

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**THURSDAY, 20 AUGUST 1931**

---

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

THURSDAY, 20 AUGUST, 1931.

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

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

PRESENTATION.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have to inform the House that I propose to present to His Excellency the Governor, in the Executive Council Chamber, to-morrow morning at 11.30 o'clock, the Address in Reply to His Excellency's Speech agreed to on the 19th instant, and I shall be glad to be accompanied by the Mover and Secondor and such other members as care to attend.

QUESTIONS.

AGRICULTURAL SETTLEMENT AS REMEDY FOR UNEMPLOYMENT.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*) asked the Premier—

"1. Has he noticed a report of Mr. J. Gunn, Commonwealth Director of Development, and the policy suggested for providing for unemployment relief, more especially of the practicability of establishing small agricultural holdings and the adoption of long range plans for intense development?"

"2. Is he aware that there still remains from moderate to large areas of land on the Darling Downs and on the coast, which could be resumed and made available for close settlement and intense development?"

"3. Will he institute inquiry as to whether an advance could be secured—(a) per Commonwealth Director of Development for the purpose of acquiring such holdings for close settlement; and (b) failing in the above direction, will he cause inquiry to be made if funds for the purpose could be secured from the State Government Insurance Office, the Public Curator, Banks, and Loan Associations?"

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

"1. Yes.

"2. Yes.

"3. Such proposals are receiving every consideration, both from the financial aspect and the practicability of cheap closer settlement for the production of marketable commodities, preferably commodities at present imported into the State or which are suitable for the export trade."

EXPENDITURE ON RINGBARKING.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"1. Is it a fact that his Department has approved of ringbarking on an extensive scale, and that for this purpose has applied for £500,000?"

"2. Will he cause a census to be taken of suitable available holdings in Central and Southern Queensland that can be made available for close settlement and subdivision?"

"3. Is he prepared to consider and recommend the diverting of at least half of the amount here mentioned for ringbarking, for the purpose of acquiring holdings for close settlement?"

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

"1. The Government, by its legislation and otherwise, has encouraged the ringbarking of lands to increase productivity. In 1929 an amount of £200,000 per annum for each of three years was asked for under 'The £34,000,000 Agreement.' A change of Commonwealth Government about that time led to the suspension of that agreement, and the money was not forthcoming. The matter was recently revived at a meeting of the Commonwealth Loan Council. No decision has yet been reached.

"2 and 3. A Closer Settlement Land Bill, to be introduced during the present session, will provide facilities for the subdivision and closer settlement of land suitable for that purpose."

CHEAP POWER FROM QUEENSLAND COAL FOR USE ON RAILWAYS.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. Has his department given, and, if not, will it give, consideration for the use on railways of a substitute for imported petrol?"

"2. Assuming that his department has made inquiries, will he lay on the table of the House the result of investigations made by his department on the subject of obtaining cheap power from the source of the State's coal beds—(a) By distillation; (b) by the use of pulverised coal; and (c) by all other processes for treating coal?"

"3. Is his department aware that successful trials have been made with light coal-car engines using pulverised coal; also, that the consumption of this coal is reported to be one-quarter of that consumed by steam cars?"

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

"1. Yes; the question of using fuel other than imported petrol is continuously being considered. As far as it can be effectively utilised, Queensland power alcohol is being used.

"2. No State in Australia has been able to obtain locomotive power from coal beds (a) By distillation; (b) by the use of pulverised fuel; (c) or by any other process than the use of coal as it is taken from the mine. The amount of by-products contained in coal would not compensate for the expense involved in obtaining them. Pulverised fuel has been tried, but is not suitable for locomotives. Hon. members may see any reports available at the Commissioner's Office.

"3. See answer to No. 2."

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*) asked the Secretary for Mines—

"1. Will he secure from the Development and Migration Commission, as well as through the Agent-General, an up-to-date exhaustive report on the subject of the different processes installed for

the treatment of coal, and the success or otherwise that has attended?

"2. Is he aware that there are evidences that in the Southern States much attention is being given to the establishment of power plants for the treatment of coal?

"3. Will the Government, on account of the great importance of providing cheap power for the development of all industries, be prepared to give special encouragement to a company that may be ready to install a plant for the production of power, and preferably liquid power?"

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

"1. The Development and Migration Commission is not now in existence, but a report on the subject of the development of Australian oil from the coal industry by Dr. A. C. D. Rivett, chief executive officer of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, was recently tabled in Parliament House, Canberra.

"2. Yes; aware that much attention is being given to the subject.

"3. Yes; all encouragement that can be offered to a company desiring to establish such an industry."

#### BOYS IN IMMIGRATION DEPOT.

Mr. BRASSINGTON (*Balonne*), for Mr. O'KEEFE (*Cairns*), asked the Premier—

"1. What number of boys has been in the Immigration Depot weekly since 1st January to 30th June, 1931?"

"2. How long have the boys been in the depot without work?"

"3. Are these boys members of the New Settlers' League?"

"4. What are the terms and conditions that these boys are sent out on to farms?"

"5. Have any complaints been received by his department from boys who are members of the New Settlers' League in regard to not receiving their wages?"

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

"1. The average number was twenty-five, excluding medical cases. The greatest number at any one time was forty-three. There are at present six awaiting employment.

"2. The average period awaiting employment was three weeks.

"3. No.

"4. Lads are placed out at the ruling rate of wages for farm lads, generally about £1 per week and keep, and in most cases the employer enters into an

agreement with the lad, undertaking to employ him for a period of one year so long as the lad is satisfactory. One-third of his wages is paid to the lad as pocket money, and the other two-thirds sent to the department for banking to the lad's credit.

"5. Complaints are rare, and when received, suitable action is taken, including legal proceedings, if necessary."

#### LOAN FUND ACCOUNT.

Mr. PEASE (*Herbert*) asked the Treasurer—

"1. What was the balance to the credit of the Loan Fund Account as at 30th June, 1931?"

"2. What were the amounts received or credited to Loan Fund Account during the year ended 30th June, 1931, under the following headings, namely:—  
(a) Counter sales; (b) Commonwealth Savings Bank; and (c) repayments, etc.?"

"3. What was the expenditure on works, etc., from Loan Fund Account during the year ended 30th June, 1931?"

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

"1 to 3. The information is contained in the 'Government Gazette' of the 9th July, 1931, No. 35."

#### ADVANCES TO ASSIST MINING VENTURES, 1929-1931.

Mr. PEASE (*Herbert*) asked the Secretary for Mines—

"1. What are the details of advances made to assist mining ventures from 1st July, 1929, to 30th June, 1931?"

"2. What are the details of advances outstanding at 30th June, 1931?"

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

"1 and 2. Information regarding any advance for mining assistance granted will be made available on personal application at the office of the department."

#### APPLICATIONS FOR WORKERS' DWELLINGS AND WORKERS' HOMES, 1930-1931.

Mr. A. JONES (*Burke*) asked the Secretary for Public Works—

"1. How many applications were received during last financial year for advances for the erection of (a) Workers' dwellings, and (b) workers' homes?"

"2. How were such applications dealt with, and what was the total amount of advances made during the period under review?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. R. M. King, *Logan*) replied—

"1. Applications dealt with for the financial year 1930-31—

	Number Dealt With.	HOW DEALT WITH.			
		Refused.	Withdrawn before Consideration.	Approved.	In Abeyance.
Workers' Dwellings .. .. .	299	4	7	282	6
Workers' Homes .. .. .	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil

No applications were received during the financial year in respect of workers' homes owing mainly to the fact that the value of applications carried over from the previous financial year was estimated to absorb the funds appropriated by Parliament for the purpose.

"2. Amount advanced during financial year 1930-31—

	£	s.	d.
(a) Workers' dwellings ...	240,623	19	8
(b) Workers' homes ...	54,939	16	10

The expenditure on workers' homes includes also all charges to purchasers' advance accounts for land rents, fire and life insurance, repainting, repairs, etc.; these items are recoverable through the purchasers' monthly repayment instalments."

ARTICLE IN "TRUTH" OF 2ND AUGUST, 1931.

Mr. DUNLOP (*Rockhampton*) asked the Attorney-General—

"Will he make it his business to read the article in Brisbane 'Truth' of 2nd instant, headed 'Wife in Compact with Husband to Ruin Young Girl,' when one Albert James Wilson was charged with committing on three occasions offences against a Rockhampton girl aged only fifteen years, who had been engaged as a nurse-girl to travel with him and his wife, was found guilty, and sentenced to six months' imprisonment with hard labour?"

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. A. E. Atherton. *Chillagoe*), for the ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. N. F. Macgroarty, *South Brisbane*), replied—

"My attention has already been drawn to this matter by the hon. member for Bulimba."

FEES PAID TO ATTORNEY-GENERAL IN CROWN CASES.

Mr. BRASSINGTON (*Batonne*), without notice, asked the Premier—

"Is it a fact that the Attorney-General, the Hon. N. F. Macgroarty, is drawing salary as a Minister of the Crown at the rate of £1,000 per annum at the same time as he has been appearing, during recent weeks, as counsel for the Crown in a case now before the Civil Court, whilst receiving substantial fees for his legal services in such case, and notwithstanding the fact that his full time has been devoted to the Civil Court case, which must naturally be to the detriment of his duties as a Minister of the Crown."

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

"I have no knowledge of it, but it is quite likely that the Attorney-General is acting for the Crown. It is the usual practice for an Attorney-General who is qualified for the position to conduct Crown cases in the Supreme Court, and in such cases he has always drawn fees. If the hon. member cares to look up 'Hansard' he will find that the late Mr. T. J. Ryan, when Attorney-General, drew fees in Crown cases."

PAPER.

The following paper was laid on the table:—

Orders in Council under "The Supreme Court Act of 1921."

REGULATION OF SUGAR CANE PRICES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

THIRD READING.

The TREASURER (Hon. W. H. Barnes, *Wynnum*), for the SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. H. F. Walker, *Cooroora*): I beg to move—

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

Question put and passed.

PROPOSED ABOLITION OF PARLIAMENTARY LIQUOR BAR.

Mr. DUNLOP (*Rockhampton*) [2.42]: I beg to move—

"That the liquor bar at Parliament House be abolished"

I have much pleasure in moving this motion. (Interjections.)

Irrespective of sarcastic interjections from either side of the House, I am quite sincere in this matter. The parliamentary liquor bar has been in existence for many years, and at the commencement of my remarks I would mention that on 23rd July last I asked the Premier the following questions—

"1. Does he not consider the time has arrived for the abolition of this liquor bar from the precincts of this House?"

"2. What revenue has been taken over the liquor bar in Parliament House during the last five years, each year to be shown separately?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION replied for the PREMIER—

"1. The matter is one for Parliament itself to decide."

Let us decide it to-day—

"2. 1926-27—£391 3s. 11d., exclusive of tobacco; £993 15s. 4d., including tobacco. 1927-28—£945 19s. 4d., including tobacco. 1928-29—£981 1s. 5d., including tobacco. 1929-30—£968 9s. 1d., including tobacco. 1930-31—£866 18s. 1d., exclusive of tobacco; £1,016 17s. 2d., including tobacco."

That is an average of £900 odd per year.

Then on 30th July last I asked the Home Secretary the following questions:—

"1. What is the total amount received by the Government during the last twelve months from licensed victuallers of Queensland for license fees paid?"

"2. What is the maximum amount of license fee that the Government call upon a licensed victualler to pay in the metropolitan area?"

"3. What amount of license fee does the proprietor of the hotel opposite Parliament House pay to the Government each year?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied for the Home Secretary—

"1. £79,585 16s. 8d.

"2. £200.

"3. £165."

*Mr. Dunlop.]*

I do not propose, Mr. Speaker, nor do I suppose you would allow me, to enter into a controversy as to the liquor trade generally; and I wish to confine myself as far as possible to making a few remarks on the motion itself. Since we met in 1929, the Government have criticised the Opposition in no unmistakable terms for the mess the country has got into as a result of State enterprises. They do not believe the Government of the country should enter into trade or compete with outside traders; and from that point of view alone, I maintain that the Government should set the example and refuse any longer to have within the precincts of this Parliament an institution which competes with the ordinary liquor trader. I do not care a "continental" whether the parliamentary bar has been in existence for a very long time or not, or whether or not it is the practice to have one in other Parliaments. It is never too late to mend. This Parliament is the governing body for all public servants and everyone else in the community, therefore it should set a good example. The Treasurer may say that the bar brings in a certain amount of revenue—over £900 per annum during the period I inquired about. I cannot say, since I have not made inquiry, whether the bar is a paying proposition or not; but the point is that this and all past Governments have charged heavy license fees to outside hotels; and it is the law—and the police administer it—that all liquor bars shall close at 8 p.m. Why do Governments collect those fees—amounting to £79,000 in twelve months—and insist on liquor bars closing at 8 p.m., when, if this House sits till 1 o'clock in the morning hon. members can get a drink at the parliamentary bar at any time they like? Personally, I am an absolute "T.T."; but I do not begrudge any man a drink in moderation. As an Australian, I believe in freedom, and, if this freedom of getting drink in moderation is to be taken from any Queensland, then, so far as I am concerned, it will only be done at the will of the people by a specific vote at a local option poll. No doubt other hon. members received a set of questions from the Prohibition League before the last election. I did; and I answered everyone of them "Yes," because they were reasonable. Those questions were asked on the basis of the matter being left to the will of the people, and, if they decide against prohibition, another vote would not be taken till a certain period had elapsed.

The platform of the Labour Party provides for the ultimate elimination of the liquor traffic in this State, which is quite a wise proposal. Much harm will be done if it is decided to close down in a peremptory manner upon the rights of moderate smokers or drinkers or any other persons. The wise course is to eliminate a bad habit gradually. Here is a golden opportunity for the Labour Party to back up my action in supporting this motion, and thereby setting an excellent example to other people. It must not be inferred that I hold any brief for the proprietor of the hotel over the road merely because I asked a question in this House with which that hotel was associated. The proprietor of that house has to incur an expenditure of £155 per annum to obtain his license to sell liquor over the bar. A building of that character must have cost

[Mr. Dunlop.

many thousands of pounds. Is it fair in those circumstances that a liquor bar should be conducted in this building providing a revenue of about £900 per annum? It is not right. Here is an opportunity for the Premier to set an example in connection with the liquor traffic in this State. I casually heard that it was proposed to move an amendment upon my motion; but, be that as it may, it will not affect the remarks that I propose to make—remarks that will be placed upon record. I am quite sincere in my action, believing as I do that drink has been responsible for the ruination of many homes. I am sure that that view is held by all hon. members in this Chamber; but, in fairness to the majority of the hotel proprietors and to the barmaids employed, I must state that they have always advised their customers who have had too much liquor to go home, and not spend the whole of their estate in the bar to the detriment of their families. I was not asked prior to my entry into the political arena to state publicly my views upon the liquor question; but I have informed the secretary of the Licensed Victuallers' Association at Rockhampton that I shall not hesitate upon the appropriate occasion to state my views fully and publicly.

I do not propose to deal with the liquor question as a whole; but I do think that the trading hours can be considerably modified. The majority of the hotel proprietors are willing to adhere strictly to the trading hours of 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., provided all hotelkeepers honour the law.

When we have a number of licensed victuallers failing to observe the early closing clauses of the Liquor Act, one cannot blame other licensees for also taking the risk of meeting that competition by selling liquor after the legal trading hours. If the trading hours were from 9 a.m. until 10 p.m., I believe the "trade" would to a man strictly observe the Act. It is worthy of consideration on the part of the Government to consider whether an alteration in the Act in that direction is not justified with a view ultimately to reducing the number of licensed houses—and eliminating them altogether. No hon. member can tell me that alcoholic liquor is good for a person. It is detrimental to the constitution of any man or woman; and that effect is all the more marked in cases of serious illness or when one has to go under a serious operation. An over-indulgence in liquor undermines the constitution. As the law of the land stands, licensed victuallers have a perfect right to demand that the Government shall not restrict their business by unfair competition, when they pay heavy license fees. The Premier can tell me whether any fee is paid under the Liquor Act into the consolidated revenue on account of the parliamentary liquor bar.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: No.

