th November, 1920, an Australian Workers' Union deputation from Ipswich waited upon the Minister, and expressed its objection to the principle of superannuation to railway employees alone, as it considered the scheme should be put up for the whole of the workers and not for one particular section, considering the contemplated scheme would mean tying employees to the railway service. The Minister replied that superannuation for railway workers had been approved by Cabinet, but he would convey the objection then raised to the Cabinet.

On 19th April, 1922, the Commissioner, writing to the Minister, stated the superannuation question had been raised again, though it was not certain that the employees were unanimous in the matter, a large number of them being young men who apparently did not appreciate the benefits to be derived, as did the older employees with years of service. The Commissioner stated he was strongly in favour of superannuation on a compulsory basis, and recommended that Mr. Bremner prepare a suitable scheme to which employees should contribute, with a pro rata subsidy from the Government. (The recommendation was approved, Mr. Bremner's final report being received in April, 1924.)

On 15th May, 1922, the Minister informed a deputation from the goods and audit branches and Engine-drivers' Association that on the eve of the last election the Government definitely committed itself to a railway superannuation scheme, and that after the election a scheme was included in the Governor's Speech, but subsequently the Queensland Railway Union (now the Australian Railway Union) had expressed its objection to the scheme, thereby making the matter rather difficult and embarrassing.

Notwithstanding the fact that the then Government supported the scheme in their policy speech, and also in the Governor's Speech, nothing further was done in the matter on that particular occasion.

{Hon. Godfrey Morgan.

Mr. KIRWAN: The railwaymen could not agree among themselves. Are you going to force it on them?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I shall, perhaps, be able later to give the reasons why the railwaymen could not agree among themselves.

The matter was, therefore, allowed to stand over, though Mr. Larcombe stated that if the railway employees, through their respective executives, would meet, discuss the matter, and agree to support a scheme, the Government could then frame legislation to include the adopted scheme, but unanimity was essential.

“The Daily Standard” of 22nd June, 1922, quoted the following adverse resolution passed by the Australian Railways Union Council:—

“That the council opposes any scheme of superannuation which is only operative on condition that the worker shall be the slave of one employer, such as any scheme applying to railwaymen would necessarily be. We express the belief that provision should be made for the maintenance of workers who, through disablement or old age, are unable to provide for themselves; but we affirm that this is a citizen right and not a job right, and that the funds necessary for such purpose should be provided from the profits of industry, and not in any part from the wages of the workers; and that a representative from this council attend the proposed mass meeting.”

It will be seen that in regard to that particular matter the members of the Australian Railways Union eventually passed that resolution, which again prevented any further action on the part of the Government.

On 10th July, 1922, a mass meeting of employees was held in the Centennial Hall, at which speeches for and against superannuation were made, and a motion in favour of the scheme was declared carried on a show of hands. An amendment proposed by Mr. Valentine, that the scheme be not under Government control, that it be self-supporting, and provide for all workers, was not accepted, and was subsequently withdrawn.

In April, 1924, Mr. Bremner's report was received, and provided for—

- (a) Normal pension;
- (b) Breakdown pension;
- (c) Widow's pension;

the then contributions being assessed as approximately £120,000 from employees and a similar amount from the Government. No decision was given to this report.

On 14th May, 1925, representatives of the Amalgamated Engineering Union and Australian Federated Union of Locomotive Enginemen, representing the Railway Superannuation Committee, interviewed the Commissioner, and subsequently presented a scheme which was submitted to Mr. Bremner, who stated it was unsuitable.

In 1928 Mr. Bremner was again asked to propound a scheme based more upon that operating in the Queensland public service, but with alternative subsidies from the Government of £10,000, £20,000, £30,000, £40,000, and £50,000 per annum.

In February last the president and vice-president of the Railway Transport Council

interviewed the late Premier, the Hon. W. McCormack, and the following is extracted from the minutes of that deputation:—

"After further discussion the Premier suggested that the council wait on the Minister for Railways (Hon. J. Larcombe, M.L.A.) desiring him to bring the matter before Cabinet and request the Government to secure the services of a suitable actuary to go into the whole scheme, find out whether it would be feasible, and what it would cost the Government to give any sort of reasonable scheme. It could then be submitted direct to the railway employees, and the concurrence of about two-thirds of their number would be necessary. This would mean imposing the scheme on about one-third of those who are to come under it. It would be a big job, and would cost the Government, perhaps, £400 or £500 to have a thorough investigation, but it would be necessary to have some definite scheme to submit to the men."

It will be seen that the last proposal agreed to by the late Premier, Mr. W. McCormack, is practically on all-fours with the Bill now before us.

When this proposal was before the Committee at another stage hon. members on the other side criticised the Government for bringing in a Bill to appoint a board. The reason why we thought it advisable to bring in a Bill in this form was to facilitate matters, so that, if the board could suggest a scheme which would meet with the approval of the workers generally the Government might be in a position to give effect to it without any delay. The Bill states definitely that, when the scheme is propounded, the Government may bring it into operation without submitting it to this House—of course, after having submitted it to the railway workers for their approval, and after finding that they are satisfied and that the Commissioner for Railways and the Government themselves, as representing the people, are satisfied with it.

Mr. DASH: Government by regulation.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No. The Government may submit the scheme to this House for approval; but, if it has met with the approval of all concerned, why delay for another twelve months? The men are anxious for this. They should have had it years and years ago; and I say that, if the board, representing the Commissioner and the people of the State, can propound a scheme that will meet with the approval of the railway workers, why not give effect to it at once? I do not say that we should wait for the unanimous approval of the railway workers, because it has been distinctly shown that a section of them do not approve of a purely railway superannuation scheme. It has been said—it may not be news to hon. members—that the leaders of the Australian Railway Union are opposed to a superannuation scheme because it will prevent men from striking—because they think that, if men who have been in the service for many years stand to lose the total amounts they have paid in if they go out on strike, they will think twice before they take such action.

Mr. KIRWAN: Is that the real reason for the Bill?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: For that reason it has been said that the

men who control the Australian Railway Union are opposed to any form of superannuation whatever for railway workers; but I am given to understand—and I think I can rely upon my informants—that, generally speaking, the railway workers are anxious for some form of superannuation. I think they are just as much entitled to it as other public servants; and whatever can be done to help to bring about a scheme which will meet with the approval of the majority will be done by this Government, who desire to bring contentment to the railway workers of the State. I have, therefore, much pleasure in moving—

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

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

At 5.43 p.m.,

THE SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. PEASE (*Herbert*): The Secretary for Railways did not give us very much information in his second reading speech. He said that the Bill was designed to carry out a promise made by the Government in their election pledges; but I would like to remind him that the policy on which the Government went to the country definitely promised the railway workers superannuation—not a board. The Government promised them bread; now they are giving them a stone. There is absolutely no necessity for this board, which will be constituted without any regard to the desires of the railwaymen. Why does the Minister not carry out his election pledge in the same way as the Labour Government honoured their promise to the police force of Queensland when they promised them a superannuation scheme? The Labour Government found themselves in the same difficulty. It was not possible to evolve a scheme suitable to all concerned, but the late Premier, when Home Secretary, had several conferences with the representatives of the Police Union and the Commissioner for Police in 1921, and eventually a satisfactory scheme was evolved. No board was created. Fancy giving to the railwaymen this stone in the shape of a board! There is no obligation upon the board to recommend a scheme that will be acceptable. The Bill empowers the Minister to continue the operations of the board for two years. I would remind the Minister that a definite pledge was made during the election campaign that the party opposite would grant to the railway workers of Queensland a superannuation scheme—not a board.

In the case of the Queensland police, the Labour Government had to contend with exactly the same difficulties as were outlined by the Secretary for Railways to-day. A superannuation scheme was required—not a board. The then Home Secretary introduced a Bill providing for the establishment of a superannuation scheme for the Queensland police. It was provided that, if a constable left the service, he was entitled to a refund of his contributions. According to the latest figures available, the sum of £387 was paid by way of refund in one year. The benefits to widows and children of deceased members amounted to something like £500, and the yearly payments amounted to £8,288. What are the present Government doing? The Minister said that it was impossible to reach an agreement with the railwaymen. We did not make a pledge on the hustings; but hon. members opposite definitely pledged

Mr. Pease.]

that they would provide a superannuation scheme, and not a board. In view of that promise, it is the duty of the Government to treat the railwaymen in exactly the same way as the Labour Government treated the Queensland police. It stands to reason that the men will not agree.

The Secretary for Railways referred at great length to what has happened in the past. They are always dabbling in the past. Do they not realise that they are now the Government? Do they not realise that they made certain pledges, and are now attempting to sidestep them? They definitely promised a railway superannuation scheme. A scheme could have been evolved by consultation between the representatives of the railway unions and the officials of the department. I listened to the present Secretary for Railways for nine years when he sat in opposition, and he told us that he knew about everything from the control of the railways to State enterprises. He said that, if he was called in, he would prescribe; but he now prescribes for the railwaymen a stone instead of bread. They are looking for a superannuation scheme.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They will get it.

MR. PEASE: The Bill empowers the Minister to keep the board in operation for two years. The Government will "dilly dally" with it until the eve of next election, when they will tell the railwaymen that, if returned to power again, they will probably get something.

One of the chief objections to the proposal, as stated by our leader and other members of the party, is that there is no provision in the Bill giving power to the railwaymen to appoint a representative to the board. The Minister says he is going to select the members of the board. If so, how on earth is he going to get over the difficulties which confronted Governments of the past? How is he going to get the railwaymen to agree to the provisions of any scheme when he will not give them the right of appointing a representative to the board? If he is going to give them a board instead of the superannuation scheme definitely promised, surely the Minister and the supporters of the Government must see that they will give no satisfaction to railwaymen until they give them the power of electing a representative to that board! The Minister pointed out that it would be extremely difficult to get such a representative. It would not be difficult. If he wants the railway service to elect one person who would be an expert in this matter, he could get him for the asking, and then he would have a reasonable measure to place before the employees for their acceptance. The Government are adopting a wrong course. They will appoint the three representatives of the board, notwithstanding that, when their members were on the hustings, they criticised the appointments made by the late Government to the Board of Trade and Arbitration, contending that they were one-sided. Notwithstanding that argument, when the Government bring something up themselves, they swallow the idea they then complained of! How can the members of the Government Party complain on one occasion of the constitution of the Board of Trade and Arbitration being one-sided, and then turn round and say they intend to appoint the whole three members of this board?

[*Mr. Pease.*

MR. G. P. BARNES: The action of the Government will not be one-sided.

MR. PEASE: If they are to get satisfaction from the workers in the railways, they must give them reasonable representation on the board. If it was unwise for the late Government to appoint the members of the Board of Trade and Arbitration, which decided the whole industrial affairs of Queensland, how much more unwise will it be in this case? The railway service is the big service of the Government, and is a service which demands a good deal of consideration. We all realise that railway services throughout the world are at the present time demanding a good deal of attention. The Minister has imported a board of two experts to inquire into the working of the railways. We do not agree with his action. We think that he could obtain within his own service two experts with vast experience of the railways. If he wants to have a comfortable service and a satisfactory service, he must trust his employees. The Minister said that he did not think it a very good idea to give the railwaymen representation.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I did not say that.

MR. PEASE: When I spoke to the hon. gentleman, he said he would see that a suitable man was selected. He will not get railwaymen to agree to a superannuation scheme unless he gives to the service the right of electing a representative to the board.

Many hon. members now in opposition have extensive experience of railway matters, as has also the hon. member for Rockhampton. If the Government wanted somebody to take the responsibility, why did they not refer this matter to the Public Service Commissioner? Better still, as has been suggested by hon. members opposite, why not call together members from both sides of the House to get the consensus of opinion on projected legislation? That excellent suggestion was made by the hon. member for Toombul when sitting on the Opposition benches, and certainly measures of infinitely greater service would result from the accumulated knowledge possessed by gentlemen who have been members of Parliament for any length of time. After all, those who have been members of this Chamber for a number of years must realise the general knowledge possessed by a politician; and surely a member of Parliament has enough knowledge to call in the experts he wants! The danger we see is that the Government will break faith with the railwaymen of Queensland; will not give them an opportunity to bring forward their point of view; and will give no satisfaction in any direction. The men will be required to contribute to any superannuation fund; why, then, should they not have representation on the board?

To use again the analogy of the Board of Trade and Arbitration, if it is fair and reasonable, as the Government contend, that the employers should have direct representation in that sphere, is it not also just that the railway employees should be directly represented on a board which is designed to formulate the best scheme possible in the interests of all concerned? Let me emphasise that the Queensland service, like the railway services in other parts of the world,

requires delicate handling and the exercise of considerable thought. Although the Secretary for Railways imported two experts from Victoria to inquire into the Queensland service, I read the other day where the Victorian Minister for Railways suggested to Parliament that hundreds of thousands of pounds—in fact, millions—should be written off the capital cost of the railways there in order to make them pay.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That was the right thing to do.

Mr. PEASE: Certainly it is the only way to reduce the capital cost. Speaking in a strictly non-partisan way, I urge the Minister to give careful consideration to the suggestion that the employees should be allowed to select their own representative. That will bring about that measure of contentment which is so essential to a public service, and will have a reverse effect to that which must ensue if the Minister persists in his intention to appoint all the representatives on the board.

Hon. members on the other side who were in opposition in the last Parliament will remember the experience of the Police Superannuation Fund. The provisions of the amending measure which brought that fund into existence were not altogether acceptable to all sections of the Police Union; but I am satisfied that to-day all sections are satisfied with the scheme. If the Government profit by that experience, they will seek the expert knowledge possessed by railwaymen, and, although the scheme propounded may not at first meet with general acceptance, it will be found that within a few years it will be as popular with railwaymen as the Police Superannuation Fund is with the members of the police force. One point I do emphasise is the right of the men to have representation on the board, particularly as they will be contributing to a considerable extent.

We also object to the provision that—

“The Governor in Council, on receipt of such report from the board, may in its absolute discretion approve of the scheme of superannuation as aforesaid or may refer same back to the board for further inquiry and amendment.”

The Government should adopt the principle followed in connection with police superannuation. They are adopting the principle of government by regulation, and more and more are flouting the authority of Parliament. No one was more severe than hon. members of the present Government when in opposition in their criticism of the Labour Government for flouting the authority of Parliament; and now they are going to force the railway employees to accept a scheme of superannuation whether they approve of it or not, although they will have to pay their share of the cost of the scheme. Then the Government are not going to submit the scheme to Parliament for approval. That is a wrong principle to adopt. If the Government carefully consider matters, I am quite satisfied that, as people of common sense, they must realise that it is a wrong thing to flout the authority of Parliament.

Our third objection is to the clause which reads:—

“Any Order in Council issued under this Act, promulgating and bringing into force any approved scheme of compen-

sation in respect of railway employees, and whether such scheme provides for compulsory superannuation or voluntary superannuation, or both, shall have the same force and effect as if it had been actually enacted in and form part of this Act.”

Government by regulation is a very bad thing as we have seen here in the last day or two; 80 to 90 per cent. of the people of Queensland are opposed to government by regulation. We say that an important matter such as superannuation for the railway employees, which they have to bear and which the country has to support, should not be promulgated by Order in Council. A measure should be brought down to Parliament and a full dress debate should take place in connection with a matter of that kind. Members on the Government side, when referring to what the Labour Government did, said that they were going to do things properly—that they were not going to do them in the slipshod manner adopted by the Labour Government. Take the police superannuation scheme. We did not ask for the appointment of a board. Our Home Secretary, with the experts that he had at his command, was quite qualified to formulate a scheme. He conferred with the various officials, and submitted the scheme to Parliament. The then Opposition had a good deal to say on it, and that is the proper method of introducing any superannuation scheme. We emphatically protest against the principle of legislation by Order in Council. This is becoming a very dangerous procedure in the hands of the present Government. They are evidently so obsessed with the easy way of doing things that they are going to adopt that principle even in connection with such an important matter as railway superannuation. They have evidently lost the principles they were supposed to have when they sat in opposition. It is a very wrong thing, and that is why the Labour Party are protesting against the measure. The Bill makes no provision for the employees expressing an opinion as to whether the scheme suggested by the board is acceptable to them or not. That is another very dangerous thing. The whole measure is wrongly conceived. First of all, the Government have violated their election pledge. The Secretary for Railways said the Government were carrying out their pledge. The Government are not carrying out their pledge. The pledge was definitely to give the railwaymen of Queensland a proper superannuation scheme.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: They are going to do it, too.

Mr. PEASE: They are going to do it in two years' time—probably on the eve of the next election.

Mr. J. E. WALKER (*Ipswich*): I should like very heartily to congratulate the Secretary for Railways on bringing in a very long-delayed measure of justice to the great body of railwaymen. I do not see any reason why they should be differentiated

from the rest of the public servants. [7 p.m.] The railwaymen form more than half the total number of public servants of the State, and I understand that every railway service in Australia excepting Queensland has had accorded to it this privilege of a superannuation scheme. It seemed to me, when carefully listening to the speech of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, that he realised that he had a bad

Mr. J. E. Walker.]

case, because his speech showed, in my judgment, far less logic and clarity than he generally displays in his utterances here. In one breath he tells us that on the hustings this party promised a superannuation scheme, and that now we are only giving a board; and he used the old simile that, in lieu of bread, we give a stone. Yet later on he criticised the Bill because it involves a scheme of superannuation to be brought in by regulation and not by Act of Parliament. I find it impossible to reconcile those two statements. The Bill either provides for a scheme of superannuation or it does not; the two cannot be reconciled. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has shown this lack of charity in criticising very severely the personnel of a board that has not yet been appointed. I do not know whether he is a prophet—whether he knows who is going to be appointed to this board. Is he making an analogy between this board, which is still to be appointed, and the Board of Trade and Arbitration as being onesided and partial?

Mr. PEASE: Your side say that.

Mr. J. E. WALKER: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has placed himself in a very difficult position there. I will take his last statement that the Bill does bring in a scheme. It brings in a scheme of superannuation, and the only question which arises is as to the procedure for the formulation of that scheme. I quite admit that the procedure laid down by the Secretary for Railways is open to argument, but, in my opinion, the very best course has been taken. It is a very difficult matter to formulate a perfect scheme for superannuation for the railway service. I doubt whether any member of this House is able to formulate such a delicate scheme as that, which would be entirely satisfactory to the great body of railwaymen and at the same time fair to the public of Queensland. It is a matter for experts—a matter in which actuarial investigations and calculations would have to take a large part; and so the Secretary for Railways is calling to his aid a board. That procedure has been greatly criticised. In the discussion which took place at the initial stage of the Bill, the gist of the argument against the Bill was that it did not provide for a specially elected representative of the railwaymen to sit on the board. Hon. members opposite paid a great deal of attention to that; but does not that involve a strange confusion of thought? To my mind it implies that the railwaymen are under the control of one of these unscrupulous and exploiting capitalists to whom our friends opposite are so very fond of referring. How far from the truth that is! The railwaymen are under the control of the Government, and no question of capitalism comes in. The only care of the Government is to bring in the very best scheme for the railwaymen which is compatible with the highest interests of the State. The Government represent the railwaymen, as they represent every section of the community.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. J. E. WALKER: Even from the standpoint of self-interest, they would naturally bring in the scheme which was most acceptable to the railway workers, so long as it does not infringe the rights of the public or endanger the welfare of the people. Why, what is the highest interest of the Government? Is it not, where the majority

[*Mr. J. E. Walker.*

of the public servants of the State are involved, to get a contented body of men? Is it not to consider their interests? And they are going to consider their interests, even if only from a selfish point of view. Of what a lot of worry it would relieve them if they could remove this source of a feeling of injustice and neglect! I think our friends opposite might give the Government a little credit for brains and for efficiency, even if only in the direction of carrying out a scheme that will be generally acceptable.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: We know them too well.

Mr. BRAND: They know you pretty well now.

Mr. J. E. WALKER: Against whom do the railway workers want a representative to protect them? The only persons whose interests come into the question, apart from the railwaymen, are the general public. Do the railwaymen want a special representative to protect them against the general public, of whom they form so substantial a section numerically? I do not think it is necessary at all. Even putting it on the lowest ground—that of selfishness—they can rely on the best scheme being propounded, in order to engender that feeling of contentment that will lead to efficiency. The Government are pledged to that; but they have a still higher duty than even the welfare of the railwaymen themselves—that is the welfare of the public; and so their power to give a scheme which might satisfy some of the men is limited by their obligation to see that it does not gravely injure the public, and I think that this Bill offers the wisest procedure by which to arrive at that objective.