Mr. DUNLOP: That is the extension of the principle of a moratorium, like that contained in the Bill we were asked to consider yesterday. (Laughter.) We must realise that, as representatives of the people, we must face these serious issues, and when we have an opportunity, as the House has at the present time, we must vote on these questions as our conscience dictates. As the Premier informed me, Parliament can decide this question; and I hope that hon.

members will show where they stand in reference to this liquor bar. I hope the motion will get to a vote to-day, and that, in the interests of the country, it will be carried. By doing so hon. members will set an example, as the maker of the laws governing the people, and show that they are prepared to cast a vote for this great reform.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: You have not given us any reason to vote for the motion.

Mr. WIENHOLT (*Fassifern*): I second the motion.

Mr. BEDFORD (*Warrego*) [2.55]: The speech we have just listened to has been an excellent example of an attempt to gain the votes of the "cold tea" party, and also to keep well in with the great "bung" party. (Laughter.)

Mr. DUNLOP: No; I have never done so in my life.

Mr. BEDFORD: We heard the hon. member doing so just now. The hon. member who moved this motion said he was an "absolute T.T.," whatever that means, but I presume it means an absolute teetotaller. I do not think that anybody has listened to a more intemperate speech—(laughter)—therefore I think it well that the hon. member was brought up as well as he was or else a great drunkard was lost to us. (Laughter.) This motion is a bid for the limelight.

Mr. DUNLOP: It is not.

Mr. BEDFORD: It is an attempt to say that, because most of the members of this House are men who are at least tolerant of the other fellow's appetite—they do not wish to compel some men to drink tea when they prefer beer—it is an attempt to state as the final economic argument that, because outside licensees are paying liquor license fees, therefore there should be removed from them the small opposition that is to be found in the parliamentary refreshment bar. Presumably the proposal of the hon. member also contains a proviso that there should be division bells ringing over in the Bellevue Hotel or in the coffee stall—(laughter)—because the logical sequence of wiping out the bar is also to wipe out the more unpayable refreshment-room.

Mr. DUNLOP: If you are not deaf, you will hear them ringing over there. (Laughter.)

Mr. BEDFORD: So far as I know, there is no arrangement made for an aerial flying-fox to bring hon. members back to this House. (Laughter.) The idea is that the whole dignity of Parliament shall be lost by seventy-two members—some of them hefty and some of them thin—galloping like fire brigade horses at the first alarm of fire. (Laughter.) This, in the interests of something like the dignity of Parliament, cannot be permitted. One would think that, if the hon. member was such a stickler for keeping to the due proportions of decent life in this palace, he would not bring into it the habits of a very low class rooming house. He is permitted a room in this building, and in that room he has installed a contrivance known as a primus stove. (Laughter.)

Mr. DUNLOP: I pay for my room.

Mr. BEDFORD: In that stove I understand he uses a form of alcohol in the shape of methylated spirits, for the further purpose

of emitting smells which have never before been permitted in this House. (Laughter.)

Mr. DUNLOP: Don't make an unmitigated simpleton of yourself. (Renewed laughter.)

Mr. BEDFORD: I have no objection to any hon. member living on lemonade if it pleases him to do so. It is a rather flatulent diet, and for myself I do not go in for it. But there is something more in this motion, even considering the side-stepping speech made by the hon. member for Rockhampton, who remembered at the last fatal moment that there were such things as licensed houses in his electorate. The whole position of Australia, even taking the economic side of it, is that the wine industry of this country, properly exploited, would become a tremendous money maker and a tremendous revenue producer; yet you would be asked to do the first thing in the recrudescence of a debate to help a stupid thing such as prohibition which every reasonable man believes has been utterly put out of court by the shocking example provided us in America.

Mr. WIENHOLT: You said yesterday that the Americans were the finest people in the world.

Mr. BEDFORD: It is said that at a certain marriage of old a wonderful miracle was performed. We find that, although America is "dry" according to law, the last year's liquor bill there amounted to £600,000,000. Certainly prohibition has produced something new in the way of miracles. At the marriage at Cana in Galilee water is said to have been turned into wine. The American prohibitionists did very much better than that. There were 1,000,000 gallons of pre-war whisky stored in a New York Government warehouse. After two years it was discovered that it had miraculously turned into water!

Included in this proposition is a general scheme—part of an echo from a stupid press outside—a general scheme to belittle the position of members of Parliament. Every depression, including this one, produces a million geniuses who are ready to believe all would be well with the world if members of Parliament were paid 1s. 6d. a sitting, ate at a coffee stall, dressed in sackcloth and ashes, and went back to the diet of John the Baptist. We are told further, if we are to listen to all the little press attackers, that the best form and the only form of government by democracy that the present-day world can, with all its imperfections, stand for—and the only way for getting over the depression is by generally humiliating ourselves. This comes very well from a press which is doing its best to keep up war prices, which lives on the Federal Government to the extent of £250,000 a year as the loss of operating its telegraph services; and I am surprised at a generally level-headed man like the Premier being blown in his alleged policy one way or the other by the last blast of wind from a newspaper office, mostly composed of mechanics calling themselves journalists, including the great man at the head of the "Telegraph," Mr. D.T.H.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. BEDFORD: Which I believe stands for Delirium Tremens Horribilis.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. BEDFORD: An attack on Parliament House comes in under this motion.

*Mr. Bedford.]*

Everybody knows that the refreshment-room end does not pay, and that the only contribution to the unpayable part of the refreshment-room is the profit paid on drink by honest, God-fearing drinkers, who are paying for the fact that teetotallers eat their heads off in the refreshment-room. (Laughter.) There is a way out of whatever little deficit there is in running the parliamentary refreshment-room and bar such as was taken some years ago by a band of patriots who decided that the Athenaeum Club in Sydney should continue to exist. The finances of the club were in extremis, and a collection of fine, splendid, noble Australians, including Sir Edmund Barton—then affectionately known as "Toby" Barton—Hopkins, the cartoonist of the "Bulletin," Archibald, the founder of the "Bulletin," and Bernard Wise got together, and decided that the good, old club should not die—that they would drink it out of debt, and they did. (Laughter.) And, if the Treasurer were only half a man, he would assist in the same way in regard to the refreshment-room here.

The TREASURER: If I gave you my share, would you be able to do it?

Mr. BEDFORD: Yes; do it in my stride. (Laughter.) I used to take on real men in relays of three a day, and, when these died out, there was no more raw material. (Laughter.) Having been well brought up in a temperance family, it took me until the age of sixteen to discover the error of my ways. At the age of sixteen I had my first beer, and found it good. Later I discovered this country naturally the finest wine-producing country in the world, and that it produced the best still hock the world has ever known.

In making Australia more and more temperate, we are being aided by time, and aided largely by intelligence in drinking. Everybody knows that every nation in the world has gone through its period of drunkenness. Alcohol exists in everything vegetable—grass, trees, grain, and fruit, and in some animal substances, too. You can get an alcoholic reaction from sea water and air; and, when the teetotaller, having decided that he has never had any alcohol in his life—although probably he has got his alcohol from lilies instead of from the bottle, as we do—when he has decided he has had no alcohol, he is burned with alcoholic wood or buried in alcoholic clay. There is no escape from alcohol. When in the beginning those old monks who were trying to turn lead into gold or discover the secret of perpetual motion discovered various permutations of certain substances the chemical analysis of which was unknown, they always ended up by making a fine liqueur. Thus the monks invented chartreuse and benedictine. Later came curacao, and that concoction of peppermint known as *cremo de menthe* or "starboard light." (Laughter.) The position of the tavern habit is that it is so many thousands of years old that it is ineradicable in man. The only thing Australians have to do is to wipe out gradually the taste for the ardent spirit and to replace it with a taste for Australian wines, which are incomparably better than those produced in any other country of the world. The Italians are the most sober people in the world, as are also the French and the Spaniards. I was three years in Italy, and I only saw one drunken man there

[*Mr. Bedford.*]

all the time, and he was an English sailor. The Teutonic peoples, the heavy drinking peoples like the Germans and the English—who are mostly Germans, because, when you say Anglo-Saxon, you mean 90 per cent. Saxon and 10 per cent. Anglo—these people still stick to the inartistic and crude ways of drinking which the French and Italians have long since grown out of. An Italian said to me once, speaking of a good wine—which is as rare in Italy as a frog with feathers—"Good wine will make you go to Heaven." I said "Make that good then." He said, "Good wine gives you a good stomach; a good stomach gives good breathing and good blood; good blood makes a good heart; a good heart makes a good man; and a good man goes to Heaven." The position of the world is that it is gradually getting sober. The greatest drawback in regard to the aims of temperance in the earth has been restrictions of those aims. Everybody knows that under "wowsersism" things went from one extreme to the other. The obverse of the Puritan shield in Cromwellian times was that people became sick of the Puritan gloom, and were thus encouraged to the restoration of monarchy on the waster Charles the Second. The Puritans had closed the theatres for something like six years, and immediately they were reopened, some of the vilest plays ever known on earth were produced, including "The Parson's Wedding."

All the nations of the earth, having gone through the baptism of crude alcohol, have gradually become sober. Many teetotallers must admit that their fathers and grandfathers did all their drinking for them. There is nothing truer than the biblical phrase that "the fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge." Most of the digestive trouble in even the sober countries of France, Italy, and Spain is that these people do the same thing as Noah did. They drink in November the vintage of October, and, if Noah had known as much about liquor as he knew about navigating his scow, he would not have made the disgraceful exhibition he did immediately after leaving his vineyard. The position in Australia, especially in the far-western plains of this State, is that a new industry is open to us provided time and money can be given to the ripening and maturing of wine.

If we could adjust our internal organs so that the habit of drinking ardent liquors and heavy beers—which were imported from cold countries like England and Germany—gave place to the drinking of Australian wines, we would immediately begin to increase the working ability of the Australian, give him a better form of life, and at the same time add to Queensland a great asset which it sadly lacks.

It is extraordinary, too, that the teetotal people of the world have produced nothing yet in the way of art or literature. If we search the contemporary poetry of the Rechabite or the Independent Order of Good Templars, we find some such crude statement as this—

"Break the pledge? Never! No! No! No!  
No.

Not while the spring from the mountain shall flow."

(Laughter.) And when one considers a great flow of poetry, wit, and humour, allied to

the drinking habit, one naturally thinks of Shakespeare, and Ben Jonson, and all the merry crew at the Mermaid Tavern, and wonders how they would have got along without a drink. A great mate of mine, Victor Daly—who should not have died, who knew good wine and loved it, and who has now gone to the place where there is no drinking—similar to the place the hon. member for Rockhampton would like to make of the back wing of this building—once wrote some lines about wine. There was at one time a good Australian wine called Cawarra. There was one other wine that came somewhere within coo-ee of it, the Cresto Blanco, of California; but then in came somebody who commercialised these wines, so that the craftsman was lost in the vigneron, and the vigneron was lost in a mere wineseller. The glory of Cawarra as a wine has been lost, but there is a South Australian hock—Quellthaler—which is sunshine and the air of the great Central Plains imprisoned in a bottle. This is what Daly wrote of a Sydney wine cellar—

“No vintage alien  
For thee or me,  
Our fount Castalian  
Of pocsy  
Shall wine Australian  
None other be.  
Then place your hand in  
This hand of mine,  
And while we stand in  
Her brave sunshine  
Pledge deep our land in  
Our land's own wine.  
It has no glamour  
Of old romance,  
Of war and amour  
In Spain or France;  
Its poets stammer  
As yet perchance.  
But he may wholly  
Become a seer  
Who quaffs it slowly;  
For he shall hear  
Though faintly, lowly,  
Yet sweet and clear  
The axes ringing,  
On mountain sides,  
The wool boats swinging  
Down Darling tides,  
The drovers singing  
Where Clancy rides.  
The miners driving,  
The stockman's strife,  
All sounds conniving  
To tell the rife,  
Rich, rude, strong, striving  
Australian life.  
Once more your hand in  
This hand of mine,  
And while we stand in  
Her brave sunshine  
Pledge deep our land in  
Our land's own wine.”

This motion should be defeated because anything that tends to make the fallacy of liquor prohibition again debatable should be defeated as a mere wasting of time.

Mr. DUNLOP: What is the plank in your platform?

Mr. BEDFORD: The plank reads, “With a view to ultimate prohibition.” As I interjected to the hon. member earlier, we have also a plank for the ultimate wiping out of original sin, but it will not be yet; and

I thank God that it will not be while I am on this earth. True temperance will come by the alteration of the Australian appetite to favour light wines; and, outside of the great economic value of the wine industry yet to be exploited, we shall thus make for Australia a character for temperance like that of France, Italy, and Spain, the most sober peoples of the world. With the drinking of light wines we shall make Australians also one of the soberest nations of the world. For that reason, if for no other, I trust that the motion which has been moved by the hon. member, who was disappointed because he was not allowed to keep fowls in his bedroom and objected to the theft of ice cream—which also contains alcohol, because no sugar can be possible without it—will be turned down amid general laughter.

Mr. DUNLOP (*Rockhampton*) [3.21]: In reply, I have to state that I offer no apology for my action in this matter. I am glad that one hon. member, the hon. member for Fassifern, has had the courage to second my motion. Since we have been in this House we have tried as independent members to enlighten the people, despite the “circusism” of some hon. members. It is regrettable that the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition should permit their followers to stoop to childish tactics for which the country has to pay. I wish to reply to the stalwart member for Warrego in no unmistakable way. I have always had the courage of my convictions, and I fear no politician either inside or outside the House. I have been elevated to public life because I have always called a spade a spade; and I will not be side-tracked by any sarcasm or mimicking by hon. members who ought to know better. The country is called upon to pay for their tactics. I can share heartily in any joke.

The hon. member for Warrego stated that I had moved the motion with a view to getting into the limelight, with my electors; but my electors know that, if I make up my mind to do a thing, I do it, and there is no man from the highest rung of the ladder to the lowest who will deter me in my determination. I throw back the sarcasm of my witty friend the hon. member for Warrego. I am not looking for any limelight, but, if anything, the reverse.

I believe in giving the licensed victuallers a fair go. While I believe in the abolition of the sale of liquor within the precincts of this House, I nevertheless believe that, while the present law of the land exists, licensed victuallers should be treated fairly. If I had the power, I would abolish the drink traffic altogether, as it is one of the greatest curses imaginable. I cannot imagine the electors of Warrego disfranchising themselves by sending their present representative to look after their interests in this Parliament. He is genuinely witty, but exception must be taken to his sarcasm and his belittlement of others, which cuts no ice. His electors must be ashamed of themselves for electing him. I have had the courage of my convictions in speaking on this subject; and whoever is my opponent at the forthcoming elections, be the candidate a representative of the Government party or the Labour party, I will force some pronouncement on this question from him. There are a number of members of the Government party who have not the courage

Mr. Dunlop.]

of their convictions. On a motion which I submitted last year in this Chamber not one of nineteen members of those who had previously voted in the affirmative on the question was game to stand to his guns. Whilst I am in this House I shall fear no one. Notwithstanding that the hon. member for Warrego took up a great deal of time waxing sarcastic at my expense, he never uttered one word which could be construed as being in favour of this motion or otherwise. I will divide the House on the question, and see just where hon. members stand in relation to it.

Question—"That the parliamentary liquor bar be abolished" (*Mr. Dunlop's motion*)—put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 9.

Mr. Barber	Mr. Winstanley
" Barnes, G. P.	
" Carter	<i>Tellers:</i>
" Dunlop	Bruce
" Walker, J. E.	" Cooper
" Wienholt	

NOES, 36.