It has evidently been a very difficult subject to tackle. Our friends on the other side during fourteen years, after some attempt and talk, have proved that it was too difficult for them. I understood the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to say that the scheme is almost foredoomed to failure unless we appoint to this board a special representative of the men, who, after all, would represent only a section of the railway employees—the majority. I think the railwaymen have enough breadth of vision to know that their interests will be fully protected by the board that is to be appointed, because they have on their side the motive of the self-interest of the Government; and so I hope that this Bill will pass, and will eventually give this long-delayed measure of justice to a large body of our public servants.

Mr. HANLON (*Ithaca*): The hon. member who has just resumed his seat made a very fair apology to his constituents—the railwaymen in Ipswich—for the Government's hedging on their promise to give the railway employees a superannuation scheme. As pointed out by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the Government promised them superannuation, and they are giving them a board. I venture to say that a great number of boards can be appointed without making any provision whatever for the old age of the railway employees.

When delivering his second reading speech, the Minister patted himself and the Government on the back somewhat by saying they were carrying out their election pledges. We shall be very pleased indeed to see them carry out their election pledges. The Government are merely indulging in a little

futile gesture to make believe, and are really dodging the main issue of their pledges. The very important pledges which they made from the platform are being conveniently sidestepped now, and some of the more trivial ones are brought to the front with the idea of carrying them out, thereby making a gesture and giving an impression to the people that they are endeavouring to honour their promises.

Mr. CLAYTON: I don't think you like it.

Mr. HANLON: The hon. member for Wide Bay is a little bit astray. I am an old railway employee, and during the time that I served in the railway service superannuation was my pet hobby. Every hon. member on this side would be delighted to see a satisfactory superannuation scheme introduced for the benefit of the railway employees.

Mr. GRIMSTONE: Why "stonewall" the Bill?

Mr. HANLON: Whenever anyone speaks on this side of the House hon. members opposite, who can never put an intelligent thought into words, believe that we are "stonewalling." I would like to remind hon. members opposite that we on this side take our duties seriously. We study the Bills that are introduced into this House, and endeavour to give expression to an intelligent reasoning as it affects the Bill.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: You make a bad attempt.

Mr. HANLON: That may be so in the opinion of the hon. member, but he is a poor judge.

The hon. member for Ipswich, who expressed the hope that this long-delayed measure of justice would now be extended to the railwaymen, seemed to be under the impression that we had a superannuation scheme before us. He seemed to be under the impression, like a number of other hon. members opposite, that we are considering a superannuation scheme in this House to-night. We have no such thing. There is nothing more important before this House to-night than was before the Cabinet when they appointed the Royal Commission to inquire into racing, or when they appoint any other commission. There is no scheme before the House, nor is there any proposed scheme. We have no reason to believe that the Government mean any business at all by this Bill. The Minister in his speech gave reasons for appointing the board. On the initiatory stage of this Bill we criticised the action of the Government, and questioned their seriousness in the matter in the appointment of a board by legislation. The explanation of the Minister was that the board is to be created to avoid delay and to expedite matters. Had the Minister desired to expedite matters the board would have been in operation the first week in June last, because the Government had every power to appoint the board without in any way consulting Parliament. There is no necessity for any legislative consent to be given to the appointment of a board to inquire into a superannuation scheme.

The Minister had no need to wait for the opening of Parliament in order to consult members of this Chamber when he desired to reduce the staff in the various railway workshops of Queensland. He promptly appointed a board consisting of

railway officials from another State, and that board has practically completed its work.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is a different matter.

Mr. HANLON: This is a Bill to provide for the creation of a board to inquire into a superannuation scheme, which the Minister says is a matter of urgency, and one that should be adopted as soon as possible; but before this Bill passes its second reading stage the board which was appointed by the Minister to sack railwaymen will have completed its inquiry.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is not true.

Mr. HANLON: Is the Minister so green as to think that we shall take him seriously when he says that the creation of a board by legislation is to expedite a superannuation scheme? The Government had no need to consult Parliament when it appointed one of its supporters to inquire into State stations prior to their sale. That was something about which it was unnecessary to consult Parliament. The matter of the establishment of a board, not to say anything in the nature of binding the Government to give a scheme of superannuation to the railwaymen, but to inquire into the subject and to make representations to and enlighten the Government as to a successful scheme, needs all this elaborate procedure of waiting until Parliament meets and introducing legislation to give effect to the desire to create a board. It is merely making a demonstration in force before the enemy.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: It is merely what the Premier calls a "gesture."

Mr. HANLON: If the Minister's reason for creating a board is, as he says, a desire to avoid delay, I would assert my objection to the creation of a board by this Bill. In the first place, the Bill will hand over to the board the power of saying what this scheme shall be. We do not know who the members of the board may be. They may be railway officials from another State. Most likely, in pursuance of that policy of the Minister of preference to other States, they will be people from outside Queensland. Parliament is asked to hand over parliamentary functions to this board. If a scheme of superannuation having the slightest chance of success is brought about, it will entail the expenditure of public funds. It will entail the expenditure by the Government of public funds in an endeavour to make the scheme financially sound and solid. Therefore, under this Bill we are asked to hand over to a board the functions of Parliament with regard to the expenditure of public funds. That is not a right thing. In any expenditure of public funds that is to be made by the Government, no matter on what score, whether it be superannuation or any other matter, Parliament should have the say as to how that public money shall be expended, and to what extent the Government intend to subsidise the scheme to be introduced. The people of Queensland and Australia as a whole are a little too suspicious of boards. I am suspicious of boards, especially a board of which we know nothing, and whose powers are so great. The Minister has given us no idea of the personnel of the board; and if the personnel has already been selected he is keeping it very dark. I would call the attention of the hon. gentleman to what happened a couple of years ago, when the Federal

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Government attempted to hand over certain functions of government to a board to be created by them. Hon. members will remember that the Federal Government submitted an amendment of the Constitution to the people of Australia, whereby they were asked—not, as hon. members repeatedly suggested, to hand over arbitration matters to the Federal Government, but to hand over the industrial control of Australia to a board to be appointed by that Government. Had the Federal Government asked the people of Australia to hand over to them the control of the Arbitration Court, they would have had a much better case to put before the people; but, when they asked the people of Australia to hand over that function of government to a board, the people of Australia very rightly and very firmly refused to do so. We should take the same attitude, and not hand over our powers to a board which may happen to be appointed by the Government in power in Queensland for the time being.

Another objection to this board is one which has already been stressed by our leader and deputy leader. That is, the Bill makes no provision for the representation of the railway employees themselves. The people who are most vitally affected by any scheme of superannuation which may come into operation must be the railway employees. If the scheme were unfair to the employees, it would be a serious burden to them. If it were unfair to the community as a whole, which no one for a moment wants, it would not be such a heavy burden on the rest of the community as it would be if the scheme were not in the interests of the employees concerned. Consequently, railway employees are more vitally interested in any scheme of superannuation for the railway service than the rest of the community.

Many times have I heard the cry of hon. members opposite—indeed it has become a political axiom of theirs—that there should be no taxation without representation. Now, this scheme, if it comes to anything—perhaps one is really “beating the air,” as it may never come to fruition—will make it compulsory for railway employees to contribute to the fund, whether they like it or not. If they are to be conscripted, as the hon. member for Bowen has just remarked, surely there is nothing wrong in having one representative on a board in order to put forward their viewpoint! If a board is appointed and one of the three representatives is selected by the railwaymen, then the employees generally can rest assured that their case will be sympathetically considered—much more so than if all the representatives are appointed by the Governor in Council. Prior to the establishment of a Labour Government, railway employees had no reason to think that the party which then controlled Queensland, and whose followers are now in office, was liable to do too much to help the railway employees. Hon. members opposite try to make out that they have changed since that time. Probably after fourteen years spent in watching Labour administration they have acquired some sympathy for the underdog; but whether the Minister is sympathetic or not, and whether he appoints someone who is sympathetic or not, the great bulk of railway employees will distrust members of a board who are appointed solely by the Government. On the other hand, a feeling of confidence will

be engendered if one representative is selected by the employees, who will, after all, contribute to the fund.

Another very important reason why one representative should be appointed by the men is that, when a report is brought in, it will probably be a voluminous document, couched in that ponderous language in which most boards of inquiry frame their conclusions, and it will be well-nigh impossible for the 18,000 or 20,000 employees of the railway service individually to read the report and judge on the merits for themselves. Their representative, however, would be conversant with their requirements, and, with his two colleagues on the board, would discuss a scheme in the best interests of all concerned; and, when that scheme was formulated, he would be in a position, understanding the viewpoint of those whom he represents, successfully to explain the scheme. He would achieve much more success in that direction than a stranger appointed by the Governor in Council.

In order that this superannuation scheme should be a success, not only is it necessary that a suitable scheme should be introduced; not only is it necessary that the scheme should be financially sound; but, if the scheme is going to be a success, it is also necessary that the railway employees should understand the scheme and why they have to contribute to the scheme. For that reason it is of particular importance that somebody in the confidence of the railway employees should be on that board.

Another question that crosses our minds when we look at the Bill is this: Is this board that we are asked to appoint a board to inquire into superannuation, or is it a board to administer a superannuation scheme? I find it difficult to understand. The title of the Bill reads “A Bill to Constitute a Railway Superannuation Investigation Board,” and then follow the usual words “and for other purposes.” What are those “other purposes?” Are we doing what the title of the Bill conveys—appointing a board to investigate superannuation in order to propound a sound scheme of superannuation? In view of the Minister’s claim that he is in a hurry to bring the scheme to fruition, why is the board appointed for two years?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It says “not exceeding two years.”

Mr. HANLON: That means two years to me. No term less than two years is mentioned in the Bill, and, if the board is appointed for two years, and it is only going to report, it is difficult to understand the Minister’s hurry. Perhaps the Minister realises that by appointing the board within the next few months to bring in a report in two years’ time the report will come before the railway employees and the people immediately before the next election—too late to institute a scheme, but they will have an opportunity to go to the country with a flowery promise of a wonderful superannuation scheme if they are given another lease of power. Perhaps that is the explanation. If that is not the case, and there is no reason for appointing the board for two years, what can be the reason? Reading the Bill through, clause by clause, one can only come to the conclusion that the board is being appointed to administer the scheme. Is that the idea? Has the Minister got a scheme already cut and dried to suit himself and to suit the Government? Under

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the guise of creating a board to make an investigation, is he actually seeking power to administer the scheme? There is much more in this Bill than a mere board of inquiry. There are powers to administer the scheme; powers of actually compelling the employees to participate in the scheme. Every power necessary to bring in a scheme of superannuation is taken under the guise of a Bill to create a board of inquiry. I do not think it is reasonable that the Government should seek to put the whole thing through while maintaining that this measure is merely to create a board to inquire into superannuation.