Mr. Annand	Mr. Kirwan
" Bedford	" Maxwell
" Blackley	" Moore
" Brand	" Morgan
" Butler	" Mullian
" Conroy	" O'Keefe
" Dash	" Pease
" Deacon	" Plunkett
" Duffy	" Pollock
" Foley	" Russell, H. M.
" Grimstone	" Sizer
" Hanlon	" Smith
" Hanlon	" Stopford
" Hynes	" Tozer
" Jamieson	" Wilson
" Kenny	
" Kerr	<i>Tellers:</i>
Dr. Kerwin	Russell, W. A.
Mr. King	" Tedman

Resolved in the negative.

#### GOVERNMENT INDUSTRIAL POLICY.

Mr. POLLOCK (*Gregory*) [3.33]: I beg to move—

"That, in the opinion of this House, the Government's policy of wages reduction, cancellation, and suspension of awards, together with curtailment of the general provisions for the health, safety, and welfare of the mass of the industrial workers in this State, has increased unemployment, bankrupted many businesses, and has inflicted injury on the people generally, particularly those for whose benefit the industrial laws were primarily initiated. This House also records its opinion that such a policy is in direct conflict with, and a gross repudiation of, the Government's pre-election pledges and promises"—

This motion seeks to deal chiefly with the effect of the Government's policy of suspending Industrial Court awards and leaving the workers who were living under the protection of those awards without any protection whatsoever. The effect of that throughout the State has been so remarkable that any man who has travelled the length and breadth of Queensland and has failed to see the disastrous effect of such a policy must have had his eyes closed 95 per cent. of the time. On the question generally of the suspension of awards, let me remark that, if ever there was a time when arbitration was necessary, it is now. In times of prosperity

[*Mr. Dunlop.*

when there is plenty of employment and very few men to take that employment, the few men competing for the many jobs are practically able to dictate fair and reasonable and in some cases unreasonable terms. But, when the jobs are few, and thousands of men are travelling throughout the State ill-clothed, partly starved, glad to pick up any sort of a job that is offering, it is then that arbitration has the only value that arbitration can have for people who work for a living. Arbitration in good times from the workers' viewpoint is not nearly so necessary as it is when times are really bad. It is now, in times like the present, with the utmost competition for every job that is offering, that we find the real need for a system of arbitration which will protect men from the greed of some unscrupulous employers who are prepared to exploit the misery of people who are unable to help themselves. When travelling throughout the State, I have found that wherever the suspension of arbitration awards is applied most, it is there that the greatest depression exists. To give an illustration, let me cite one, among many instances—the suspension of the station hands' award. It is true that the Government have at the present time so suspended the operations of arbitration awards that at least two-fifths of the workers of this State, who were previously under awards, are unable to receive any protection whatever from the court, due entirely to the action of the Government. But, wherever the policy of the suspension of awards operates most, there you will find that the depression is sharpest and keenest. When the Government came into power, station hands were receiving £3 10s. per week and found. Later on, through the action of the pastoralists, who approached the court for a reduction, that wage was reduced to £3 per week. But apparently that reduction was not sufficient to suit the Government and a few of their supporters among the larger pastoralists, because when the wage stood at £3 the Government decided that they would suspend the operation of the station hands' award to enable wages to be reduced still further in accordance with the desire of those who wanted to exploit men who were in difficulties. These awards have been suspended, and in particular the station hands' award has been suspended for some time. The net result of all this is that station hands' wages to-day in Western Queensland vary from 15s. to £2 10s. per week. Instead of there being a protection of £3 a week, as there was before the arbitration award was suspended, there is now no protection whatever for the employee against any unscrupulous employer who desires to take advantage of his straitened circumstances. While I admit that the cases where men are employed at 15s. a week and found are not numerous, I also say that the cases in which men are getting £2 10s. a week and found are very few indeed. In the majority of cases the general wage paid in the country that I represent, where the cost of living is still very high indeed, is from 24s. to 35s. per week.

In the case of a few of the more favoured selectors and even station managers who are allowed freedom in their goodness of heart and sense of fairness to give fair play, in isolated instances men are receiving up to £2 10s. per week; but in the vast majority of cases the rate is from £1 4s. to £1 10s. or £1 15s. per week. In the majority of cases, it is not over £1 10s. per week.

This is the result of a policy which cannot be defended. The protection which arbitration gives is not protection against the fairminded employer—and there are plenty of them in this country—the protection that arbitration gives is that which is needed against the unscrupulous, grasping, and greedy employer, who is prepared to take advantage of any circumstances. Arbitration was only instituted to protect people against the men from whom the worker needed the most protection. The abolition of awards has not meant that the toiler receives any worse deal from the average fairminded employer—he does not. In some cases where they can possibly afford it, fairminded employers have, to my knowledge, kept wages up to the arbitration standard, and in a few cases even higher; but it is with men who are unscrupulous and who will never pay a fair wage except under legal compulsion that this policy of the Government has found most favour. The man who can take advantage of a stockman who literally hawks his labour on to his property, and says to him, "You cannot get any rations here. It will be difficult for you to walk on without rations; I can give you a job at £1 per week and tucker; and that is all you can get here." That is the type of man that the suspension of awards has helped. On the last trip I took out West I passed three men travelling from Longreach to Winton—three strong, able-bodied, young fellows, all good types of men. Being in a car by myself, I naturally asked them if they would like a lift, and they said they would be glad of it. They told me they had to go within 30 miles of Winton, branching off the road to go to a station in search of rations. The case they put up to me was this: They were single men; they had received their 5s. worth of rations from the sergeant of police in Longreach, and that the rations had cut out the day before because they had to lose time on the journey from Longreach to Winton—a distance of 150 miles. They were travelling on empty stomachs with very little water and with hardly any prospect of a lift, because the majority of the people out West were unable to afford cars. They had to branch off and go to a station about 50 miles from Winton and get rations. I said to one of the men, "What will happen if you can't get rations?" He said, "We will have to do the best we can; we will have to ask for tucker. If the employer tells us that he can't afford to give us rations, and says he will give us a few days' work and fill up our tucker bags, we will have to accept it."

This suspension of Government awards in the pastoral industry and every other industry has meant that men in these difficulties are forced to travel on light rations and to accept whatever work is given to them at whatever price is offered, or else go along still further on hungry stomachs; and there is a limit to the distance a man can travel in the very dry, inhospitable country of Western Queensland under conditions such as those. This suspension of awards has merely meant that no advantage is given to the decent class of employer in the community, who in many cases will not take advantage of the opportunity to reduce wages. He will still pay what is a fair thing. But the suspension of awards means giving

an advantage to that type of callous individual who is prepared to say, "Work for tucker or walk and starve!"

It was argued by the authors of this scheme, by the Premier and others, and by the president of the Pastoralists' Association in their last annual report, that quite a large number of men have obtained employment because of the low wages being paid who would not have been employed if the wages had been kept up to the previous level. I would like these people to show us just where additional men are employed. I have rather an intimate knowledge of the vast majority of the station hands in the electorate I represent, and, on making inquiries in the Winton district when I was there, last, they told me without exception that in all cases not only were more men not being employed but that the stations were carrying on with the least possible number of men, working them the longest possible number of hours, and reducing their rations to the very lowest possible level. To-day in Western Queensland, instead of award conditions obtaining, under which the men got decent rations on a scale laid down by the court, the scale is laid down by the employer, and, unfortunately, it is not a very good one. The hours also previously were laid down by the court. To-day they are laid down by the employer. The hours that are worked and likewise the wages that are paid are governed by the amount of work and the number of hours unfortunate men on the verge of starvation are prepared to undertake in order to keep body and soul together. It may not be a pretty picture, but, unfortunately, it is as true as I am standing here. In Western Queensland to-day, in spite of the Government promises prior to the last election, there is an accentuation of what the Premier described as the tramp, tramp, tramp of the unemployed. The sound has grown louder. In some parts of Queensland it is deafening compared with what it was when the Government took office. That is due to the suspension of awards. It is due to an entire disregard of the things that men need who work for a living, and the things that go to make up a decent standard of living.

It has to be remembered that from time immemorial station hands have carted their labour to the very doors of the employer. They are always there; labour is always to be obtained; and it is a pity that any action of this Government has been responsible for a state of affairs that will enable men to exploit the necessities of other men who are offering for employment.

The effect of this suspension of awards is just as great upon business as its effect on the men who were employed, if it is not even greater. Generally in Western Queensland, where the policy of suspension of awards has operated, a large number of storekeepers have been carrying on in the slack season the men who are now working on the miserable wage of £1 or 25s. a week, believing that in the ordinary course of events they would be receiving some work at the stations this year and would be able to liquidate their back debts. In the Western districts the credit system has so grown that during the slack period storekeepers have customarily been willing to take the word of station hands and rouseabouts and carry them over the slack period of the year until the next season.

*Mr. Pollock.]*

No distinction has been made in favour of the married man in suspending the awards. The wage for which the single man is prepared to work becomes the basic or ruling rate for the married men too. There are thousands of married station hands, some with large families, all over Western Queensland, and to-day the wage for the married station hands varies from 15s. to 35s. a week, and in odd cases reaches as high as £2 per week. These men are unable to carry on on that amount. When you realise that the cost of practically all commodities is 30 per cent. higher in western towns than it is on the coast, largely owing to railage, but in some cases to other causes, you realise the utter impossibility of a married man maintaining a home, paying rent, perhaps paying off a worker's dwelling, or even attempting to pay off one penny from the back rent from the enormous wage of 25s. to 30s. per week. Unfortunately many of them are not receiving even that amount. Those circumstances have, in turn, led to such a state of depression in business in Western Queensland that general businesses are practically unable to carry on. If this state of affairs is allowed to continue because of business depression and its consequent unemployment, then it will not be long before at least one-third of the population leave those towns and districts to seek employment on the coast. These men were previously receiving a fair and reasonable wage under arbitration. In view of the big drop in the price of wool and the depression generally, I am not going to argue for a moment that the wages awarded by the court for station hands would have remained at the old figure. I am not such a fool as to believe that the wages of one section would be kept up while the wages of another section were being reduced. Obviously, the Industrial Court would have taken the same stand in all cases, but it would not have reduced the wages to the extent that applies to-day. The unscrupulous employer would have been compelled to follow the example of the decent man and at least pay a fair living wage in accordance with the cost of living, if the award had not been suspended. Whilst I personally recognise that the conditions which applied in 1925 during the boom wool period and during the boom times generally in Australia would probably not prevail to-day because of the depression and slackness in industry, still I believe that no sensible judge of the Industrial Court could justify a wage of from 15s. to £1 a week for married station hands with families to keep.

That leads me to the belief that the Government were utterly unconcerned about the interests of the workers of this State when the station hands' award and other awards were suspended. I am not so familiar with the conditions of the workers in the agricultural districts as I am with those in the pastoral districts; but I do know that there is a fixed price for wheat to-day. There are pools for all kinds of primary products. In short, there is arbitration and retention of high prices by governmental action for the farmer and for the agriculturist generally. The policy of this Government is arbitration and fixation of prices for the farmer, but no fixation of wages for the worker. While the farmer is protected to the extent of a fixed price for his commodities, no protection whatever is given to the man employed in the production of these commodities. The

[*Mr. Pollock.*

employer can, to use a harsh term, sponge upon the employment of the ordinary man who comes to work for him. He can compel the employee to work for whatever wage a hard-up man is prepared to accept. If a worker is resident in an agricultural district and the district is teeming with swagmen and the farmer is able to obtain a worker for 15s. to £1 per week and the barest supply of food, and work him half way round the clock, then, whether we like it or not, that is the basic wage for that industry. It is an application of the economic rule of supply and demand. Once you abolish the legal protection extended to the wage-earner, you remove any right that he might have to obtain a fair or decent wage from any person.

This policy of the Government of fixation of prices to the primary producers and starvation wages, or "catch-as-catch-can" rates for the general worker cannot last. It is impossible that people who are not receiving a living wage can continue to pay high prices to keep these commodities at the high standard fixed by the Government. There must be one inevitable result, if the Government are prepared to face the suspension of awards, and that is the suspension of all the advantages of arbitration given under the guise of pools to agriculturists and farmers generally. It is a remarkable thing that four or five years ago the ordinary working man, who decided that arbitration was no good to him and who wanted to depart from it in order to substitute the system of direct action, was called a Bolshevik; but to-day the man who wants arbitration from this Government is still a Bolshevik. He was a "Bolshie" before because he did not want arbitration; now he is still a "Bolshie" because he wants it. It seems to me that the Government have one cry for to-day and another for to-morrow just to suit their own ends.

The latter part of my proposal reads—

"This House also records its opinion that such a policy is in direct conflict with, and a gross repudiation of, the Government's pre-election pledges and promises."

I propose to prove that, and to bring the public utterances of the Premier before the last election to support the statement in the resolution that this policy is not in conformity with the pledges and promises made by the Government to the people before the last election. Speaking at Mackay, the Premier is reported as follows:—

"The whole purpose of the Labour organisation to-day is to raise up a bogey that, should my party get into power, there will be a reduction of the wages, a lengthening of hours, and a reversion to the conditions of 1915. 'If that were likely,' he added, 'then why was it that in countries that had never had a Labour Government—countries like New Zealand, America, Germany, and Canada—had conditions not changed in this way?'"

Coming down to Rockhampton on his tour, the Premier became a little more emphatic, for he said—

"All sorts of bogies have been raised by the Labour Party, including the idiotic statement that, if the Nationalists were returned, there would be a reduction in wages and an increase in working hours. That was all moonshine."

At Gympie he said—

“Much that was not there had been read into the policy he had put before the people. Suggestions made concerning what his party intended to do should it gain power were quite foreign to any intention of his and quite foreign to any intention of his party. Pamphlets had been sent round the country that were absolutely misleading. One of these stated that Tory policy was wage reduction. It was humbug to talk like that. No party—and certainly not his party—would stand for lower wages, because it was recognised that a high-wage country was a prosperous country, and they wanted to see Queensland prosperous.”

That brings me to the question of whether the suspension of awards was intended to raise or lower wages. I presume the Premier would not argue that he suspended awards so that wages could be raised, especially at this time when there are about 10,000 men offering for every job. Shortly before the election the “Daily Mail” published a statement over the Premier’s signature of his political faith, in which this was stated—

“The stupid bogies raised by our opponents that we are out to retrench and to lower wages are entirely without foundation. We realise that a low-wage community is a low-spending community.”

Then in a full page advertisement of the “Daily Mail” of 8th May, under what purported to be a likeness of the Premier and under a heavy set of headlines, appeared this—

“Smashing replies to Labour lies.  
Definite pledges.

The Country-Nationalists definitely stand for no reduction in the standard of living.”

In addition to those pledges which were made by the Government, there are pledges which were made individually by members of the Ministry. For instance, the Secretary for Public Instruction, speaking at Salisbury, said this—

“The Government had indulged in a policy of vilification and abuse of the members of the Opposition and their policy. They said that, if they were returned with a majority, they would reduce wages and the standard of living, notwithstanding that such statements had been emphatically denied by Mr. Moore and members of his party.”

At Toowoomba, the archpriest of the Department of Labour and Industry (Mr. Sizer), who is pretending that he is giving work to the unemployed of Queensland, had this to say—

“The Nationalists were not a party supporting low wages and long hours. A low-wage community was a low-spending community, which was entirely opposed to their ideals and aspirations. Their objective was higher production and higher wages, and they intended introducing legislation to permit of its realisation.”

That is about the richest joke that the Minister has ever made—that he intended to introduce legislation improving conditions.

At 4.2 p.m.,

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

Mr. POLLOCK: The present Government “Whip,” the hon. member for Enoggera, had this to say, according to the “Telegraph” of 2nd May, 1929—

“The policy speech delivered by Mr. Moore had for its foundation more production. This ideal meant higher and not lower wages; neither did it mean increased hours.”