Another feature of the Bill which rather surprises me is that no matter how much we may disagree with the Minister, he still maintains that it is necessary to have parliamentary sanction for the creation of this board, and then in the Bill he takes power to institute a scheme of superannuation, put it into operation, compel the employees to submit to it, and spend public money in the administration of it without parliamentary sanction at all.

[7.30 p.m.]

What is the most important phase of the proposed superannuation scheme? Is it more important that Parliament should be consulted as to the right to create a board, or is it more important that Parliament should be consulted as to the right to administer the scheme, to spend the people's money, to tax the railway employees, and to compel them to join in that scheme whether they wish it or not? There can be no argument that, if parliamentary sanction is required for anything, it is required for putting into force the actual scheme itself. Perhaps, as I said before, the Minister has the scheme cut and dried. Perhaps someone has warned him that the scheme is not going to be satisfactory to railway employees; and, if he thinks it necessary to inflict it upon them, he desires the board to do it without bringing it before the House and allowing it to be subjected to the searching and thrashing-out which it would get in this Chamber.

Before I conclude I wish to deal with another principle which comes under this Bill, and which has been mentioned by the Leader and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition—that is, the system of government by regulation. During the few years I have been in this Chamber, I have never seen a Bill which has provided so largely—the bulk of it, in fact—for the Governor in Council to do things required. When I sat behind the late Government, the members of the present Government Party, who were then in opposition, continually attacked the then Government on what they termed “government by regulation.”

Mr. EDWARDS: It was necessary, too.

Mr. HANLON: I quite agree that during the term of office of the Labour Party government by regulation, more or less in the great majority of cases, was successfully and justly carried out; but never during the fourteen years the Labour Party was on the Treasury Benches in Queensland was government by regulation made a science as it has been made by the present Government in regard to income tax matters. We have always understood government by regulation to mean that the Governor in Council takes power to issue proclamations or regula-

tions in accordance with an Act of Parliament. Every regulation issued by the Governor in Council during the period this party controlled the government of Queensland was a regulation in furtherance of the spirit of the Act of Parliament concerned. In no case was the vital and main principle of any Act altered by regulation. I suppose we might claim that the secrecy of the Income Tax Act is about the most vital provision in the Act; it might be called the governing provision in the Act. That had the endorsement of both sides of the House when the Bill was going through; but now the Government, by regulation, have completely reversed the Act without consulting Parliament. It was not a regulation in conformity with the Act and for the better administration of the Act. Power should only be taken by the Governor in Council to issue regulations in conformity with the spirit of the Act, and in order to make better and easier its administration.

I object very strongly to giving such wide powers as these. We are giving power to establish the scheme. We are giving powers to this board and the Governor in Council to do all things necessary to launch this superannuation scheme, and to expend public funds—and that, to my mind, is the most vitally important part of it—to spend whatever money they like, whether rightly or wrongly, whether for good or evil, and to compel railwaymen, whether they like it or not, to come under it, giving the powers of a Mussolini over the railwaymen of Queensland, and taking from this Parliament powers which rightly belong to it.

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*): I remember the time when the police superannuation scheme was first mooted. The Labour Government were at that time disinclined to introduce it. I have turned up in “Hansard” the speech I made at that time, and I am going to quote it to show that, although the police had only one union and they knew what they wanted and they asked for a superannuation scheme and outlined it to the Government, the Government—although they said they were sympathetic—could not see their way to introduce the necessary Bill until forced to do so by the Opposition in this House. (Opposition laughter.) Hon. members may laugh, but I am going to prove it to them. I do not make statements unless I am prepared to support them. We have had the statement made to-night that the introduction of a superannuation scheme for the railwaymen is not going to give satisfaction because they have several unions; and the Minister, knowing that, in his wisdom—charged with the responsibility of bringing a scheme into being and starting it off on the right course—thinks that the best interests of the service will be served by appointing a board. I might not altogether agree with the appointment of a board; I might be willing that the Minister should go right on with the scheme; but, if he is of the opinion that that is the best thing to do, I am not going to stand in his way. At the same time, I do not approve of the hypocrisy of hon. members opposite when they say that, although this Bill lays it down that the board must report in two years, nevertheless the Government are not sincere.

On page 2542 of “Hansard” for 1919-20 will be found the speech to which I refer, and what I said at that time was not challenged by the Labour Government or their

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supporters—a fact which proves that what I said was correct:—

“Now, to deal with the attitude of the Government. On 13th June, 1917, Premier Ryan, replying to a deputation from the Police Union, said, *inter alia*—

I can give the assurance I have told you, and with regard to the other matters, I will go carefully into them with my colleague the Home Secretary, who entirely agrees with the views I am now expressing. I will go carefully and sympathetically into the requests you have made with regard to superannuation and the other matters you mention. The main other matter was the question of superannuation. I will put the matter before the Cabinet, but I give you that assurance as head of the Government of the manner in which it will be dealt with.

“In February, 1918, in the course of his policy speech delivered at Townsville, Mr. Ryan announced a Police Superannuation Bill amongst the measures to be immediately dealt with by his Government if returned to power. Such Bill, although placed on the business-sheet of Parliament for the past two years has not yet materialised.

“According to the ‘Police Union Journal’ of October, 1918, the following letter was received by the Police Union from the Home Department:—

Referring to your letter of the 19th July last to the honourable the Premier, and to previous correspondence, I have the honour, by direction, to inform you that the request of your union for an improved police superannuation scheme will be brought up for consideration and decided during the next session of Parliament.”

I also quoted in my speech the remarks that had been made by Mr. Huxham during the previous session, when he said—

“The Government had promised that next session a Bill would be brought in which put the police in the same fortunate position as the men in New South Wales.”

I am not raising any objection to the superannuation scheme for the Queensland police. If hon. members will peruse “Hansard,” they will find that I outlined the scheme in this Chamber. (Opposition laughter.) The scheme was submitted to me by the Police Union in order that I might advocate it in this Chamber because the Labour Government had refused to introduce it. I took up the cudgels on behalf of the police, and from my place in this House I advocated the scheme and twitted the Government for not introducing it. Hon. members opposite are endeavouring to claim considerable credit for the introduction of that scheme, but they were not prepared to extend that benefit to the police until they were compelled to do so by the threat of loss of political patronage by the police. After a delay of but a few weeks in office, the Secretary for Railways has deemed it fit to appoint a board to investigate a railway superannuation scheme, which it is admitted by all is a more difficult scheme to formulate than that required for the police. I am quite agreeable that the Minister should go right ahead and introduce a scheme into this Chamber; but I would point out that the delay on the part of hon.

members opposite in the case of the police was one of years, whereas with this Government it has only been one of a few weeks. Hon. members opposite have no case. They are merely indulging in political propaganda in order to create an uneasy feeling in the minds of the railwaymen. They question the sincerity of hon. members on this side; but there are sufficient ex-railwaymen on this side to guard the affairs of railwaymen generally. I have no railways in my electorate, and I have no “axe to grind.” The Minister is sincere in his purpose—equally as sincere, and perhaps more so, than were the Labour Government when dealing with police superannuation.

Mr. WEIR (*Maryborough*): I think for arrant rot the hon. member for Kurilpa “takes the bun.” I am sorry that he is not in opposition now using his wonderful powers forcing Governments to do things. I can quite imagine him screaming at the top of his voice in his caucus and no one taking any notice of him. He has to scream so that the people in Kurilpa will really know that he is on the job. One does not require any greater evidence of the insincerity of the Government than the remarks of neophytes in politics, who allow their Government to do just what suits the Government without consulting them at all.

We need no better evidence than the fact that the Home Secretary pleaded crass ignorance of the measure. We require no better evidence than the speech of the hon. member for Ipswich, who, in a logical and well-reasoned speech and in his simplicity and want of knowledge of parliamentary procedure, revealed the cunning of the Government. Cuning is their stock-in-trade. In the absence of cunning, this logical and clear mind “let the cat out of the bag” when he told us what we expected he would tell us—the truth. He told us that this Bill does not provide only for the establishment of a board to investigate, but it provides for the establishment of a board to do things. That is obvious now. If you look at clause 6, you will see that the board has the powers so very ably pointed out by the hon. member for Ithaca. Power is given for the board to supersede this Legislative Assembly, and to take into its own hands from the very day it is appointed the whole and sole control of introducing a scheme of superannuation as affecting railwaymen. The contention has been launched by hon. members on this side—and it is a contention that cannot be resisted—that, as a matter of decency, railwaymen should be permitted to enjoy the privilege of minding their own business. Who are better able to mind the business of the railwaymen than the railwaymen themselves?

We are conscious, every one of us, of the fact that in the bigger matters affecting the railway employees, such as the Appeal Board to hear appeals against dismissals, punishments, and transfers, we allow no one else to “butt in.” We permit the railwaymen to mind their own business. In every centre, whether it be in South Queensland, Central Queensland, or Northern Queensland, the employees’ representative on the Railway Appeal Board is elected directly by the railway employees. There is no difficulty there about the overlapping of union interests. The railwaymen have long passed that point. Everyone knows that the union representative on that board is the best man in the service. In one year

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he may be selected from the traffic section, the Guards' Association, or the Australian Railways Union; in another year from any of the other unions. The railwaymen select the most capable man for that board. If they can be trusted to mind their own business on the Appeal Board, then they should be trusted to mind their own business by electing a representative to this board. Why should they not be allowed to elect a representative to look after their own affairs? The Home Secretary gave us very good food for thought the other night. He said that there was a need for an actuary to be appointed to this board. I contradicted him at the time. As a matter of fact, the Bill specifically excludes an actuary from the board. I do not expect contradiction on that point, for the Bill lays it down that there shall not be an actuary on the board. If anyone denies that assertion, let him read the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The board can secure the services of an actuary.

Mr. WEIR: That is correct—it can buy the services of an actuary. According to the Act, the three representatives on the board are supposed to represent three interests—the Railway Commissioner, the public, and the railway employees. The Railway Commissioner is surely capable of looking after the man who represents him. That is his function. I believe he will do that, and do it well, because the Commissioner will see that the officer who represents him will be a capable officer. No one will deny him the right to do that; but, having done that, there is no further reason why he should usurp the functions of the railway employees and elect their representative. Why should the railwaymen be cajoled and forced into this measure by being told that they have not enough intelligence to elect a representative to look after their own interests?