Presumably, he was in accord with the hon. member for Kelvin Grove (Mr. Hill), who said—

“He emphatically denied that the party intended dismissing public servants, reducing wages, or lengthening the hours of labour, and appealed to his audience to ‘Change the Government.’”

Apparently all these things that hon. members opposite promised not to do prior to the last elections have been done by the Government; but not one of them has come over to this side; not one of them has raised his voice in Parliament against those measures; not one of them, either inside or outside this House, has the least word of condemnation of the Government, or has made the least effort to dissociate himself from the actions of men who have done exactly the opposite of their pledges to the electors.

Then the hon. member for Nundah (Mr. Kelso), speaking at Nundah on 2nd May, 1929, said—

“The Government” —

The hon. member was referring to the Labour Government—

“would employ the same tactics as they had done at the last election, and would try to play on the fears of the electors by telling them that, if the Opposition Party were returned to power, they would reduce wages, lengthen the hours of labour, and abolish the Arbitration Court. Mr. Kelso said that Mr. Moore had emphatically stated from time to time during this campaign that he and his party would do nothing of the sort.”

Although he has done everything of the sort, the hon. member still sits solidly behind the Premier. He is still one of the “dumb-driven political cattle” supporting the Government, and apparently will still continue to support the Government, no matter what they may do.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not in order in using the expression “dumb-driven political cattle.”

Mr. POLLOCK: There was no personal reflection intended, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I would ask the hon. member to withdraw the statement.

Mr. POLLOCK: I have no objection to withdrawing it if it is offensive. Perhaps I can put it better in another way. I can say that the members of the party who pledged themselves to oppose any reduction in the standard of living or in the onslaught on wages are so supine that they are prepared to do whatever they are told to do

*Mr. Pollock.]*

by the Premier and his bosses outside this House. Perhaps that puts the position more effectively and more truthfully than the way I did put it. Mr. Speaker, who unfortunately is not here at the moment, had this to say—

“There were no extravagant promises of anything but what was capable of fulfilment without reducing wages or the present standard of living.”

One can go through the whole gamut of the pledges made by members of the Government Party prior to the last election and find that everyone of them distinctly pledged himself. It is not as though they did not know what they were doing. They went before the electors with their eyes open to the facts. Many of them were experienced parliamentarians who knew the state this country was in, and who ought to have known the difficulties that lay ahead. With the knowledge that the price of wool—behind which they are attempting to shield themselves to-day—had already dropped to an unprofitable price, that, generally speaking, the prices of primary products were falling on all hands—knowing all these things they deliberately pledged themselves that they would not interfere in any way with the standards of living of the workers. Any breach of a pledge such as that is rank treachery to the electors of this State. It is the basest form of treachery that any Government could be guilty of, and, if men cannot be trusted to honour the promises that they give at election time, there can be no security in representative government. The electors certainly expect that the men for whom they vote will honour the pledges that they make, and do something to overcome the policy that they have been suffering under for some time past. These men knew the difficulty, and had enough experience. The Premier himself has been in this House for seventeen or eighteen years. He was an experienced enough politician to know that the promises he was making were promises that he would have to stand up to. He ought to have been able to see the difficulties that we had got into. Mr. McCormack was able to see them. Other men with any capacity were able to see them; consequently there is no excuse for the hon. member dishonouring the pledges which were made.

The last of the pledges made to the electors that I propose to read was made by the hon. member for Maree. It is the funniest and richest of all. The “*Courier*” of 30th April, 1929, reports Mr. Tedman as having said at East Brisbane—

“Any privileges that may be enjoyed by the workers to-day would not be disturbed by a National Government, which would ensure that there would be no reduction in wages or an increase in working hours.”

In the same issue of the “*Courier*” the same gentleman is reported as having said at Ipswich—

“Railway employees have nothing to fear from a change of Government. There would be no reduction in wages. If his party by act of legislation either increased the hours of the workers or reduced wages he would leave that party.”

He is still over there with his whiskers very deep in the cream, and he does not intend leaving.

[*Mr. Pollock.*]

If there is any further testimony needed, then here are some—not the ones we produced previously—but here are some placards which were posted up just prior to the last election. The first reads—

“Is it a job?”

“Queenslanders—Thousands of Your Fellow Citizens—

“Their Wives and Children—are looking

“To You To-morrow to Vote them a Job.

“McCormack Has Nothing To Offer Them.

“Give Moore’s Scheme a Chance!

“£2,000,000 for 10,000 workers.

“And

“Change the Government!”

That is authorised by P. T. G. Shaw, Terrica House, Brisbane. The other placard reads—

“It Can Be Done—It Will be Done.

“If my Party is Successful at the Polls, We Pledge Ourselves to arrange for the expenditure of £2,000,000

to find early employment for 10,000 workers.

A. E. MOORE.”

What has become of them?—

“Workers—Safeguard Your Jobs and Your Children’s Future.

“Change The Government!”

When I submitted an identical placard to this last year I was given a view of “the outer,” and I presume the feelings of the Government have not changed since then. As I know how touchy they are on the subject, and how likely to provoke the Treasurer the exhibition of such placards will be, perhaps it is as well to put them away. When Mr. Speaker ruled last year that the exhibition of placards such as these was conducive to disorder, he probably thought the Treasurer was so annoyed that he would come over and bite me. At any rate, the fact remains that twelve months after the Government made those pledges they were satisfied to give me a week’s suspension because I drew attention to them, and because they could not bear to look their own pledges in the face twelve months after they had made them. I am glad they have changed a little. They have altered, and have either become more callous in the matter of broken pledges or else have decided to take no notice, as, after all, it will work out for the best if they are ignored. There is no doubt the whole policy of the Government has been disastrous to all centres in Queensland. It will continue to be disastrous, and there is only one way out of the difficulty, and that is to give the right to the workers to go before an arbitration tribunal which will award them what is sufficient to live on.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. DASH (*Mundingburra*) [4.14]: I desire to second the motion so ably moved by the hon. member for Gregory; and in doing so I would like to give a little history as to why arbitration became the policy of the Labour movement. Many years ago the workers were disorganised, very little consideration being given them by their employers; and for years and years they made every effort to get the right to work. The wages then were fixed according to the

supply of labour, so that troubles arose year in and year out in many industries; and the workers began to organise for their own protection, and various attempts were made to break up their organisations. That went on for years, especially in the western districts of Queensland, where the bush workers were badly treated. Away back in the 80's a move was made to form what is now known as the Australian Workers' Union, and also other unions. The workers came into conflict with the employers in the early days, and every attempt to settle disputes was futile until strikes grew to such dimensions that it was impossible to carry on industry. I notice that the Governments in those days were desirous of helping the workers to obtain a fair deal. Looking through the volume written by Mr. C. A. Bernays, entitled "Queensland Politics During Sixty Years," I find the following on page 469—

"In the session of 1874 it is of interest to find C. H. Buzacott introducing a Bill to provide a statute day for labour. This measure reached its first reading stage only."

Great pressure was brought to bear, and the measure reached its first reading stage only. It was dropped by the then Government, after some speeches had been made which showed that the pastoralists wanted great concessions.

On the same page we read this—

"The Statute Day for Labour Bill (Buzacott) reached the Committee stage in 1876, but there it lapsed. After providing that it should not apply to persons employed as domestic servants, and persons entrusted with the care of cattle, sheep, or other live stock, it continued as follows:—

'2. The standard day for persons employed in any workshop shall consist of eight actual working hours, and no more, excepting cases where agreements for a longer working day shall be mutually entered into.

'3. Except in cases where special agreements shall have been made, every workman shall be entitled to claim and recover a full day's wages for eight hours work, whether performed by day or night, and, for every hour exceeding eight, a sum equivalent to one-eighth part of a full day's wages.'

That was away back in 1874. The Government declined to place on the statute-book some restriction of the hours of labour so that the employer would do the fair thing. From then on we find that the conflict between labour and capital was so great that in 1894 on a private members' day, and practically the same date in the year as that on which we are now discussing the conditions of the workers in Western Queensland, Mr. Thomas Glassey moved the following motion:—

"That, in the opinion of this House, it is essentially necessary in the interests of industrial peace to terminate the present shearers' strike at the earliest possible date; and, with this end in view, this House calls upon the United Pastoralists' Association and the Workers' Union to appoint two representatives, with a chairman to be appointed by this House; said persons to form a conciliation committee for the purpose of

endeavouring to settle the existing dispute in the pastoral industry, which is disastrously affecting the public welfare. In the event of either party refusing to appoint representatives to such committee within the period of a fortnight from date of passing of this resolution, this House immediately proceed to appoint representatives for the party so refusing, and will take such legislative action as may be found necessary to compel both parties to abide by the decision."

It took the pastoral workers over thirty years of agitation to get an award of the Arbitration Court, and it was not until Labour had control of the Treasury benches and abolished the Upper House that the station hands were able to place their case before the court. For many years an endeavour was made to get it before the Federal Arbitration Court; but, owing to difficulties in serving the claim on the employers and the need of evidence as to members of the union, it was impossible to get an award for that industry. Not until Labour was able to amend the industrial laws of Queensland were the pastoral workers able to get their due. Immediately the present Government came into office, however, they suspended the award, and put the station hands back where they were over thirty years ago.

Women cooks on stations have also been exploited since the suspension of the award to such an extent that now such a worker gets £1 10s. per week, whereas under the award which has been suspended she got £4 16s., and she now has to work twelve hours a day without any allowance for overtime. In addition to that, a ruling has been given by the Department of Labour that a woman cook engaged as housekeeper cannot claim sustenance from the unemployment insurance fund when she leaves her employment.

The award relating to the metalliferous mining industry was also suspended. At an earlier period the miners engaged in metalliferous mining operations endeavoured to have their grievances settled by approaching the Industrial Court, but they were not given the right to do so. They were compelled to accept whatever wage was offered to them by the mineowners; and, if they did not wish to do so, they were discharged from their work. If a miner dared to complain of his treatment, he was branded as an agitator, and excluded from employment in any mine in the district. The miners continued to demonstrate the desire to enter the Arbitration Court, but it was not until 1916 that the miners were able to obtain a decision from that tribunal. At that time the working conditions were so trying that the miners were compelled to go on strike, and it was impossible to foretell from week to week how the miners were being treated industrially, or how their health was being safeguarded. Mining laws were adopted for the protection of the miners, but laxity of supervision on the part of the mine inspectors made it impossible to see that all the conditions were given effect to. It was impossible for the inspectors to inspect every mine daily, and certain conditions were placed in the award dealing with dusty and hot places in the mines. It was made imperative upon the employer to safeguard the health of his employees—a very good move on the part of

*Mr. Dash.]*

the court in the interests of these workers. From that day forward the health of the miners was safeguarded by the adequate supervision exercised by the industrial mine inspectors, and the ravages of miners' phthisis were not nearly so severe during the operation of those awards. The present Government, having no regard for the health of the miners, suspended the operation of the awards relating to metalliferous and gold mining. I freely admit that metalliferous and gold-mining operations are not so extensive to-day as they were; but the few miners are entitled to be protected in the same way as miners who would be employed by a large undertaking employing hundreds of men. For years these men agitated for the protection given by an award of the court and, when it was granted, many disabilities were removed. The provisions relating to mine ventilation were considerably improved, and in connection with other branches of mining the work was carried on smoothly and almost entirely free from industrial disputes.

The railway workers have now been removed from the protection of the court. In 1914 when the Denham-Barnes Government were in power, the railway employees at Townsville went on strike with the object of drawing public attention to the fact that they were working under conditions that should not be tolerated. They knew that they had no chance of winning the fight; but they were determined to demonstrate to the people of Queensland that the railway workers were suffering untold hardships. They requested the Government of the day to permit them to go before a board or before a judge of the court, not with the object of obtaining an award, but for the purpose of placing their case before the court. They were anxious that the public of Queensland should know the treatment meted out to them by the Government of the day; but it was not until Labour was returned to power that the railway workers were given the right to approach the court in the same manner as other employees of the State. One of the very first awards granted by the court extended to the railway workers substantial increases in wages and improvements in conditions in which they were justly entitled. Those conditions continued until the present Government obtained control of the Treasury benches. One of their first acts was to remove the public servants and the railway employees from the protection of the Industrial Court.

When the Government were before the electors in 1929, they promised not to interfere with the Arbitration Court. We find now that these promises have been broken. They are not now prepared to trust the court to fix the wages for their own employees. They also say that the court to-day is the same court as when Labour was in power. That is not so. The Government have so amended the original Act that the industrial legislation is on a different basis altogether to-day. The Industrial Arbitration Act of 1916 laid down a certain basis on which wages and conditions were to be made by the court. The court has been hamstrung by this Government, and the statutory powers guiding it in its decisions have been altered. The original Act provided that no employee could be worked for more than six out of seven consecutive days in any one week, but to-day, owing to the amendment of the Act, the court has power to make an award providing for an employee working seven

days a week without any time off. Governments holding office before Labour realised that eight hours a day was sufficiently long enough for a worker to work in any one day, and they placed legislation to that effect on the statute-book. They also legislated that workers were entitled to so many holidays a year. The present Government have deleted some of those statutory holidays.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: That is not so.

Mr. DASH: The Government have taken away certain holidays which public servants and others previously enjoyed. Some of those holidays had been prescribed by previous Tory Governments. The Minister cannot deny that fact. The position of the railway workers in Townsville to-day is such that many of them have been brought down to a condition of affairs that almost amounts to starvation. I have received a letter from a mechanic who has a wife and eight children. He tells me that his wages are £3 13s. 6d. per week, and adds that the family has not tasted butter for the last four months. That reduction in the standard of living of that family has been caused by the policy of the Government. We also find that, owing to the drastic action of the Government in taking the station hands and rural workers away from the protection of the Industrial Court, the scale of rations which was prescribed in the awards does not now apply. We find in some awards to-day the scale of rations which must be supplied to the workers must be "well cooked and properly served by the employer." If it was necessary for the court to prescribe that scale for the workers, what sort of standard will they now enjoy when they have been removed from the protection of the court? We find on the one hand that the employers have organised as a body, and on the other hand that the employees have organised into unions. The policy of Labour was to bring those organisations together in conference before the Industrial Court. That worked splendidly right up to the period when the Government suspended a number of awards.

Mr. BLACKLEY: How many strikes had you before then?

Mr. DASH: Before the adoption of the principle of arbitration a strike could occur at any time and dislocate business; but the Arbitration Court was created to bring the disputants together and settle their differences on the best possible terms for all parties concerned. By this means industrial disturbances were avoided. What is the position to-day? Men in the mining industry who want to improve their conditions are compelled to adopt the same stand as in days gone by and dislocate industry if they desire a rate of wage and conditions commensurate with their task. We know that men accept contracts in the mining industry without any regard for the mining laws. We also know that mining inspectors could not previously visit the mines regularly and see that the laws were observed, but under the award the union had the right to prosecute employers for not fulfilling the conditions of awards. To-day even that protection is taken away from the workers. The only rights they have are those which they can demand if they are strong enough to do so; and, of course, that is dependent on the large question of supply and demand. An industrial union is formed by a body of

[Mr. Dash.

workers for the purpose of their own protection and in order that each worker may get a fair deal, and to prevent any exploitation whether in the matter of hours, wages, or working conditions. The object is to regulate all matters pertaining to work in industry. Briefly, the object may be expressed in this way—overcoming the difficulties of labour. Of these disabilities the chief is that, owing to lack of a reserve fund, the labourer cannot stand out for his price as all other sellers can do. The labourer must sell to-day; the employer may not buy till to-morrow. It is not a question of the margin of profits to the worker; it is a question of his life. Unions are formed to protect the workers both in their employment and in assisting them to obtain a livelihood. The policy of the unions is to make the employers deal with them collectively; but the attitude of the employers is to deal with the workers individually, so that they can dictate terms and take advantage of the law of supply and demand, quite regardless of whether the terms are good or bad.