Now as to the actuary aspect. I have said from my place in this House that there is no need for an actuary to be appointed to the board. In doing so I am not discrediting the value of an actuary.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You agree with the Bill.

Mr. WEIR: I do agree with the Bill, but only in so far as it is going to give the railwaymen some measure of satisfaction. If it is going to do that, then it is worth while. At all events, in so far as an actuary is concerned, the Bill itself sets out that there is no need for the appointment of an actuary, because it says that of the three men who shall be appointed none of them shall be an actuary. That is definitely laid down in so many words. The Bill goes on to say that, if the board wants the assistance of an actuary, it must buy that assistance from outside itself.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It may engage one.

Mr. WEIR: It does not even say that it may engage one.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You agree with the Bill that there is no need for an actuary?

Mr. WEIR: I say there is no need to appoint an actuary to the board, but the other night the Home Secretary said there was. That is what I am contradicting.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: But one can be engaged, if necessary.

Mr. WEIR: Let us look at the actuarial side. I can remember the history of this scheme away back in 1900 or thereabouts; and I can remember what happened very distinctly up to 1912. I can remember four schemes being promulgated in the Commissioner's office, and sent all over the State. The hon. member for Rockhampton will also remember them. I remember them well, and I can remember taking part in the discussions on those schemes both in Maryborough and in Ipswich.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What happened?

Mr. WEIR: They died, like this one will. There is a mortuary up there. The whole lot of them will be buried in due course. If I were as sure of going to heaven as that this scheme will be here just immediately before and after the next election, then I shall have no worry on that score. It will be there.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: This Bill will be passed and put into operation.

Mr. WEIR: Give those 200 apprentices you examined the other day a job, and I will believe you. An actuary is not going to be a member of the board for a very good reason. Since 1912 and further back, I can remember distinctly the processes of argument and the framing of measures exactly similar to this. I can remember all of those measures—the superannuation scheme, which was suggested in Commissioner Evans's time—the schemes that were transferred to paper. I can remember how responsible officers were sent out at the Commissioner's expense and in the Commissioner's time; how those officers addressed the railwaymen and tried to put the scheme forward. In every case the railwaymen fell down on the job for the reason that they were never satisfied that the scheme was genuine. Their idea was that there was a "nigger in the woodpile." So there was. One way the Minister is going to kill his scheme is by making the railwaymen think that there is a "nigger in the woodpile"; and they will not be satisfied otherwise until they have the ordinary common courtesy extended to them of allowing them to appoint their own representative. If the hon. gentleman wants to spoil what might be a good measure, he is going the right way about it by reflecting on the intelligence and the capacity of the railwaymen to mind their own affairs. There should be no argument against giving the men a representative. The Commissioner will have his representative; why not give the employees the same right?

Mr. BRAND: They are going to have one.

Mr. WEIR: The hon. member for Burrum interjects that they are going to have one; but he is going to be selected for the colour of his hair. I am not saying political colour, but he will have to be of the colour that will suit the Minister. If that is not the case, why not let the men appoint their own representative?

Let us go a stage further. If all the schemes promulgated from time to time were analysed, surely a scheme could be devised to-day on a good basis, particularly when, as I said the other night, we have the added experience of the police scheme, the public service scheme, and all the other superannuation schemes that exist in other parts of the world! If these things are worth anything, surely it should not be a difficult thing for the departmental officers to frame a

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scheme for submission to the men! Give them the right to argue it out, and say "Yes" or "No" to any such scheme. They did it before, and they killed all the schemes put forward. They probably will kill the proposed scheme from suspicion. If they do, then it will be the fault of the Minister. I hope such a thing will not happen.

There is an aspect of the scheme which, to my mind, tells more definitely than any other way just why the Government are introducing this scheme. I have no two opinions as to the reason for the introduction. I do not believe they have one thought of doing a good service for the railwaymen. I believe their commercial mind is the only mind they have; that they have their minds bent on balancing the ledger. They know that, while we in our day compelled men to resign on attaining the age of sixty-five years, they promised that they would not retire men at sixty-five years of age. I know from internal experience of the railway service that the "age 65" regulation in the railway service is as old as Captain Cook. At any rate, it was there when I joined the service in 1899. We carried it on; but the new Government said, "We will abolish it." Well, they get all the credit they are entitled to for that. Now, having abolished that regulation and realising that it is going to be a burden in these days of declining revenue in the railways and a necessity for curtailing the number of employees in the railway service, they have come to the conclusion that they have bitten off more than they can chew, because there is, and always has been, a demand at the bottom of the service for the elimination of the "65" men at the top of the service, particularly as there is not much room in the service for extra men. I am not arguing the merits of that case. I am one of those who believe that it is a crime to put a capable old man on the "scrap-heap." That is not his place. It is a travesty on civilisation that the one crime a man commits is that he gets old at sixty-five years of age. It is a pity that the nation—and particularly the Federal Government—have not brought in an up-to-date old-age pension measure worthy of the name for superannuating all men who reach the age of sixty-five.

Mr. COLLINS: Hear, hear!

Mr. WEIR: You will agree with me, Mr. Speaker, that, when a man has done noble service in any walk of life in this great Commonwealth and has reached the age of sixty-five, he is legitimately entitled to a pension to enable him to live the rest of his life with his family and those surrounding him in comfort. That is a good argument. For all that, the commercial aspect intrudes itself here. These people see that the old men will be shoved out in the ordinary course. They have fixed up the difficulty for the time being; but they want the railway employees to "carry the baby." We know that these old men will be pushed out, and they put it on the railwaymen to push their own old men out. Therefore, they formulate a scheme which will force the men to carry the responsibility. The provision for compulsion is there; whether it is right or wrong is beside the issue.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: If the railwaymen believe you they will have no scheme.

Mr. WEIR: I am not blaming the hon. gentleman. The Minister has power to pre-

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vent any theory that I might put up by giving the railwaymen the right to mind their own business. That is my point. The railwaymen will not be bound by me. They have enough intelligence to mind their own affairs, and they ought to be given the right to do so. The Government see the need for pushing these old men out, and they say, "Rather than carry the responsibility ourselves we will throw it on the railway employees. We will give them compulsory superannuation, so that they will carry the responsibility of superannuating the old men in the service." I want the Minister to remember the fact that the unit given to men who retire under the public service superannuation scheme is not a very great amount. It is not a very large amount for these old men to retire on.

The difficulty in connection with any superannuation scheme is the men who have reached forty to forty-five years of age. It is a very difficult thing to make an actuarially sound scheme which will enable men of forty-five years of age to come under the scheme. When a man reaches the age of forty-five years, he becomes an encumbrance to any scheme. It is difficult to formulate any scheme that will give these men the full benefit. That is so in life insurance and in all measures that are built on actuarial grounds, and for that reason there will be a difficulty always confronting the Government regarding the responsibility of the man who is old when the scheme is introduced. That is going to confront this Government, and I believe that is the reason why they are introducing a scheme to relieve themselves of the responsibility of retiring men at sixty-five years of age.

Mr. DUNLOP (Rockhampton): As an old railway employee I should like to say a few words on this Bill. I do not think any hon. member who has spoken on any subject since I have been here needs a dose of bisurated magnesia for his digestion in order to get a lead from either side of the House. I supported the amendment proposed by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition at an earlier stage of this Bill, and, after the remarks of the Secretary for Railways, I am more convinced than ever that I did the right thing in supporting that amendment. The hon. gentleman started away back in the "never never," and proceeded stage by stage, and the further he went the more I became convinced that there had been dissatisfaction throughout the railway service for some considerable time. The hon. gentleman quoted one particular union which bore out my statement at the time that to a large extent what kept railway superannuation back was that a certain union did not want to see the institution of a superannuation scheme because it might prevent it from taking direct action and going on strike.

From what the Minister read to us, it convinced me that the railway employees to-day have been approached by two lots of employees, one of which is the Australian Federated Union of Locomotive Enginemen; but the railway service is composed of 16,000 employees. I never understood from what

the Secretary for Railways said [8 p.m.] that any of those employees were approached. The hon. member

for Maryborough practically put the case in a nutshell in his remarks. The Secretary for Railways, and particularly the Commissioner

for Railways—I do not suppose anyone has had more experience than myself of the Commissioner for Railways—some of the Commissioners are good, and some of them are anything but good. One of them at one particular time was so good that, when I asked permission to come down from Ipswich to interview him and I came down, he gave me ten minutes to get back to Ipswich, and would not receive me at all. (Laughter.) The Secretary for Railways or the Commissioner to-day dare not appoint on the Railway Appeal Board or any other appeal board a man of their own accord, but give the employees the right to appoint their men. The reason for that is that it creates a better feeling to let the men take their own responsibility on the appeal board. I had the honour of being on the appeal board for nine years. I was elected by the employees themselves, and they apparently considered that I had more than the average amount of intelligence to state their case. (Laughter.) Whilst I was on the board, I was not afraid to criticise the Commissioner or anyone else. When you get there, you do not want to be frightened of anyone so long as you give a fair day's work for a fair day's pay to your superior officer when you are on duty. (Hear, hear!) I say without fear or favour, that the Minister should have taken the employees into his confidence by giving them the right to appoint their representatives; and, being a bit of a prophet, I shall forecast that this thing is going to end as the hon. member for Maryborough said it would. If you do not give them the right to have a say in appointing a representative, you are killing the first principle of it by not taking the employees into your confidence. If the Minister did that, it would have given the men a fair show to shoulder their responsibility on the board. I believe I can almost pick the union from which the employee is going to come, if there is anything of a board; but, fortunately, having something of a Christian-like nature, I will not say. (Laughter.) I am certain of this: The Secretary for Railways has quoted a certain union, and that is why I think he is afraid of submitting the question to the railway employees in case that particular union will have nothing to do with it. All this piffle to the effect that they might cripple the Bill, as the Home Secretary said, is nonsense. He knows nothing about the railway employees. He wants to be in touch with railway employees to know what their requirements are. The railway employee knows his own business best; otherwise why is it that the Secretary for Railways and the Commissioner for Railways brought about the Inventions and Suggestions Board? It was because they know that railwaymen have got brains, and have brought into operation certain improvements which have saved the Government thousands of pounds. Surely to goodness the Government should have given the men their confidence! but they have held something back, and that is going to kill the superannuation scheme. I want to know from the Minister whether this scheme is going to be made compulsory. I have no mandate from the railway employees that they want it—a certain number want it—but the majority have to decide whether they want it or not. Is the question going to be submitted to the employees for them to say "Yes" or "No" in regard to it? Is it going to be an Order in Council which has to decide the whole thing, instead of this Parliament? We have

on the business-sheet something about the Babinda State hotel, which is only a secondary consideration compared with the welfare of the railway employees, and there is also something about Mount Isa. This Parliament is going to decide what is going to be done in those cases, and the decision is not to be left to be dealt with by an Order in Council.

I suppose they think that the railway employees, as a body, do not know their own business. I am satisfied that they do. I know for a positive fact that a very large percentage indeed of the railway employees in all branches have taken out policies in the State Insurance Office and other insurance offices, and those employees will want to know where they come in. That is a phase of this question which I have never yet heard discussed. If this scheme is to be compulsory, many of them will pull out from the State and other insurance offices. Moreover, with the shrewd method of putting off railway clerks and others that the Government have at the present time, railway employees have to think twice before they start anything like this scheme. That is one matter that has to be taken into consideration. Is the scheme going to be submitted to a vote of the employees as a whole? If so, naturally there will have to be a reasonable percentage of them in its favour, because they ought not to be forced into paying whether they like it or not, when so many are already contributing towards policies of insurance. As regards the appointment of the actuary and the board and going abroad for experts generally, the board which the Minister has already appointed seems to have gone away like an aeroplane; but I shall have something to say on that matter when the report comes along. I should like to remind the Minister that our own men have the brains necessary for a job of this kind. I quite agree with the hon. member for Maryborough that we have the police and public service superannuation schemes to guide us; and we have in the railway service men with brains who have risen from the bottom rung of the ladder. Whilst I am an Australian native, I am opposed every time to picking anyone from outside Queensland for these jobs, because Queenslanders have the brains to do anything you like to pick. Queensland is the best section of Australia, and anybody who goes abroad in preference is not fit to be in this Parliament or in any local government body.

I certainly am going to support the measure, but I am surprised that it only provides for the appointment of a board, and that the Government are not going to take their own employees into their confidence. Considering the present trend of railway events, I believe that my forecast will prove correct that, when this question is submitted to a vote, the fact that the Government have not taken their employees into their confidence will cause the men to vote against the scheme in order to teach the Minister a lesson and make him realise that we have the necessary brains in our own service. I believe that alone will kill the superannuation scheme, and this appointment of a board and consequent waste of time will all go for nothing, whereas we could have done the sensible thing and introduced a scheme straight out, giving the railway employees an indication of what it was going to be, and so recognising the principle of parliamentary control. Naturally, if it goes to

Mr. Dunlop.]

a vote. I will support the Bill as the lesser of two evils, and because I consider that two-thirds of a loaf is better than no bread and enough to go past a man's Adam's apple into his corporeal legislative stove. (Laughter.)

Mr. DASH (*Mundingburr*): The Minister has given us very little information; and, as to the appointment of a board for the purposes of investigating the matter, it must be quite obvious to every hon. member that that could have been done without any Act of Parliament.

At 8.12 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. Roberts, *(East Toowoomba)*) relieved the Speaker in the chair.

Mr. DASH: The Bill goes further, and provides that the Cabinet shall exercise full legislative powers—powers which should not be granted to any Cabinet by a Parliament. The Bill provides that the board may take as long as two years to formulate a scheme. No doubt the board will have far-reaching powers. It will be able to make inquiries under the provisions contained in the Official Inquiries Evidence Act of 1910, which Act will be amended by a Bill that was under discussion in this Parliament this afternoon. If the Cabinet had sufficient power to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into racing in Queensland and if the Cabinet had sufficient power to appoint other boards, why could not this board be appointed in a like manner? Had a board been appointed in that manner, a scheme based on the report would then have been submitted to Parliament for consideration before receiving the force of law.

I quite realise that the Minister has a sufficient number behind him to guarantee a safe passage to the Bill; but I would remind him that the Bill proposes to introduce a superannuation scheme without the sanction of Parliament. The members of his own party will not be given an opportunity of considering a scheme; but it will be dealt with by a small coterie of members sitting in secret conclave in Cabinet. The Cabinet will pass the legislation required to give effect to the scheme whilst the representatives of the people will be ignored. Such a position should not be allowed to go unchallenged. On the hustings hon. members opposite repeatedly claimed that they intended to restore the authority of Parliament in Queensland if they were returned to power. They are proceeding further than any other Government did in the direction of ignoring Parliament. I have a recollection of their bitter criticism and abuse of the Labour Cabinet when it issued regulations for the administration of various Acts of Parliament. I remember the condemnation that was heaped upon the Government by hon. members opposite when they were in opposition; and I clearly recollect their bitter complaint that the Government of the day were resorting to government by regulation, and not government by the people through their legislators in Queensland.

Clauses 5, 6, and 7 of the Bill take from the representatives of the people the right to discuss the superannuation scheme. I am quite well aware that fourteen days after the opening of Parliament the regulations can be thrown upon the table after having been passed by the Governor in Council, and that hon. members on this side must

move a resolution against their adoption if they are opposed to them; but that resolution might never come before Parliament for discussion. What is to be feared by allowing the representatives of the people some voice as to how the money of the State shall be expended, and how the people shall be taxed in connection with this matter? These clauses do not indicate that the legislators of Queensland will be given an opportunity to consider the scheme. We shall have something very strong to say when this Bill reaches the committee stage.

Yesterday the Treasurer placed upon the table of this House certain regulations having a far-reaching effect. Clause 3 (2) illustrates the power of the board. Under this clause, if witnesses whom the board intends to examine do not come forward to give evidence—and I do not know what evidence the board will require—they can be fined an amount not exceeding £500. What is behind this Bill. Is it a superannuation Bill, or is it a Bill for the purpose of inquiring into other matters?

Mr. COSTELLO: It is a new taxation measure in disguise.

Mr. DASH: The title of the Bill is—

“A Bill to constitute a Railway Superannuation Investigation Board; and for other purposes.”

What are the “other purposes” this board is intended to inquire into? The Minister has given us no information as to what they will be. The only information the hon. gentleman gave us was some history of railway superannuation schemes written by some officer of his department, together with some statistics which were compiled for him. Hon. members desire some information as to what the scheme of superannuation will be.

The Secretary for Railways was selected by the Leader of the Government. The members of his own party had no say in the selection of the Cabinet. The Premier expects, because he put it over the members of his own party, to put it over us without any protest from this side; but we are going to have our say in the matter, despite whether the hon. member for Carnarvon bawls like a bull or not. We demand a say in these matters. What is wrong with the Government introducing a Bill as it may be drafted by the board of inquiry or the Cabinet, and permitting hon. members to study it clause by clause? They are afraid to bring such a Bill forward because of the criticism we may offer. I intend to offer my criticism against certain clauses of this Bill at every stage when it comes before us.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): I intend to have a few words on this important measure. First of all, I notice the title of the Bill is—

“A Bill to constitute a Railway Superannuation Investigation Board”;—

That is all right, but the sting is in the latter portion of the title, which proceeds—
“and for other purposes.”

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Have you never seen that before?

Mr. COLLINS: I have. Then we come to clause 5, which reads—

“The Governor in Council, on receipt of such report from the board, may, in its absolute discretion, approve of the scheme of superannuation as aforesaid, or may refer same back to the board for further inquiry and amendment.”

[Mr. Dunlop.]

I would like to know from the Minister, who has not given us too much information, exactly what this clause means. I have heard the hon. gentleman make far better speeches from the Opposition benches. I think he has fallen down on his job, for he has not got that punch which he had when he sat on this side of the Chamber. I looked for enlightenment in his speech on this important measure, but received none. I notice that the Bill says in reference to the appointment of the members of the board—

“Regard shall be had to the interests of the Commissioner for Railways and the State generally.”

I am interested in the Commissioner and State generally. I would like to know from the Minister if the intention of the Government is that the State shall provide certain funds for this proposed superannuation scheme. I take it that it is. That being so, I am going to say a few words on behalf of the people of this State, including the railwaymen. I am sick and tired of piecemeal legislation in connection with what I call sectional legislation.

First of all, we had a superannuation scheme for the public service; then a police superannuation scheme; and now it is proposed to introduce a measure of superannuation for railwaymen. I remember, as other hon. members probably do, that the Commonwealth Government appointed a commission to travel the length and breadth of the Commonwealth to inquire into the practicability of a scheme which would be applicable to the whole of the people of the Commonwealth. Such a scheme, embracing all workers, is what is needed in this country; and, considering that the largest portion of the electors will have to provide a certain amount of money to allow the scheme to be finalised, what is wrong with the Government withdrawing this proposal and proving that they are progressive—which I know they are not—by coming down with a scheme that would embrace the whole of the workers of this State? I have no hesitation in saying that the railway employees are working in what might be termed a sheltered industry. Why should the people who are working in other casual kinds of work—

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You have your knife into the railwaymen.

Mr. COLLINS: I have not, because the hon. gentleman will find that 95 per cent. of the railwaymen in my electorate supported me at the last election. I know where I stand, and I am in the habit of telling the truth, whether it offends or pleases. My argument is that this proposed measure is a sectional one, and that, considering that the people of Queensland will have to provide a portion of the funds necessary to carry the scheme to a successful issue, they should also be included in a somewhat similar scheme.

Clause 2 of the Bill provides for the appointment of an investigation board. I am tired of all the investigation boards we have had in the Commonwealth, and am beginning to ask myself what is the use of Parliament when we appoint investigation boards to deal with matters that are legitimately within our province? I am sick and tired of all the boards that have been making inquiries with no result. Then, coming to clause 5, we find this—

“If, however, the Governor in Council approves of such scheme with or without

amendment as aforesaid, he may, in his absolute discretion, either—

(i.) Introduce legislation embracing such scheme so approved: or—

You see the way it comes in—

“or—

(ii.) By Order in Council issued under this Act, promulgate and bring into force such approved scheme, to take effect as from a date to be fixed in such Order in Council.”

I share the opinion of other hon. members on this side that there is no need for this investigation board at all. Did not the Minister go back to the year 1900 to outline the various inquiries that had been made by various Governments? Yet the hon. gentleman wants to make a still further inquiry! Where are these inquiries going to end?