I intend to deal now with the question of Government policy, which is to assist the employers in their endeavour to break down the standard of living of the workers. The motion explains the effect of that policy. People are being underfed and under-nourished. In Townsville at the present time the conditions of the workers are the worst they have ever been during my twenty years' association with that city. It is sad to think that men who have been in constant employment for twenty years or longer—good, honest workers—are unable now to get employment. Of course, under the Government unemployment relief scheme, they may get from £1 2s. 6d. to £1 10s. per week, according to the size of the family; but, when you look at these men and note the condition they are in, you can realise that the position of their families must indeed be acute. Some of these men told me they were so weak, owing to under-nourishment, that they were unable to continue for the full day's work and had to ease up on the job. By the time they pay rent out of the few shillings now paid to them, there is not sufficient money left to enable proper nourishment to be given to their families. So serious has been the Government's policy that many women with babies are under-nourished, and as a consequence these babies are not properly fed. That is a very serious position, and the Government do not seem to be doing enough for these people. We have no objection to the worker doing work in return for rations; but we contend that he should be given sufficient work to enable him to get more than the ration scale, particularly as men who are working eat more than men who are idle, and further, that men engaged on relief work are in many cases obliged to live away from home; so that they are compelled to keep two homes going. That means, of course, that a great deal of the ration allowance is used up. The men who are working on Harvey Range are away from Townsville, and they have to keep themselves there. The work on these relief jobs is very hard. A man on this work has to keep himself, and he has to keep his wife and family in Townsville.

When the Labour Government were in office, we established a certain number of baby clinics throughout Queensland. We placed clinics on wheels, and sent them into

the back country; but since the present Government have been in office they have not extended the child welfare system beyond completing the clinic at Warwick which was under way when the Labour Government left office. There should be more necessity than ever for these clinics now that the Government have instituted their deflation policy, so that the women may take their babies to the clinics and get proper treatment.

Mr. NIMMO: What sympathy have you? The clinics were built out of borrowed money.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. DASH: The hon. member about sympathy and about borrowed money! What if we did erect these institutions from borrowed money?—which I say we did not do. They were erected from funds received through the "Golden Casket."

Mr. NIMMO: That is not so.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. DASH: Possibly a small amount of borrowed money was used for this purpose; but, even if they were wholly erected with borrowed money, it was money well spent. It was money spent in the interests of the people of this State, and for that reason alone they should have been extended. Had Labour remained in office, we would have extended them despite what the hon. member may say to the contrary.

Mr. NIMMO: Rubbish!

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. DASH: The hon. member may look upon the clinics as rubbish. The present Government have done nothing for the women and children of this State.

Interjections.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I must ask hon. members on my left to obey my call to order. Interjections are disorderly.

Mr. DASH: The Labour Government had some regard for the welfare of the people, and we established baby clinics, and also domestic science schools. We also extended them by placing them on rails, so that they could go into the back country and give the people in the back country the same facilities that the people of the cities enjoyed. The present Government cannot show one instance in which they have increased these services. They left them where they were when they attained office.

We also established an ophthalmic school in Brisbane where the children of the West could be treated. Why have the Government not extended these services? They are humane services, and services the people are looking for. In spite of this, the Government talk about the humane legislation they are placing on the statute-book. They have not carried out their promises. They have made the people suffer more than they ever suffered before. They have taken away the protection they had under the laws of the State, and have given them nothing in return. At the present time the factories and shops inspectors dare not keep the employers up to the mark. Although awards have been breached frequently of late, there have not been many prosecutions. When one considers the amount of wages that were refunded to workers when Labour was in power as a result of breaches of awards, it showed that there were many breaches of awards, and there are more breaches of awards to-day than ever.

*Mr. Dash.]*

At 4.40 p.m.,

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. DASH: We know that thousands of pounds were due to the workers which the employers refused to pay until actions were brought in the courts. We know that to-day that there are employees in the city working long hours. I can remember the time prior to the making of awards dealing with storemen, packers, and carters, those employees were worked to all hours of the night with no extra pay for overtime, and at a very small wage. Since this Government came into office we can see employees working back at night, and they tell us they are not getting overtime, but that they dare not speak, as they would be in danger of dismissal. That is the fear which is in the minds of the workers of to-day through the Government not keeping the employers up to observance of the awards of the State. There has been some activity, for instance, in connection with the sale of light-weight bread in the city. Those are the things that should be safeguarded. The position to-day is that many of the workers are not able to buy the necessary commodities of life.

Then I would bring under the notice of the Government the question of workers' compensation. When the amendment of the Workers' Compensation Act was introduced in 1929, we on this side pointed out the many workers who were suffering from miners' phthisis, would not secure any benefit from the amendment of the Act. Until quite recently a number of old men suffering from the complaint, but who have been out of the mine for fifteen years as they have been able to earn their living as night watchmen, or by working on the wharves, and now find their lives too badly afflicted, to continue to work, denied the right to workers' compensation under section 14 (b) of the Act owing to the amendment passed by the Government in 1929. They are now denied the right they had before this Government came into office.

Again, the Government promised they would increase the workers' compensation payments from £4 5s. to the basic wage. When the amending Bill was brought in in 1929, we moved an amendment to the effect that the maximum payment should be £4 5s. per week; but the Government refused to accept the amendment, and the maximum payment to-day is £3 14s. per week. I remember the Secretary for Labour and Industry saying, "If it takes £4 5s. per week to keep a man when he is well, how much more does it cost to keep him when he meets with an accident?" The Government tell us they have increased the workers' compensation under the Act.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: That is true.

Mr. DASH: If the hon. gentleman can tell me that a change from £4 5s. to £3 14s. is an improvement in regard to workers' compensation, I know nothing about arithmetic.

Mr. NIMMO: That is the basic wage.

Mr. DASH: That is the basic wage to-day. When the Government went on the hustings, they led the workers to believe that a worker, whether single or married, whether with dependants or not, would receive the basic wage of £4 5s. They promised the

workers of Queensland at least £4 5s. when they were injured, but all the Government give them to-day is £3 14s., and they do not give that amount if a man is a rationed worker in the railway service, and only earns £2 10s. per week. When he is injured, whether he has a wife and family or not, the maximum amount of compensation he is paid is £2 10s. per week. That is vastly different even from the basic wage of £3 14s., which hon. members opposite say they promised; and there is even a greater difference between it and the £4 5s. which we say they promised. Why do they not bring in an amendment of the Act, and give the worker the £3 14s., if they meant the basic wage to apply? I have taken up with the Insurance Commissioner cases in which men had been working for £2 10s., £2 15s., and £3 per week when they were injured, because they happened to be rationed workers that week; and I am told that that is the only compensation they can receive, notwithstanding the policy hon. members opposite enunciated before the election.

I reiterate my statement that, when hon. members opposite came into office, the workers were the best off in Australia, their wages were the highest, their hours were the shortest, and their conditions were the best; whereas to-day their wages are the smallest, their hours are the longest, and their conditions are being taken away from them.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The railwaymen are better paid here than anywhere else in Australia.

Mr. DASH: The hon. gentleman will have an opportunity after I have spoken of proving that what I say is not true.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You are not telling the truth.

Mr. DASH: The hon. gentleman knows that, if a railway servant is receiving only £2 10s. or £3 a week when he is injured, that is the total amount of compensation he can get. If he consults the Insurance Commissioner, he will find that I am telling the truth. I do not speak without being sure of my facts, and I am not in the habit of making rash statements.

Mr. BRASSINGTON (*Balonne*) [4.48]: I want to take this opportunity of having a few minutes with the Premier on the question of the suspension of the station hands' award. Ever since this session began I have endeavoured to secure certain information from the hon. gentleman, but on each occasion I have failed. The Premier has side-stepped the issue by giving answers not relevant to the points I raised, and this is my opportunity of placing the matter before the hon. gentleman again in the hope of securing a satisfactory answer. The position in the West to-day is extremely bad owing to the suspension of the station hands' award. No matter what the Premier or his supporters may argue, the fact stands out that the West is suffering most acutely because wages have been substantially reduced and the purchasing power of the workers has consequently fallen. This, in turn, has resulted in business depression and the consequent increase in unemployment. In evading the many questions I have asked, the Premier apparently attempts to justify the policy of the Government. I would like him to attempt to justify the examples that I propose to place before the House.

[*Mr. Dash.*

The first case is that of a man engaged to undertake ringbarking at 3s. per day, who is compelled to walk 5 miles to his place of employment and 5 miles back. In the next place, a very generous employer in the Surat district has taken the opportunity to exploit the policy of the Government by offering a number of men a wage of £1 per week, out of which they would have to find their own rations, and throughout the Cunnamulla district the average wage does not exceed £1 10s. per week. How would the Premier and the Secretary for Labour and Industry like, as station hands, to be placed in the position of having to support a wife and family on the miserable pittance now being offered as a result of the policy of this Government?

**THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS:** Is that £1 10s. per week and keep?

**MR. BRASSINGTON:** And keep. How can a man support a wife and family on the miserable sum of £1 10s. per week? The hon. member for Warrego pointed out yesterday that the price of bread in a certain western town was 8d. per loaf.

**THE SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY:** That is included in their keep.

**MR. BRASSINGTON:** The hon. gentleman apparently is too dense to appreciate a reasonable argument. How can a man support a wife and family—in many cases a large family—on a wage of £1 or £1 10s. per week when the price of bread is 8d. per loaf and the price of other commodities proportionately high?

**THE SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY:** Bread is included in their keep.

**MR. STOPFORD:** It is only the man who gets the keep, and not his family, who must reside in the town.

**MR. BRASSINGTON:** The policy of the Government is one that is altogether unfair to the western portion of the State. It is a disgrace and outrage to ask any working man to support a family on a miserable pittance of £1 or £1 10s. per week. I asked the Premier this afternoon to justify his policy by going out into the West to meet the western people on this issue and to ascertain their opinions. If he is prepared to do that, then I can guarantee him a very hot reception. He will soon realize that his policy is certainly not very popular in Western Queensland.

**MR. JAMESON:** It is more popular than the policy that you support.

**MR. BRASSINGTON:** I would inform the hon. member for Lecky that it would be difficult to know what policy he supports. He got into this Chamber upon a promise to support a certain policy, but immediately upon his arrival here he dumped that policy and swore allegiance to the party now in control of the Treasury benches. In other words, he exploited the farmers of his district to get into this House, and then sold them and their interests.

I listened the other night to the Premier sidestepping the question of the suspension of the station hands' award. He said that during the election campaign he and his supporters stated as part of their policy that, if they were returned to power, they would suspend the rural workers' award. The hon. gentleman endeavoured to lead us to believe that his statement on that occa-

sion could be taken to mean that, if his party were returned to power, the station hands' award would also be suspended. Let me follow that statement to its logical conclusion. If it is right to suspend the station hands' award on the ground that it applies to a rural industry, then I should like the Premier to make a definite declaration of policy this afternoon as to whether it is the intention of the Government in the near future to complete the promise made to the people by suspending the award relating to the shearing industry also. I view this statement of the Premier with some alarm.

**THE PREMIER:** You are twisting what I said.

**MR. BRASSINGTON:** I am not endeavouring to twist the position at all. I am merely taking the statement made by the hon. gentleman the other night, and, on the basis of that statement, I ask him to make some definite declaration of policy in so far as the award in the shearing industry is concerned. The statement of the Premier will give rise to fear and apprehension in the minds of Western people. This policy of exploitation of the workers by the Government is causing Western people to wonder when the next reduction in wages and lowering of conditions will take place, and whether the shearing industry award will also be suspended.

**THE PREMIER:** What side did you support in the recent shearers' strike?

**MR. BRASSINGTON:** It is a well-known fact that the Nationalist-Country Party have at all times a number of paid agents among the workers creating dissension for the purpose of injuring the Labour Party.

**THE PREMIER:** Which side did you take?

**THE SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY:** Were you in favour of the shearers' strike?

**MR. BRASSINGTON:** I would ask hon. members opposite how much did the United Graziers' Association pay them and their organisation for their action in suspending the station hands' award, and the very handsome assistance given in the extension of pastoral leases?

**THE SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY:** Which side of the strike did you take up?

**MR. BRASSINGTON:** Might I ask hon. members opposite a very pertinent question in that connection?

**MR. MAXWELL:** No; you answer that question!

**MR. BRASSINGTON:** I would ask the hon. member for Toowoong, seeing there are differences in his party, whether he supports the Premier or the Secretary for Labour and Industry.

**MR. MAXWELL:** There is no difference in this party.

**MR. KERR:** You answer our question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Order!

**MR. BRASSINGTON:** Mr. Speaker, I would ask your protection from the interjections of hon. members opposite.

**MR. MAXWELL:** Why don't you answer the question?

**MR. BRASSINGTON:** I will not be baited by hon. members opposite on any bog. I was proceeding to say that there is an uneasy feeling in the minds of Western

*Mr. Brassington.]*

workers, who are wondering as to the reason for the great generosity on the part of hon. members opposite in conceding valuable concessions to pastoral lessees? They are asking the reason for those concessions.

Mr. MAXWELL: Did they ask it while you were in power?

Mr. BRASSINGTON: They are asking the question in this particular instance. Recently I asked the Premier a question on this subject, and mentioned that one pastoral company deriving benefit from this concession had shown a profit of £644,796 over a limited period of seven years. Was there any justification for the extension of leases of that company?

The PREMIER: I had to treat all alike.

Mr. KELSO: Didn't you run up a hollow log during the shearers' strike?

Mr. STOPFORD: You ran up a hollow log a few minutes ago when a division was taken for the abolition of the bar in Parliament House.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: The hon. member for Nundah has made one of his usual stupid interjections. I want to ask the hon. member for Nundah where he was during the municipal election? Why was the hon. member not supporting the official Nationalist candidate? No—the hon. member ran up a hollow log.

Mr. MAXWELL: Where were you during the shearers' strike?

Mr. BRASSINGTON: In introducing his wool relief scheme, the Premier stated that, owing to the financial losses of pastoral lessees, there was a justification for extending the period of their leases. Where a company has made a profit of £644,796 in seven years, where is the justification for extending the leases? I might remind the Premier that the majority of the properties owned by the Australian Pastoral Company are situated within the St. George District.

The PREMIER: I was referring to the fact of their investments.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: The bulk of the investments of that company are in the pastoral industry, and the bulk of their properties are in the St. George District.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: What is wrong with them?

Mr. BRASSINGTON: Nothing, except that they paid the Government to give away valuable concessions, which the Government did—lock, stock, and barrel.

Mr. MAXWELL: Of course your Government did not give away anything!

Mr. BRASSINGTON: We stood by the policy of the Australian Labour Party. The Premier made a nasty insinuation when I was speaking before in connection with an alleged action of the previous Labour Administration. I have gone to the trouble of investigating the statement made by the Premier. I find it was similar to a statement he made during the Balonne by-election.

The PREMIER: What statement is that?

Mr. BRASSINGTON: The hon. gentleman knows to what I refer—the question of Charlotte Plains. The hon. gentleman misrepresented and twisted that issue.

The PREMIER: I did not. The statement I made was perfectly definite, and I gave certain people the opportunity to bring an action if they wanted to do so.

[Mr. Brassington.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: No matter what the hon. member for Enoggera or the hon. member for Rosewood may have said during the Balonne by-election, there was nothing done along the lines they suggested. They may twist and misrepresent the matter as much as they like, but they can never harm the Labour Party on that point.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Why didn't your party cut up that property?