When I travel my electorate in the north of Queensland, precious lives like my own, as the representative of the people, are under the charge of the engine-driver, the fireman, and the guard in charge of the train. For the time being they are the bosses of the train, and are even above the representatives of the people. They are an enlightened type of men, as well as the men who pack the sleepers and keep our lines in good repair. All credit to the men who pack these sleepers so well in the heat under our tropical sun. When I visit my electorate, I ride there in a first-class compartment enjoying the result of the labour of the men at Ipswich who built these cars. It is these good railwaymen who have made it so comfortable for me and other passengers on the train. I have been on trains when the rain has been falling in torrents, when thunder has been crashing over our heads, and when the lightning has been illuminating our carriages; yet these noble souls carry on. They are more noble, perhaps, than some of the men who fought in the trenches. These noble men face the storm, and carry on not knowing whether some bridge over a gully or creek may not be washed away. Still they carry on, and take the passengers to their destination. To think that these men, according to the Secretary for Railways, are not fit to have a say in the election of a representative to this board! I hold no brief for any railway union, because I believe they are right behind the times. If they had taken my advice, they would have had one big union in the railway service, and not twenty-six unions, as they have at the present time. The Minister could have devised some method whereby the whole of the unions could have had a vote in connection with the election of the employees' representative on this board.

Mr. EDWARDS: You stood behind a Government that sacked them.

Mr. COLLINS: I never agreed with the sacking of railwaymen. The hon. member is sitting behind a Government that, in a general kind of way, is sacking men for all time, and not sacking them for a week.

I would like to know who is going to constitute this board. Are the Government going to bring two or three men from some other State? This State of ours has got more geniuses than any other State in the Commonwealth. Let me give an illustration of what the Commonwealth Government had to do in the past. At one time we had in Queensland Sir Samuel Walker Griffith. He

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became Chief Justice of the Commonwealth. He was a Queenslander. Later we had a man named Bell, who became Chief Engineer of the Commonwealth Railways. Then we had a man named Powers who was appointed to the Commonwealth Arbitration Court. Later we had a man called Urquhart, who was in charge of the police in Queensland. The Commonwealth Government were glad to get hold of him as Administrator of the Northern Territory. Only the other day we had a man called Christie who was sent to clean up the mess at Canberra. I would like also to refer to a man with whom I played cricket in the days of my youth; but for whom I have no respect at the present day. This was a man called Lukin, who went to the Commonwealth to do work that I do not believe Queensland agrees with. We have had Queenslanders of outstanding ability in every walk of life, and I would like to know from the Minister why there is any need to go to Victoria when the State can produce such men as I have mentioned. I was in Victoria in the days of my youth. It was then the most conservative State in the whole of the Commonwealth, and it is still the most conservative. It has not progressed

[3.30 p.m.] at all. There is no need to go outside this State when we have ability in the State, if the Government will only make use of it. I am satisfied that what the Secretary for Railways has done is a reflection on the State. (Interruption.)

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I must ask hon. members to refrain from interjections.

Mr. COLLINS: I am not listening to the interjections, because I am addressing a greater audience than a few members of Parliament. The great mass of people outside Parliament, who have made Parliament possible, are those to whom I am speaking. I am satisfied that, if the Minister takes the advice tendered from this side of the House, he will be doing right. I sat in opposition many years ago, and you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, were in Parliament at the time, as also was the present Secretary for Railways, but that hon. gentleman does not seem to have learnt much since then. (Laughter.) It was stated to-night that a man who to-day occupies the position of Chief Justice of Queensland, who was in Opposition at the time, moved an amendment to a particular Act, which amendment was accepted by the then Government. I hope the Government are not going to take up the attitude that they possess all the wisdom of the House, and not use the argument that, because we did so and so at one time they must do the same now. I was brought up in a different school of thought to that—in a school of thought which held that two wrongs did not make a right. If they allege that we as a Government, did wrong, is that any reason why the present Government should do wrong? If we make a good suggestion, not only in connection with this Bill, but with other measures, it should be accepted. I hope the Government will take my advice and withdraw this Bill, and show they have some initiative, and some idea of what the great mass of the people require, and introduce a general scheme of superannuation which will apply to the whole of the population.

Mr. HYNES (*Townsville*): I desire to preface my remarks by saying that this party and the whole of the Labour movement gene-

rally are in favour of a proper scheme of superannuation for railway workers and for all other workers in the community. A great deal has been made by Government members about carrying out an election pledge in regard to this matter. If they were carrying out their election pledge in its entirety, hon. members opposite would receive the whole-hearted and sincere co-operation of members on this side in placing the measure on the statute-book. I have in my hand the policy speech of the Premier at the last election. In reference to the Bill which we are now discussing he had this to say—

“OUR RAILWAY POLICY.

“Two general matters of policy perhaps I should first mention. Firstly, we propose to inaugurate a sound scheme of superannuation for railway employees, free from political interference. We shall not be party to enforcing any age limit for service in the department . . .”

It was to be free from political interference. I would point out that that is what this Bill is bringing about—it is giving control of the scheme to the Cabinet. The Governor in Council mentioned in the Bill is the Cabinet; and I take it that the Secretary for Railways will be the person who will have most influence in connection with this matter when it is decided by the Cabinet. We say that this is bringing the scheme under political control. The Bill is camouflaged to make the people believe that it is for the purpose of inaugurating a board of investigation. It is patent to me that it is not the intention of the Government to refer this matter to Parliament again.

This is the last say we shall have about the scheme, and that is why we are taking the opportunity to protest against the action of the Government in not allowing the employees, who are chiefly affected by it, to elect their representative to the board. It is only a reasonable request to make, and, seeing that we represent the interests of the Commissioner's servants, it is only reasonable for us to emphasise that they are justly entitled to a voice in framing the scheme. We have a precedent to guide us. The employees already have the right to appoint a representative to their appeal board. Why should they not have a similar right in respect of this board? The reason must be that the Cabinet are afraid that the presence of a direct representative of the employees would be instrumental in bringing in a scheme which might be too favourable to the employees. It is logical to conclude that that is the sole reason why they are precluded from selecting their representative. In order to emphasise my contention that the Governor in Council or the Cabinet will eventually establish the scheme, I would like to quote a paragraph from clause 5—

“If, however, the Governor in Council approves of such scheme with or without amendment as aforesaid, he may, in his absolute discretion, either—

- (i.) Introduce legislation embracing such scheme so approved; or
- (ii.) By Order in Council issued under this Act, promulgate and bring into force such approved scheme to take effect as from a date to be fixed in such Order in Council.”

The whole of the power is given to the Governor in Council, who, amongst other

[*Mr. Collins.*

things, may say whether the scheme is to be compulsory or voluntary, and there is a vast difference between the two. The representatives of the people of Queensland, the people who should have a voice in deciding such an important matter, are not to be consulted at all. The Cabinet, which is not even elected by the members of the Government Party but appointed by the Premier himself, is to determine the matter.

In effect, we might say that the Leader of the Government Party will have the sole right of saying what the scheme shall be and of fixing its details. That is a great injustice to the men who will come under it, and an abrogation of the rights of the people who will have to find some of the finance. I have always supported a proper scheme of superannuation for railwaymen, and I do not think there is a member on this side who would not give the Government whole-hearted support if they came down with an honest scheme and said, "There it is; we want to put it into effect."

It is rather significant that this board is to be appointed for two years. Is that an indication that the matter is going to be shelved for two years, or that it is going to take two years to make the investigation? I am satisfied that, if I asked the Minister now whether he had sufficient data in the Railway Department to enable the details of a scheme to be settled, he would be compelled to answer in the affirmative.

The objects of the Bill are camouflaged by its very title. The Bill is entitled "A Bill to constitute a Railway Superannuation Investigation Board," whereas it is a Bill to give to the Government the right to introduce a scheme without any reference at all to the representatives of the people in Parliament.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: Flouting the authority of Parliament.

Mr. HYNES: Clause 6 provides—

"Any Order in Council issued under this Act promulgating and bringing into force any approved scheme of compensation in respect of railway employees, and whether such scheme provides for compulsory superannuation or voluntary superannuation, or both, shall have the same force and effect as if it had been actually enacted in and formed part of this Act, and shall be judicially noticed, and shall not be questioned in any proceedings whatever."

That indicates that the Government intend to place this legislation on the statute-book before they actually know the effect of the legislation or the nature of the proposed scheme. That is something that should cause us great concern. The Government have the temerity to introduce a measure and to ask for the sanction of Parliament before we are made aware of the nature of the legislation. The effect of the Bill is to give to the Governor in Council the whole say-so as to what the scheme shall be—whether it shall be a voluntary or a compulsory scheme, and whether the workers are to receive a fair "go" under that scheme. When the Government refuse to give to the workers the right of appointing a direct representative, then I must form the opinion that they intend to introduce a scheme that will not be of much benefit to the employees in the Railway Department of Queensland.

Mr. POLLOCK (*Gregory*): I object to the principles contained in this Bill. I did raise some objection to them before responding to the toast of the departing guests the other night. One of the objections that I have to the appointment of this board is, firstly, that there is no business in the Bill itself. If the Government meant business, the board would have been appointed by the Governor in Council, and the recommendations would have been considered by Parliament. But, instead of that, the Government have decided to secure all the advertisement possible by allowing Parliament to approve of the appointment of a board of inquiry—a hitherto unheard-of proceeding—and to have the Government as the sole referee as to whether the recommendation of the board—if any recommendation is made—shall become law.

Shortly after the elections the Premier stated that he intended to see that parliamentary government was observed in Queensland—that is to say, that Parliament would be consulted in all matters of consequence. Now Parliament is being consulted on the question of appointing a board to inquire into a scheme; but, when the actual scheme itself is to be considered, Parliament is not to be consulted. All we can do is to approve or disapprove of the Bill. After it has become law, the Government can appoint the representatives. Another objection that I have to the scheme is that the Government have not seen fit to give us an undertaking that the men most vitally affected by the Bill—the railwaymen—will be represented on this board.

The Minister may hand-pick somebody, and then tell us that the employees in the railway service are being represented on the board; but the men themselves will have no possible chance of agreeing to the choice of that representative. The Minister told us at a previous stage of this Bill that the railway employees would have a direct representative on this board of inquiry. When one sums the Bill up, he must realise that, firstly, if there is any business in it, the Government would have appointed a board of inquiry without any reference to Parliament at all. They have that power. That has always been a function of Governments. I challenge the Secretary for Railways to give me one illustration in Queensland where a Government appointed a board of inquiry into a matter and first consulted Parliament.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I will accept your challenge.

Mr. POLLOCK: Is there an illustration?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes. I will give you one instance.

Mr. POLLOCK: I have been in this House for fifteen years, and I have never known of a precedent. We all know that there are devious tricks of Governments.

Mr. MAXWELL: Your Government availed themselves of them.

The TREASURER: There are many devious tricks which we on this side do not understand.

Mr. POLLOCK: If the hon. gentleman refers to his Government, then I do not concur with him. There is no business in this Bill beyond a cheap form of advertising and electioneering to impress railwaymen with the idea that something is being done for them.

Mr. Pollock.]

whereas nothing is intended to be done, otherwise the Government would have appointed the board straight out and have allowed it to make its own recommendations.

At 8.46 p.m.,

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. CLAYTON interjected.

Mr. POLLOCK: The hon. member is a mere tyro in legislation.

Mr. CLAYTON: You only arrived here a few minutes ago. (Laughter.)

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. POLLOCK: And what is more, I am not going to give you the chance for a while to fire me out again.

Mr. KERR: We are glad to hear that.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You have learned your lesson.

Mr. POLLOCK: I hope the hon. gentleman has learned his. So far as I can make out, in several instances when inquiries were to be made and boards appointed by previous Governments in this State or by other Governments in Australia, the board was first appointed by Order in Council without any reference to Parliament whatsoever. That was when business was intended. Parliament was always consulted afterwards, and the recommendations of the board in some instances given effect to. I ask hon. members to go back as far as they like in the history of Queensland politics and quote me an instance where Parliament was previously consulted by the introduction of a Bill to appoint a board of inquiry. I should be very surprised indeed to hear of one. I remember no such instance. In addition to there being no representative of the railway workers on this board, the board will be appointed for a period of two years. Why is the board being appointed for a period of two years? I see no good reason for its being so appointed. Any board competent to do its work should be able to make its inquiries, and, through the Government, place before Parliament a scheme of superannuation for railwaymen within six months, if it were intended to do so.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You were in power for fourteen years, and never brought in a scheme.

Mr. POLLOCK: We are not discussing what the previous Government did or did not do. The hon. gentleman does not seem to realise that he is now a member of a responsible Government, and that we are discussing what he proposes to do, and the public and railwaymen are waiting to see what he is going to do in this matter.

The lead so far that he has given the railwaymen in regard to superannuation is not a very encouraging one. It is no doubt nothing but a genuine intention to advertise widely for electioneering purposes the fact that a board is to be appointed; but, according to the principles contained in this Bill, the Government may refer this matter back to the board time after time for further particulars in regard to recommendations, and so on, until the period of the board's appointment has expired. On the face of it, there does not appear to be any real business in the scheme.

There is one other point—the question of parliamentary government.

The TREASURER: Is this secondary?

[Mr. Pollock.

Mr. POLLOCK: It is not a secondary principle, although the hon. member and his Government believe that parliamentary government must be of secondary consideration. If they did not believe that, they would have this scheme brought to Parliament instead of to the Governor in Council before it is finally approved of—if ever a recommendation does come before the Government. In the first place, under parliamentary government, if a Government is to do anything of this sort in lieu of Parliament, then the Government should at least be representative of Parliament. It is not. Nobody can say that the Government represent public opinion as expressed by the representatives in Parliament to-day. Secondly, if the Government were merely elected by members of that side of the House, who are a majority in this Chamber, it might be said that there was some semblance of parliamentary government under a proposal such as this. But that is not the case either, because the Government have been very carefully handpicked by one man—the Premier. Whether the Premier himself did the actual picking or whether the other party that was responsible, as the Premier says, for telling the country that £2,000,000 was to be borrowed for 10,000 jobs was responsible for picking the Government, I am not able to tell; but it is a fact that the Government was not picked either by members on one side or the other side of this House, and that they were picked ostensibly by the Premier. Whether he actually did the whole picking I cannot say. How such a Government can be expected to represent Parliament, and how a decision in a matter such as this by the Government can be said to represent Parliament or democracy or parliamentary government, is quite beyond me to answer. I hope that, when the Minister rises to defend the Bill, he will at least give us some information on those lines. I object to the Bill. I do not think there is any business in it, but really believe that the Government merely intend advertising that they introduced it. I hope they will get on with the appointment of the board, and see that the thing is done properly, if they intend to do it at all.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. Godfrey Morgan, *Murilla*) in reply: During the whole of my long experience in this House I have never witnessed such a display of cant, humbug, and hypocrisy as was indulged in by hon. members opposite. (Opposition dissent.)

Mr. HYNES (*Townsville*): I rise to a point of order. Is the Secretary for Railways in order in saying that hon. members on this side of the House indulged in a display of cant, humbug, and hypocrisy?

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is not in order, and I ask him to withdraw.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I withdraw. I listened most attentively to the remarks of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, who objected, first of all, to a board being appointed by Parliament.

Mr. PEASE: I did not. I told you to get on with your promise.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member stated definitely that there was no necessity to ask Parliament to appoint a board—that the board could have been appointed without consulting Parliament. Evidently one of the chief objections to this Bill on the part of the Opposition is

because the Government thought it advisable to ask Parliament to sanction the appointment of a board for the purpose of inquiring into this most important matter. The late Chairman of Committees, who often gives a display of his alleged knowledge of parliamentary procedure, said to-night that he knew of no instance—he challenged me as Minister to give one case—where previous Governments sought parliamentary authority for the appointment of a board to make inquiries and report in regard to any matter. As late as 1922 the Labour Government passed an Act constituting the Cairns Hydro-Electric Power Investigation Board, and defined its power and duties. That board was appointed by the Labour Government to do exactly the same in many respects that this Railway Superannuation Board we are seeking authority to appoint is to be asked to do. It is to be appointed for the purpose of making investigation into certain matters and then report to the Government, so that the Government, if they so desire, can submit the scheme to those who are chiefly concerned—the railway employees—and eventually either submit it for parliamentary approval or else put the scheme into operation without consulting Parliament.

Another important point raised by hon. members opposite was that the railway employees will not have direct representation on this board; but not one hon. member gave any indication of how it would be possible to elect a representative of the employees to this board. It will be interesting to hon. members to learn that there are ten or twelve different unions connected with the railway service. As is well known, the Australian Railway Union is the largest union in the railway service, representing over one-third of the employees in the department, and naturally, if it went to a vote, that union would have the greatest voting power in electing an employees' representative to this board. It would cost a large sum of money to enable the 18,000 or 20,000 employees to record a vote in the election of a member to this board, and, without giving the employees an opportunity of recording a secret vote, it would be impossible to give the employees what members opposite term direct representation on this board. The Government intend to consult the railway representatives throughout the various branches with a view to ascertaining their opinion in regard to a suitable man to represent the railway workers on this board. That is the only way in which to get representation of the worker, and it is the intention of the Government to have a representative of the railway employees upon this board.

[9 p.m.]

It has been said that this board will have a life of two years. Certainly the Bill provides that the life of the board shall not exceed two years. The board may cease to exist after three months.

Mr. HYNES: It will coincide with your political death.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There is no reason why this board should remain in existence for any great length of time, because it is the intention of the Government, when the Bill becomes law, to appoint three representatives for the purpose of investigation, and eventually submit a scheme; and I likewise promise the railway employees that before that scheme is put into

operation, either voluntarily or compulsorily, they will have an opportunity of saying whether they want it or not. I also definitely state that if the railway employees, by a majority, do not desire the superannuation scheme, then I for one, and the rest of the Cabinet and Government members generally, will not force it upon them. It will rest entirely with the majority of the railway employees whether they obtain a superannuation scheme or not.

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: What is the good of that to them if they are being sacked?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I can say without fear of contradiction that there are more railway servants employed to-day in the State of Queensland than there were in any four months after an election during the time the Labour Government were in power.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Again, I can say that this board is only being appointed for the purpose of investigation. It is not going to administer the scheme after the scheme has been once decided upon.

Reference has been made to-night to the police superannuation scheme. Everybody knows that, compared with the railway employees, the police are very few in number, and have only one union. The hon. member for Maryborough knows that the railway employees, with their numerous unions, are continually fighting one against the other.

Mr. WEIR: Not on the appeal boards.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: This is a different matter altogether.

Mr. WEIR: They decide those things on the appeal board now.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I would point out that, not only in this case but in numerous cases in the past, the Government of the day found it necessary to go to Southern States to get men to make investigations and inquiries, and Queensland was passed over. As an illustration, when the late Mr. Ryan was Premier of this State, during one particular dispute he found it necessary to go to New Zealand and obtain a judge from New Zealand to come here. (Opposition interruption.)

The SPEAKER: Order!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Again, I want to point out that, when the late Government wanted a man to manage a big agricultural scheme for the organisation of the farmers, they went to Western Australia and secured the services of Mr. Macgregor. Again, when they wanted a man to handle one of the greatest spending departments in this State—a man who bears the greatest responsibility for the future progress and development of the State—they went to Victoria and selected Mr. Kemp as Commissioner of Main Roads. Again, when they decided to spend millions of pounds in one of the greatest irrigation schemes in this State, which everyone recognises as most important in a State like Queensland, they again went to Victoria and obtained Mr. Partridge to look after the scheme. (Opposition interruption.)

The SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. Godfrey Morgan.]

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS:
As I have already said, hon. members opposite have not criticised this particular Bill with a view to assisting the railway workers. Being naturally disappointed at their defeat at the recent election, they are out to victimise the railway workers, recognising as they do that the railway workers throughout Queensland voted against the past Government owing to the fact that they had dangled over their heads year after year a superannuation scheme which was never brought into effect. That is the only explanation I can think of. It is more or less jealousy on the part of hon. members opposite because the Government have taken steps only four months after the election to fulfil this promise. Day after day the Government are bringing forward Bills to redeem their promises, and they are going to follow that course throughout.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put and passed.

Consideration of the Bill in Committee made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

DUCHESS TO MOUNT ISA RAILWAY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. R. M. King, *Logan*):
I do not think it is necessary for me to make a long speech in moving the second reading of this Bill. On the initiatory stage I gave a short but, nevertheless, pretty full explanation of it. In fact, I said all that could be said, and, having done so, I content myself now with formally moving—

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

Question put and passed.

Consideration of the Bill in Committee made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

The House adjourned at 9.10 p.m.