Mr. BRASSINGTON: I am getting on with my argument. The Scottish Investment Company, which has made large profits in recent years, has secured an extension of lease of Fernlee in my district and Nive Downs in the Augathella district. I listened to a statement of the Premier when he referred to a speech made by me on the last occasion I spoke in this Assembly, on the question of the class of land that would be resumed under this scheme. I ask the Premier to see that when the question of resumption comes up in connection with Nive Downs holding, in fairness to the people of that locality, the Government will see that they are not put into the position of accepting the resumption of many thousands of acres of worthless country on the eastern side of the Nive River. I ask the Premier to remember that; and, if he does give effect to his policy, to give the very best of the land coming up for resumption to the Western people to enable them to settle on that land. I shall conclude my remarks by inviting the Premier to go out into Western Queensland and justify the policy that the Government have pursued so far as it concerns the West. If the hon. gentleman would condescend to recognise the Western people and meet some of the Western members in a debate, I can assure him that, when he leaves the West, he will certainly understand the Western idea of his policy, and he will know that the people there will have nothing to do with him or his party in the future.

Mr. CLAYTON: What policy do you support?

Mr. BRASSINGTON: I support the policy of the Australian Labour Party, which stands for arbitration. Hon. members opposite are not game to get upon the public platform in this city or in any part of the State and justify their policy. If the Secretary for Labour and Industry had been present at the Town Hall the other night, he would know that every time his name was mentioned it was greeted by a storm of hoots. Hon. members opposite know what they would receive from the people, and they have not the courage to meet the people. But here in this House, by sneers, they accuse other people of lacking the courage which they themselves do not possess. Again I express the hope that the Premier will come out to the West. If he does, he will come back very quickly knowing that the people there will have nothing to do with him or his party.

Mr. HYNES (*Townsville*) [5.7]: I rise to support the resolution. There is no gain-saying the fact that, in the interests of the people of Queensland, attention should be called to some of the acts of the Government both through legislation and through administration during the last two years. The motion sets out that they have renounced their election pledges. The other day, from the front bench in this House, we had responsible Ministers of the Crown admitting

that they had been obliged to go back on their election pledges.

Mr. KELSO: The Premier said so. What is wrong with that?

Mr. HYNES: I am quite satisfied that the people of Queensland are beginning to understand that the objective of the present Government is to get back to cooler conditions—back to the old 8s. a day standard of living. We have the Premier as late as last evening, when another measure was being discussed, making the statement that the salvation of this State and of Australia generally depends upon our ability to compete in the world's markets with our products. That means, of course, that we shall have to bring our industrialists down to the same standard of living as obtains in India, Japan, and other retrograde countries.

The PREMIER: How can you export at a loss?

Mr. HYNES: We had been exporting up to the time we left office, and were able to maintain those living standards.

Mr. KELSO: On borrowed money.

Mr. HYNES: If the Premier is prepared to say at the next election that he favours bringing about cooler standards for the great mass of the working class in this country, then I do not think he will win even his own seat.

The PREMIER: I have never advocated any such standard.

Mr. HYNES: The hon. gentleman made that statement last night.

The PREMIER: I did not.

Mr. HYNES: On looking round we have evidence that the hon. gentleman is endeavouring to give effect to that policy. We have 25,000 industrialists to-day who are working for the same effective wage as the workers in India and Japan are getting.

The PREMIER: How are you going to export at a loss year after year?

Mr. HYNES: We demonstrated during the fourteen years of Labour Administration in Queensland that we were able to export our surplus products and to maintain a high standard of conditions for the workers. The conditions of the working-class in Queensland to-day are almost as bad as they are in the retrograde countries of the world. Take the case of the man with a family who is now working on intermittent relief work, for instance; while Labour was in power, that man was employed at least at the basic wage, or at a wage fixed by an independent tribunal on the basis of what it would take to keep a family of five in something like decent comfort. Those are the facts which emerge from the present situation. There are 25,000 men, who were mostly employed at least on the basic wage during the Labour regime, who to-day are working on the intermittent relief scheme, and that number is being constantly added to. The people of Queensland—even the business people, as the motion points out—are sick of the present Administration. They are looking forward to the opportunity next year of putting the Government out and giving Labour a chance to govern again in the interests of the country.

The PREMIER: What about the by-elections?

Mr. HYNES: The hon. member knows full well where he had a set-back from the electors.

The PREMIER: Where?

Mr. HYNES: Take the Fassfern seat, where the candidate with the endorsement of the present Government failed miserably, and an Independent candidate in the person of Mr. Wienholt was successful in that contest. Is not that an indication?

The PREMIER: We did not miss at Maryborough.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: What about Cairns?

Mr. HYNES: The Government made certain promises in Maryborough that they have not carried out, and there is not the remotest possibility of their winning the Maryborough seat the next time. The hon. member for Maryborough will admit that.

Mr. BLACKLEY: Wait and see!

Mr. HYNES: The desire of the people of Queensland is to get a chance of undoing the great mistake they made in 1929. In order to hold office the Government are looking round for something to assist them to do it. They talked about extending the life of Parliament for a further two years; but even the decent Nationalists in the State would not tolerate such a reactionary and pernicious proposal, so the Government abandoned it. Some of the geniuses behind their political party organisation have come forward now with a proposal to reduce the number of seats to sixty-two. I notice that the mouthpiece of the Government, the "Courier," has stated that, as the Labour seats have the smallest number of electors on the rolls, they, of course, have to go. They are going to sacrifice ten of the present Labour seats in order to hold on to office. The Premier makes the bold statement that he is doing this in the interests of economy. I have worked the position out, and find that, by the elimination of ten seats, they are going to save five farthings per annum per head of the population in Queensland. It is a cowardly way to hold office by redistributing the boundaries of electorates and cutting out the ten seats, which will no doubt make it rather difficult for Labour to win. But I am satisfied that the people are so fed up that it does not matter how the electorates are gerrymandered, hon. members opposite will be defeated when the people have an opportunity of passing judgment on what they have done during the last two years. It is even necessary for the present Government to pass a measure dealing with the sale of margarine—that is to say, the standard of living is so bad—hon. members opposite have reduced it to the level of poorer countries of the world—that the people are unable to purchase butter.

Another point I wish to make is that everybody seems to be getting some relief in respect of interest payments except those who need it most. The Commonwealth Government have reduced the rate of interest on war service homes by something like 1 per cent.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: No.

Mr. HYNES: By something, anyhow.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: They have not.

Mr. Hynes.]

Mr. HYNES: They have. No hope is held out to the people who have workers' dwellings or workers' homes that such a thing will be done here. When the contracts were entered into for the purchase of workers' dwellings and workers' homes, most of the tenants were getting at least the basic wage of £4 5s., and in some cases their children were getting that wage also. Now the basic wage has been reduced, and in many cases the children who are living with their parents find themselves out of work. It would be only just if something were done to reduce the burden on the tenant so that he might have a chance of making ends meet. A reduction of even a half per cent. would help. Why not make it? Hon. members opposite have been giving a lot of things away to their friends. Why not give the workers a rake-off as well?

I would like to refer again to the very harsh treatment meted out to single men who are out of work. They are obliged to walk about the country in order to qualify for 5s. worth of tucker per week. They are hunted from pillar to post by the police. That is the position obtaining in the North and in other electorates also. The Premier justified the position by explaining that in several districts there was more likelihood of these young men scouring work if they presented themselves personally at the gates of the farmers or selectors. In North Queensland there are often 100 miles between two townships. What is the use of insisting on such a policy as that? When people require employees there, they send to the centres of population for them.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: It was your own Government's policy.

Mr. HYNES: It was not. When we were in power, these young men were working. I can give the names of several of my own electors who were working in the railway workshops at Townsville, and who were put off by the present Administration. These cases have come under my own personal notice. I also know that the police have been informed that they will be paid two-pence for every name they have removed from the electoral rolls. No such thing was ever done when the Labour Government were in power.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: The Labour Government paid one penny per name.

Mr. HYNES: We paid nothing.

Mr. STOPFORD: We paid to have them put on.

Mr. HYNES: The present Government are paying the police at the rate of six for a shilling to have names removed.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: We are also paying to have them put on.

Mr. HYNES: Although my committee has been rather energetic and active in Townsville and has placed 450 names on the Townsville roll since its last publication, I find that the organisation supporting hon. members opposite has been more active because of the plentiful amount of cash available from the wealthy squatters and other organisations, and have taken 500 names from the roll.

Mr. KELSO: That is another lie.

Mr. HYNES: It is not.

Mr. KELSO: It is a lie.

[*Mr. Hynes.*]

Mr. HYNES: You are a contemptible liar if you say it is. That is a superlative, and you cannot beat that. (Laughter.) This is going on all over the State. Although my committee placed 450 names on the roll since its issue in December last, there are still fifty names less because the opposing organisation has removed 500 names.

The Government first proposed to extend the life of Parliament, but their own people turned down that proposal. Now they propose to eliminate ten Labour seats by a redistribution of the electoral boundaries to enable them to hold on to office. They have also amended the electoral law to prevent the migratory seasonal worker from exercising the franchise. It is most difficult at the present time for the migratory worker functioning in the big pastoral industry and the sugar industry to retain his name on the roll, and, in addition, the police are paid at the rate of six for a shilling to remove names from the roll. These are some of the contemptible things to which the Government have stooped in order to retain office. It is only right that we should seize upon this opportunity to ventilate these real and tangible grievances in this House. I feel sure that, when the Government summon up sufficient courage to face their masters—the electors—they will be told in no uncertain way that they have made a hash of the job of administering the affairs of the State, and will be routed from office notwithstanding the redistribution of the electoral boundaries providing for the elimination of ten Labour seats.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY (Hon. H. E. Sizer, *Sandgate*) [5.23]: There is not the slightest doubt that the motion has been moved with a view to indulging in a little propaganda. Quite a lot of wild statements have been made merely for the purpose of talking. The hon. member for Townsville referred to the spectacle of men walking about the country, and he blamed this Government for that; but, as I said on a previous occasion, there has been no alteration from the policy pursued by the Labour Government. The hon. member for Townsville retorted that under the Labour Government these men were in employment; but apparently he has forgotten that my predecessor in office admitted on the eve of the election at which he was defeated that the number of unemployed was in the region of 40,000. That remark is contained in an official statement published on the eve of the election, and I have here the report from which those figures were taken. I do not deny the fact that the position is critical; but I do deny that there has been any change of policy in that connection, except to afford more liberal treatment to such men than they received under the late Government.

The hon. member for Balonne cut the most sorry spectacle this afternoon that I have ever seen in this Chamber. When tackled on a certain question, he edged from point to point, and has not yet said which side of the shearers' strike he supported. He has not said whether he supported Senator Rae, who came from New South Wales into this State, put Queenslanders out of work, and permitted New South Wales workers to take their place. Neither has he said why the late Government, of which he was a supporter, withdrew the resumption notice respecting Charlotte Plains. I am perfectly sure that the policy laid down by the Premier to assist the pastoral industry, the

failure of which would be fatal to Queensland, is a sound one. Any man with a knowledge of the industry knows that it could not carry on with wool realising 8d. per lb. if it were not for the assistance received from the adverse rate of exchange. Hon. members opposite talk about giving concessions to our friends, but I would remind them that people in glass houses should not throw stones, otherwise they might hear more of what happened in regard to Charlotte Plains.

Mr. POLLOCK: I challenge you to state what happened in regard to Charlotte Plains.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: If hon. members opposite are going to talk and make charges like that against the Government, then we want to know why their Government issued a resumption notice in respect of Charlotte Plains and then withdrew it.

Mr. POLLOCK: I challenge you to state the reason.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. BRASSINGTON: You are a liar, and you know you are.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. member to withdraw that statement.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: After having had the pleasure of saying it, I do withdraw.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Withdraw and apologise.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: I will withdraw, but at the same time I—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I will call upon the hon. member to apologise if he does not withdraw unreservedly.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: I withdraw. Mr. Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The Secretary for Labour and Industry is misrepresenting the position, and not stating facts. He has suggested something against this party. I ask you to extend the same protection to us as you extended to the Minister, and call upon him to withdraw.

Mr. POLLOCK: The Minister certainly made allegations of crookedness with respect to Charlotte Plains which we cannot allow to pass.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: We challenge him to produce any evidence of crookedness.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: I will repeat what I said. I have no apologies to make for standing behind the Premier in the policy of the Government in regard to pastoral leases. It is in the best interests of the State that the wool industry should be protected in this crisis, otherwise unemployment will increase out of all proportion. If the Government are to be charged with any malpractice in giving extensions of pastoral leases, I would ask why was Charlotte Plains resumption given by the last Government and then withdrawn?

Mr. POLLOCK: Why?

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: Probably for the same reason as the Government are giving extensions of leases—to encourage the pastoral industry. (Laughter.) But we have not gone so far as to issue notices of resumption and then withdraw them.

Mr. POLLOCK: What was wrong with that?

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: I do not know.

Mr. POLLOCK: No extension of lease was given by the late Government to the lessees of Charlotte Plains, and you know that.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: Many empty statements have been made by hon. members opposite concerning interference by this Government with the Arbitration Court. The hon. member for Gregory himself admitted that the position of the pastoral industry was very difficult, and that probably the pastoralists could not pay the wages prescribed by the court.

Mr. POLLOCK: I did not say that.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: The hon. member said that the employers had to work for rations; that they could not afford to pay the award wages.

Mr. POLLOCK: No.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: The hon. member did say that distinctly. I wrote it down at the time.

Mr. POLLOCK: Don't misquote what I said.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: I want to make the point that the hon. member for Gregory himself realises that the pastoral industry is in great difficulties.

Mr. POLLOCK: Your policy of extending leases only helps your friends—not the people I represent.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: The position of the wool-grower has been brought about by the fall in the price of wool. If hon. members opposite were on this side of the House, they could not raise wages one farthing. Probably there would have been greater reductions if we had followed the policy which they enunciated. Certainly the reductions would not have been so great had the Commonwealth Government dealt with the position in the early stages.

Mr. POLLOCK: Why did you suspend the station hands' award?

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: I make no apology for doing that because I am convinced that, if that action had not been taken, more men would have been out of work than there are to-day. (Opposition dissent.) Hon. members opposite know that very well. The hon. member for Toowong has just handed me figures which show that from 30th June, 1924, to 30th June, 1928, £1,291,618 was paid from the unemployment insurance fund, and £225,000 in respect of outdoor relief. I do not claim that the position is satisfactory; but what I do strongly object to is that, in the face of the greatest crisis this country has ever seen—a crisis which may become accentuated—hon. members opposite are so flippant that they speak merely for propaganda purposes. In their own hearts not one of them wants to assume the responsibility of office. They know that immediately on their accession to office their position would be most difficult, because a mere change of Government will not alter the financial and economic position. Further, they would have no excuses to make, unless, of course, they made use of the oft-repeated

Hon. H. E. Sizer.]

phrase that "their predecessors had mis-managed the position." I realise that hon. members opposite are having a delightful time—they are able to criticise without responsibility.

Mr. POLLOCK: What about all those promises you broke?

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: As I have said during previous debates, many promises we have kept; some we have not—not because we did not want to keep them, but because of stress of economic circumstances. We have not kept some promises, any more than the Treasurer of the Commonwealth Government kept his promise that he would re-open the coal mines a week after the Federal Labour Government were returned to power.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: Why resurrect that?

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: I have no desire to do so, because I realise it gets us nowhere. The point is that the motion which was moved by the hon. member for Gregory is purely propaganda. I intend to move an amendment which will give an opportunity to the House to discuss the problem on a bigger scale. Therefore, I beg to move the following amendment:—

"Omit all words after the word 'House,' and insert in lieu thereof the words—

'a policy of securing co-operation amongst citizens of all political parties to work for the common good presents the best solution of our acute national difficulties.'

Mr. HYNES: "Let's get together, boys!"

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: That might be an advantage.

Mr. HYNES: With an olive branch in one hand and an axe in the other. (Opposition laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: If in a time of national crisis—a crisis which is fast assuming more serious proportions, because, whilst the position here may be less acute than in other States, it is bound to be seriously affected by an adverse position in other States—if in such a time hon. members opposite are prepared to sit idly by, hoping that they can tickle the ears of some people, they are making a most serious mistake, because I venture to say that action will have to be taken, not only by this Government, but by all Governments of the Commonwealth, at a not far distant date to avoid further disaster to the community. The banks are assisting, but, after all, they are only using the savings of the people.

When the Governments of Australia collectively have gone behind £7,000,000 in two months of this financial year, how long can the position go on? We are faced with a national deficit even with the reductions that have been made. If we continue to go back £7,000,000 every two months, it is obvious that it cannot be very long before disaster overtakes us. It is appalling that hon. members who should be conversant with the whole situation and the seriousness of Australia's position can act in the way the Opposition are doing. The Labour Government have taxed the people to the limit. We cannot go on in that way. I ask hon. members on the other side how they would

meet the obligation if they were the Government. The hon. member for Mundingburra says, "Give them more money!" I have no hesitation in saying that at the rate we are spending the relief fund, we shall be £250,000 overdrawn at the end of the year. Where are we going to get that money? Hon. members opposite do not know. In the face of that, how can they say "Give them more!" The problem of the Queensland Government and the problem of all Governments is: How can we continue to give the people as much as we are giving them? I say definitely that no Government is trying more earnestly than we are to give the most we can to the people.

Mr. BRUCE: You have destroyed the workers' conditions. You have brought them down to 30s. a week.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: That is absurd in the extreme. If that is so, are the workers' conditions in New South Wales any better than they are here? Are the workers' conditions in South Australia any better than they are here? Are the workers' conditions in Victoria any better than they are here?

Mr. BRUCE: They could not be worse.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: They are distinctly worse. We have not got to the stage in the metropolitan areas of this State when unemployment rations have increased twenty-five times in eighteen months. That has happened in New South Wales, and the Government in that State are now spending at the rate of £7,000,000 a year to feed their people. How long can they go on? Only the other day my colleague, the Treasurer, had to agree to the issue of treasury bills to the extent of £500,000 so that the Government of New South Wales could pay the bakers who are delivering bread to the people. Hon. members opposite can have all the political kudos they like. I do not want any political kudos. I would like to get the people through this problem so that I could have some peace of mind, and I would like some help.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: You closed Mount Morgan.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: How could I close Mount Morgan when your Government were in power? Here is a problem I am asking this House to consider: We are fast getting into difficulty.

Mr. BRUCE: You are in it.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: No one denies the position. Because the Commonwealth Government are in the same difficulty, they have taken the workers from the Arbitration Court. The Commonwealth Government have given the Minister power to reduce wages, and that was introduced by Mr. Theodore, who introduced the first Industrial Arbitration Bill in this House. Why did he do it? Simply because the Commonwealth Government cannot carry on.

It is no use merely to theorise. Hon. members opposite can do so if they like; but we have to get down to practical administration and do the job. As the Leader of the Opposition rightly said when he was a Minister, any Government policy is dictated by the financial situation. Hon. members opposite, when in office, had rising revenues and ample loan

[*Hon. H. E. Sizer.*]

funds, and were able to spend; still there were large numbers of unemployed. We, on the other hand, took office with a falling revenue and a shortage of loan funds. (Opposition interjections.) Are we responsible for the fall in national income, for the fall in the price of silver and wool, for the drop in wheat prices?

Mr. BRUCE: Has that all happened since you took office?

THE SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: That has all happened since we took office, unfortunately. My colleague the Secretary for Railways has almost to juggle with the situation in order to improve matters, as the railway revenue is falling every day. The House should pay great attention to the solving of this momentous problem. We must tackle it in a big way, and sink minor differences. I think there is a very difficult time ahead for the people of Queensland and Australia. This Government will run out of funds in due course—every Government will run out of funds—and we shall have to fall back on the banks, which are to-day in a worse position than they have ever been before. We can see how dangerous it would be for banks to get into difficulties. It would only require one or two of such actions as have been taken by the Government in New South Wales to cause the banks to collapse. We are using every means in our power to prevent such a calamity in this State. It appears to me that to indulge in empty carping criticism at the present time is exactly like fiddling while Rome was burning. I say without hesitation that to get Queensland and Australia through this crisis much more courageous action will have to be taken. If income continues to fall at the rate it is falling and unemployment to increase, with sales taxes, increasing costs and further tariff impositions, it will make it almost impossible for people to live. We shall come to complete stagnation. (Opposition interjections.) It is well that we should realise the position. No one knows better than the Leader of the Opposition how difficult it is.

But, although this state of things exists, there is a brighter side; though it will take prompt and determined action on our part to remedy matters. The empty criticisms of hon. members opposite are to my mind absolutely nauseating in the face of the facts of the situation, which are not new but are known to everybody. The Governments of Australia are going back at the rate of £7,000,000 in two months.

Is it not time that we realised that we are practically in a state of national emergency, and that this community is in greater danger of destruction from economic causes than it was during the clash of arms? Is it not time that we realised that what we held on the fields of battle we may easily lose in the insidious economic combat going on in times of peace? The battle now is not fought with a blare of trumpets; nevertheless, we are face to face with stern hard realities. Every man who is a man at all must realise the extreme difficulty of getting the community through the crisis; and all sections of the community must back any action taken with a view to saving the country from further disaster and restoring prosperity as soon as possible. This was done in Great Britain during the war. All parties gave of their best for the common

weal; everybody collaborated in evolving the best policy for saving the nation. They did not indulge in carping criticism—the carping criticism of hon. members opposite, who know in their hearts that their own plans could not be carried out. They say, or would lead us to infer, that where we have curtailed they would increase; that where we have taken away they would give back. They know in their hearts that they could not do it, and that, if they should become a Government next year and things move at their present rate, they will be in the unfortunate position of reducing even further than we have done, or else—as Mr. Lang has done—they will have to default.

All classes should combine. The Premier is not worrying about popularity, personal or governmental. He is indifferent to it. The thing is to take a big, broad view, and try to save the community from the disaster which has befallen the sister State of New South Wales. I am not concerned about what may happen to me. What I am concerned about is earnestly doing my duty, and seeing that all sections of the community suffer as little hardship as possible. Hardship there must be; but let us make it as little as possible. The amendment I have moved invites the House and the public generally to realise the serious position we are in; to realise that we are on the verge of a national emergency, and that all must co-operate in carrying out a policy which will bring us safely through. Let us have a temporary cessation of party warfare.

I do not appeal only for this Government or for any Government, whether Liberal or Labour. I appeal for all Governments, Federal or State, who are prepared to see Australia through. If they have the courage to do that, let them have all the backing we can give them. As a man in a responsible position to-day, I have no personal objection to anyone. Every one of us has a duty to the public and the country. Whatever may happen to us individually should not be given any consideration. There is a better side to every man's nature; and, when the call comes, I believe that even the most partisan can be roused to action in a time of danger to the nation; but there is such a thing as waiting until the house is on fire. I want everybody to take action before the house becomes alight; and I appeal to all sections of the House to that end. I do not care personally what political future is ahead of me—I am not the least concerned about it. I say with all the sincerity at my command that the situation is grave; but it is not hopeless. There is daylight ahead, but stern action will have to be taken; and the co-operation of all sections of the community is urgently required to bring about a new era of prosperity. I ask the House to consider seriously the amendment that I have moved.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*) [5.51]: I have very much pleasure in supporting the amendment. Hon. members opposite have devoted a good deal of time and energy to indulge in propaganda in the hope of interfering with the activities of the Government; but it must be very galling to them to be flogged with their own stick in connection with this matter. One would think that it was a crime to insert political advertisements in newspapers during an election campaign.

Mr. Kerr.]

We all know that it is the practice, and has been the practice of political parties over a long period of years, to publish political advertisements in newspapers at election time. I do not deny that political advertisements were published during the last election campaign by our party; but I can also produce advertisements published by the Opposition when they were in power, and published by them when they were previously in Opposition. Those advertisements contain solemn promises which have not been honoured to this day, although conditions were favourable for their fulfilment. Those promises were made when the Government were able to spend up to £3,500,000 annually from the loan fund, and a considerable sum from the consolidated revenue. The Labour Government made many promises which they have failed to honour, although they were made many years ago. They promised to introduce a child endowment scheme in 1925, at a time when the State was prosperous, when plenty of loan money was available, and a buoyant revenue was being enjoyed. It was then easy to obtain loan funds from England and America. The Leader of the Opposition, who, no doubt, has inspired this motion, had this to say at the time in connection with the child endowment scheme—

“Leading thinkers of the State of Queensland have long devoted considerable attention to the subject, have watched with great interest the operation of various schemes instituted in a number of countries, and are unanimous that the time is opportune for the introduction of such a scheme in this State. Who is rash enough to dispute that the time is long overdue for the recognition of the national work performed by mothers in the rearing of their families? It is the considered opinion of those best fitted to judge that the institution of a scheme such as the one under review will do much to banish poverty from the home of practically every worker in Queensland! What a goal to attain.”

Mr. McCormack, the then Premier, on the 9th April, 1926, shortly before the elections, had this to say—

“Unless the Commonwealth Government take immediate steps to introduce a scheme for the whole of Australia, this Government will formulate a child endowment scheme for Queensland and proceed with it without delay.”

After the elections the present Leader of the Opposition, who proceeded to a conference of Commonwealth and State Ministers in Melbourne in June, 1927, as a representative of the Queensland Government, said when the question of child endowment was being considered—

“It would be fatal if, at this stage, we made any mistake as to the manner of dealing with this important subject, which is little understood throughout the Commonwealth. Before any definite scheme of such a far-reaching nature can be agreed upon, it is necessary that we should have more information than we possess at present. I suggest that the Commonwealth Government should appoint a Royal Commission to make a complete economic investigation of the whole subject.”

Child endowment was a most important subject, and one which our Government are

[*Mr. Kerr.*

trying to bring about. Already they have established the principle in the intermittent relief scheme. If the Government are returned to power at the next election—which in all probability they will—they will be the only Government capable of carrying out such a scheme. That is one broken election promise made by the late Government; yet members opposite and supporters of that Government are accusing us of breaking promises! It is difficult to conceive how fathers and mothers could be deceived by such an election promise, or how that promise was not given effect to, seeing that it was made at the peak of this State's prosperity.

The charge of broken promises made by hon. members opposite against this Government is simply an attempt to divert attention from the promises which they themselves did not fulfil to the electors. In addition to the promise of child endowment, Mr. McCormack, in his policy speech delivered on 9th April, 1926, made this definite promise in respect of pensions to widows and orphans—

“The scheme will provide a weekly payment to widows with young dependent children, and will lay down a more liberal allowance than that now provided for children under the care of the State.”

The widows are still waiting for the Labour Party to do something in that direction. Labour remained in power for some years after 1926. I had widows visiting my office asking me to direct them to where they could collect the pensions they had been promised. Yet hon. members opposite have the audacity to take advantage of private members' day to charge this Government with breaking promises! The conditions under which the Government are governing the State are altogether dissimilar from those obtaining when the late Government made those promises. That fact is likely to have a big influence with public opinion. When the Railway Department Estimates were being discussed in this Chamber in 1926, Mr. Larcombe, the then Secretary for Railways, said—

“I appreciate the general tenor of their (the Opposition) speeches, but I say that they cannot get down to essentials—that they do not understand the difference between the standards of efficiency and inefficiency. I will prove that we have efficiency.”

At 7 p.m.,

*In accordance with Sessional Order, the House proceeded with Government business.*

## WEIGHTS AND MEASURES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

### INITIATION.

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

“That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend ‘The Weights and Measures Acts, 1924 to 1930,’ in certain particulars.”

Question put and passed.

## MORTGAGORS RELIEF BILL.

## COMMITTEE.

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

Clause 1—"Short Title"—

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*) [7.2]: I beg to move the following amendment:—

"On page 2, lines 15 and 16, omit the words—

'(5.) The provisions of this Act shall not apply to the Crown.'"

I take the view that the provisions of this measure should apply to the Crown where they are appropriate. I realise that the State Advances Corporation, and particularly that section of it dealing with housing, is already provided for, but what I have in mind are mortgages held by the Public Curator, the State Insurance Commissioner, or other authority of a similar character. The Public Curator lends money on fixed mortgage in the same way as the Union Trustee Company or other such company having control of the investment of trust funds. The terms and conditions and the rates of interest chargeable are similar in respect of both the Public Curator and the outside companies, and I do not see any reason why mortgagors to the Union Trustee Company should have a remedy under this measure whilst mortgagors to the Public Curator will not be similarly treated. After all, the Public Curator's office must stand on its merits as a financial institution engaged in certain business, and I see no reason why this measure should not be made applicable, as I have indicated. I do not propose to labour the matter, because it is self-evident that where conditions are similar they should apply equally as well to Crown instrumentalities as to outside concerns. The object of this Bill is to give relief under certain conditions, which are set out. According to the amount of the mortgage the position will be controlled either by the Supreme Court, or the magistrates court, and Crown mortgagors should be exactly in the same position as others.

The PREMIER (Hon. A. E. Moore, *Aubigny*) [7.5]: I do not feel inclined to accept the amendment. The Public Curator is not in the same position as private trustee companies. As a matter of fact, he does not pay income tax. For another thing, the Public Curator is a Government official; and a Government official is not likely to be harsh on individuals. This Bill is not brought in for people who are treating their clients fairly and decently. It is brought in for people who are endeavouring to take advantage of the situation; and no one would imagine for a single moment that the Public Curator is going to take advantage of any individual. The Public Curator, just the same as the State Advances Corporation, will treat his clients sympathetically, and try to help them in every way he can. As a matter of fact, I do not think the Bill will apply to trustee companies to any extent. I have never heard of a trustee company being harsh to its clients or taking advantage of a situation such as exists to-day. As a rule, such companies try to help their clients.

Mr. POLLOCK: I can give you one shocking example.

The PREMIER: I think I know the case the hon. member is referring to; but after

going into the facts of the case, it did not appear to be a shocking example at all. The cases that have been brought before me are cases of individuals who are taking advantage of the present position. It is not fair to suggest that an officer of the Crown would attempt to take down any individual. The Crown instrumentalities will act reasonably towards the public.

Mr. POLLOCK: The Public Curator invests trust moneys, and must look after the interests of his clients.

The PREMIER: The Public Curator has tremendous power, which enables him to do almost anything he likes without going to the court. He can reduce interest and make whatever terms and conditions he likes with his clients. I am sure no hon. member imagines that a public servant is going to take advantage of a position such as exists to-day.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*) [7.8]: The point involved in the amendment has been overlooked by the Premier. I take the view that this Bill provides for some form of remedy for a mortgagor; and I propose that the Crown should come within the scope of the Act where it engages in undertakings similar to those private individuals engage in. The Premier quite truly said that public servants are not out to fleece the public; and the moving of an amendment of this kind is no reflection on any officers of the Crown. Rather is it a protection to them. Any department engaged in this class of business should be subject to the same law and the same conditions as private undertakings; then there can be no question of preference.

Certain parts of the Public Curator's business are set out by statute; and he is given certain powers and authorities that would naturally not be given to private companies. I am not dealing with that phase of the Public Curator's business at all, but with that phase whereby he is empowered to invest moneys on fixed mortgage. He makes advances on fixed mortgage of trust moneys and moneys deposited with him for that specific purpose. It is his duty to look after his clients' interests and secure good investments for them, and a public servant should not be put into the position individually of refusing or granting certain things. This is a measure whereby a man can go to the court, and, on cause being shown, derive certain benefits. Why should that not apply to the Public Curator as well as to anyone else?

The Premier talks about matters connected with an individual. We are not dealing with the Public Curator as an individual at all, but with him as a mortgagee; and, if a man gives a mortgage to the Public Curator, and is entitled under the scope of the Act to the relief which it gives, he should not be deprived of that advantage. In the position stated by the hon. gentleman, a man will have to crave from the Public Curator as a boon what the Act gives other people as a right. The Public Curator is an entirely free agent to deal with the situation as he thinks fit and proper, whereas a mortgagor to a private individual or company has a legal remedy to have his case dealt with in court; and what is wrong with that? It gives the mortgagor the same rights in a case against the Crown as against individuals. A man ought to have that right

*Mr. Smith.]*

as a citizen. From the Public Curator's point of view, it would be more advantageous to him to be brought within the scope of the law than it would to outsiders. Why should he be placed in the position of having to reject or agree, as he thinks fit? Granting that he may do the best thing possible under all the circumstances, he would be in a much stronger position if his mortgagor had the same rights and remedies as other citizens have under the measure.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. R. M. King, *Logan*) [7.18]: I think that the Leader of the Opposition is labouring under a misapprehension. He desires that the words should be omitted because he wants the Public Curator to come within the scope of the Bill as a Crown instrumentality. The Public Curator Act distinctly sets out that the Public Curator is a corporation sole, and not the Crown; and he is in the same position as any other mortgagee contemplated under the provisions of this Bill. A mortgagor can take action against the Public Curator under this measure.

Mr. HANLON: The Premier said "No."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I do not know that the Premier quite grasped what was being said at the time. The Public Curator is not the Crown; he is in exactly the same position as any other person under this Bill; and the mortgagor who has the Public Curator as mortgagee, can, if he thinks he is being unjustly treated, take proceedings under the Bill in the same way as any other mortgagor.

Mr. HANLON (*Athaa*) [7.20]: It appears to me that we are starting off pretty badly on the Bill. Parliament passes a lot of measures which hon. members afterwards find they do not thoroughly understand. We find the Premier assuring the Opposition that the Public Curator is not within the scope of the Bill, and that it is not necessary for him to come within its scope.

The Premier: I did not say he would not; I said it was not necessary.

Mr. HANLON: The hon. gentleman conveyed the impression that he did not believe that he was. Nobody listening to the hon. gentleman could be under the impression that he thought the Public Curator was coming under the Bill. I gathered from what he said that the Public Curator and the State Insurance Commissioner were not, but immediately afterwards the Deputy Leader of the Government assures us that the Public Curator will be within the scope of the Bill. The very least that we can expect is that the Cabinet should understand a Bill which they place before Parliament. The general run of members cannot be expected to understand legislation if Cabinet members contradict themselves. There is certainly a doubt as to whether the Public Curator and the Insurance Commissioner come within the Bill, and on reading the Bill we are inclined to believe that they do not. The Premier should realise that a mortgagor who has given a mortgage to the Public Curator will not be satisfied unless he has the same right as the man who has given a mortgage to any private trustee. He will think that, if he could come under the Act, he would get a better deal than the Public Curator gives him. There is

no doubt that we had the impression from the Premier, when the Financial Emergency Bill was going through, that the Public Curator was in the same position as any other trustee, but we now understand that the position is entirely different.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. R. M. King, *Logan*) [7.23]: For the information of the hon. member, I would like to read section 9 of the Public Curator Act—

"(1) The Public Curator is hereby constituted a corporation sole under the name of 'The Public Curator of Queensland,' with perpetual succession and a seal of office.

Subject to this Act the Public Curator shall be capable in law of suing and being sued, and of taking, purchasing, holding, and alienating land of any tenure, and of doing and suffering all such other acts and things as bodies corporate may by law do and suffer.

"(2) The appointment of the Public Curator and of his deputies and their signatures, and the seal of the Public Curator, shall be judicially noticed."

Mr. HANLON: Is your decision binding on the High Court? (Laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I am not going to say that, but I am quite sure my opinion is right.

Question—"That the words proposed to be omitted from clause 1 (*Mr. Smith's amendment*) stand part of the clause"—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 30.

Mr. Barnes, G. P.	Mr. Moore
" Boyd	" Morgan
" Butler	" Nimmo
" Clayton	" Peterson
" Deacon	" Russell, H. M.
" Duffy	" Russell, W. A.
" Dunlop	" Sizer
" Grimstone	" Swayne
" Hill	" Tedman
" Jamieson	" Walker, H. F.
" Kelso	" Walker, J. E.
" Kerr	" Wienholt
Dr. Kerwin	
Mrs. Longman	<i>Tellers:</i>
Mr. Maher	" Costello
" Maxwell	" Kenny

NOES, 18.

Mr. Barber	Mr. O'Keefe
" Bedford	" Pollock
" Bow	" Smith
" Brassington	" Wellington
" Cooper	" Wilson
" Dash	" Winstanley
" Hanlon	
" Hanson	<i>Tellers:</i>
" Hynes	" Foley
" Kirwan	" Jones, A.

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Barnes, W. H.	Mr. Collins
" King	" Bulcock

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clause 1, as read, agreed to.

[*Mr. Smith.*

## Clause 2—"Interpretation—Mortgage"—

The PREMIER (Hon. A. E. Moore, *Aubigny*) [7.23]: I beg to move the following amendment:—

"On page 2, lines 26 and 27, omit the words—

'such mortgage in every such case securing a fixed liability'

and insert in lieu thereof the words—

'but not including a mortgage payable on demand.'

There was some doubt as to whether a mortgage securing a fixed liability was one that might be paid off at different periods. The amendment makes it quite clear that the clause is to apply to practically every mortgage except a mortgage payable on demand, which would really be an ordinary overdraft.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*) [7.25]: I am opposed to the amendment. This is the definition clause, and it is a very wide one. It has been taken in its entirety from the Financial Emergency Act, which was deliberately devised. At least, the wording of this definition is the same as the definition of "mortgage" in that Act. That definition was made very wide deliberately. Now the Premier proposes to delete the words—

"such mortgage in every such case securing a fixed liability."

Obviously, by omitting those words the definition is narrowed considerably in scope, excluding a number of instrumentalities that otherwise would be included. While making it clear that the words the hon. gentleman proposes to insert are for the purpose of excluding money held at call placed on mortgage, he is not similarly clear in moving his amendment. By his amendment he not only does not make it clear that moneys at call shall not come within the scope of the definition, but he narrows the ambit of the clause in other directions.

The PREMIER: I am widening it.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: Mortgages payable on demand should be subject to the same conditions of review that apply in other cases.

Mr. KELSO: How can they be?

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: The hon. member is looking at it from the point of view of a banker. I am looking at it from the point of view of men carrying on the industries of the State, who, through no fault of their own, are faced with the situation that, if the banks or financial institutions call up the advances, they would be driven off the land or ruined. In sugar and farming districts financial institutions make advances on fixed security. They take the securities offering in the form of the fixed assets of the farmer. To all intents and purposes it is a mortgage in the same sense as other mortgages are, with this difference, that there is no fixed duration of time. If a bank holding a similar security made an advance for a period of five years, then it would be subject to the provisions of this Bill. That is not the usual practice. The usual practice is to make the advance, and the money is nominally at call. If that class of mortgage is excluded from the ambit of this Bill, then such relief as the Bill gives will be denied to many sections of the community, and the Bill will be abortive in its aim and purpose. The only justification for the Bill is that it

deals with the extraordinary situation that has arisen; and the development which has arisen is one for which no individual can be held responsible. Persons enter into mortgages in the best of good faith. Their security, according to then existing values, was good value, and their prospects were good through no fault of their own, but through the lowering of the value of their product, they are not in a position now to meet their commitments according to the terms on which they secured the advances. The Government and Parliament must consider whether the law regarding these contracts should be allowed to take its course or not. If allowed to take its course, then in many cases good citizens will be thrown off their holdings and driven into the cities to add to the unemployed army. Anyone having the best interests of the State at heart does not desire that to happen. As the Premier pointed out, in some instances the mortgagee takes a reasonable view of the situation and enters into an arrangement with his client which is equitable to both parties; but there are others who are not prepared to enter into such an arrangement or make any concession whatsoever. This Bill provides that in the latter case the Magistrates Court or the Supreme Court, on being moved, can vary the terms or conditions of the mortgage with respect to both interests, and with a view to retaining the person in his business, or on his farm or grazing selection, as the case may be. By limiting the definition clause in the manner proposed by the Premier a very large proportion of the people in this State will not get the relief to which they are entitled. I propose to move the following amendment on the Premier's amendment—

"Omit the words in the amendment—  
'but not.'"

The amendment will then read—

"including a mortgage payable on demand."

Mr. POLLOCK (*Gregory*) [7.31]: The amendment proposed by the Leader of the Opposition gives the Government an opportunity of showing their sympathy with the wool industry. We have heard quite a lot in this Chamber about the Government's alleged sympathy with people who are battling in an endeavour to grow wool with big debts hanging over their heads. The Bill seeks to give those who are mortgagors of property the opportunity to have the rates as between the lender and themselves adjusted by a court in accordance with the changed times. It also gives power to the court to deal with any fixed mortgage. In order to make the position clear and to deal with day-to-day mortgages—mortgages that are payable on demand—we propose that in respect of mortgages on industry—that is to say, a mortgage which a grazier or selector has given over his property, perhaps to the extent of £12,000 or £13,000, and in respect of which the bank can call for repayment on demand, the mortgagor shall have the same right to go to the court for relief in respect of his interest rates as any other person in the community. The object of the Premier's plan, if we can believe the Premier and the Treasurer, was, in the first place, to secure a reduction in the interest charges on industry. In the wool industry in particular a good deal of the difficulty is caused to-day because the interest charge is the greatest charge that selectors have to face. Those people who have fed their sheep during the drought and

*Mr. Pollock.]*

who have gone behind to the tune of £10,000 or £12,000 are in a serious position. In many cases the average rate of interest which is payable by a selector on a 20,000-acre holding is in the neighbourhood of £1,000 per annum. That payment is hanging over his head for interest alone. If those people can get before the court with the right to have their interest rate adjusted and reduced, if the court considers it a fair thing—

The PREMIER: This Bill has nothing to do with interest.

Mr. POLLOCK: We are trying to make it deal with interest.

The PREMIER: You cannot, because interest was dealt with in another Bill.

Mr. POLLOCK: It ill becomes the leader of a party which calls itself the Country Party to object to such a proposal.

The PREMIER: Interest was dealt with in another measure.

Mr. POLLOCK: The point is that the Premier seeks to provide definitely in this clause that these people shall not receive relief from the rates of interest they are paying under mortgages.

The PREMIER: This has nothing to do with interest. That is what I am trying to tell you.

Mr. POLLOCK: If this amendment is carried, it can have everything to do with interest. Does the Premier mean to tell me seriously that there should be any distinction between the interest rates on mortgages in industry and interest rates on mortgages for the paying off of homes?

The PREMIER: But a Bill dealing with interest has already been passed, in accordance with the financial agreement. This deals with principal.

Mr. POLLOCK: This does not cover the question which we are now raising.

The PREMIER: Of course, it does not.

Mr. POLLOCK: And, as representatives of a certain section of the people, we have the right to ask that they be covered. What is wrong with asking that those people who have borne the burden of a four years' drought and are in difficulties now—who are unable to employ men because of this interest burden, and who, everywhere they turn, are faced with the position of having to meet an interest charge which they can never possibly meet—what is wrong with asking that they shall be included in the scope of a Bill which proposes to give relief to people who are in the hands of mortgagors?

Why should the Country Party of all parties object to it? Why should they not be the first people to try to protect those people that the Country Party alleges it stands for and pretends to represent? The Premier may not want it to cover their case. He may be, and probably is, more concerned with the interests of the banks than with the interests of the primary producers, and his attitude on this measure would indicate that; but that does not alter the fact that we are not concerned with the interests of the banks as against the interests of the primary producers. We recognise that these people are entitled to, and should receive, relief; and this is the time and the place to provide it. If the Premier can give any reason why these

people should not receive relief and why everybody else should receive it, well and good; but I believe he cannot give that reason.

The PREMIER: Mr. Roberts, I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member in order in talking about another measure altogether? This Bill deals with capital, and not with interest. The measure dealing with interest was the Financial Emergency Act. This has nothing to do with interest.

The CHAIRMAN: I think the hon. member is in order in discussing the question of interest.

The PREMIER: It is beyond the order of leave. This Bill has nothing at all to do with interest.

Mr. POLLOCK: I do not want to get beyond the scope of the Bill. The definition reads—

“Mortgage” means any deed, memorandum of mortgage, instrument, or agreement whereby security for payment of money is granted over real or personal property or any interest therein, and includes an agreement for sale and purchase of real and personal property where payment of the unpaid purchase money and interest thereon is secured on such property; such mortgage in every such case securing a fixed liability.”

The Premier proposes to omit the words—  
“such mortgage in every such case securing a fixed liability.”

and to insert a provision that the Act shall not apply to a mortgage payable on demand. We are seeking to amend his amendment so that the Act will apply to a mortgage payable on demand. We definitely ask that an overdraft—which, after all, is a form of mortgage—shall be included. It may not be a fixed mortgage; but it is a mortgage on security, and is payable on demand; and, if we delete the two words referred to, it will have the same effect. It will mean that these people will have the right to go to the court, the same as any other person. I can understand the Premier trying to dodge the issue. No doubt it is not a very popular one with the Country Party, and I can understand the hon. gentleman trying to get it ruled out of order. I am referring to the case of selectors in Western Queensland, a large proportion of whom I represent, and a majority of whom have a good deal of confidence in me. These people have overdrafts—which I contend are the same as mortgages—amounting in some cases to £13,000 or £14,000. They cannot get relief from those agreements, and the Government have made no effort to see that they get relief.

The PREMIER: That is not true, and I will prove it.

Mr. POLLOCK: I differ from the Premier—I say the Government have made no effort by legislation.

The PREMIER: That is quite different—that is how you get out of it.

Mr. POLLOCK: The hon. gentleman is trying to squib out of this. These people cannot carry on their industry as selectors, or provide employment for the hundreds of men who are walking round the pastoral districts while the first charge on the moneys

[Mr. Pollock.]

they earn is the payment of over £1,000 a year interest to the banks or other institutions which are financing them. We ask that they be given the same rights as any other section of the community covered by mortgages to ask the court that their rates of interest be reduced, if their case warrants it.

The PREMIER: The Bill does not apply to that.

Mr. POLLOCK: The Bill can be made to apply to it, and the alteration of two words will make the Bill apply to it. If the alleged Country Party will vote for the amendment having the words "including a mortgage payable on demand" it will be carried, but the Premier wants to provide that it shall not include a mortgage payable on demand. What is the use of telling me that we are not talking to the question?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You are not.

Mr. POLLOCK: The hon. member may disagree with us, but he cannot say that we are sidestepping the question and that we have not a real case. If he is afraid to face the thing, he should walk out, as he did on the division with reference to the closure of the bar. If hon. members opposite believe as I do that these people cannot carry on their industry without some measure of relief, if they believe in giving these people some control over their properties to provide employment for the hundreds of men who are walking about in Western Queensland, they will vote for the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. NIMMO (*Oxley*) [7.44]: I am surprised at the attitude of hon. members opposite. If the words which the Premier suggests are not put into the Bill, what is going to happen to the primary producers and business people who have arranged for overdrafts? They may have arranged for a £500 overdraft and have drawn only £50, and the bank, if this measure applies to it, may say, "We are not giving you any more money." It will simply kill the opportunity of these people getting money.

Mr. POLLOCK: The court must take into consideration the circumstances of the case.

Mr. NIMMO: Hon. members opposite say they are trying to help people, but they are really trying to ruin them. The legislation put through this Chamber by hon. members opposite has had the contrary effect to what they intended it to have. Their amendment would kill the opportunity of the Western men to get any further advances from the banks. They are still getting money from the banks to enable them to carry on; but, if the hon. member's amendment goes into the Bill, that will be impossible. I am rather surprised at hon. members opposite trying to prevent such people from getting further advances.

Mr. BRASSINGTON (*Balonne*) [7.45]: I oppose the Premier's amendment, and I propose to support the amendment of the Leader of the Opposition, for the simple reason that the success of this measure will depend upon the amount of relief it will give. Unless the amendment of the Leader of the Opposition is accepted, the Bill will not give relief to a large number of grazing selectors throughout the West who are working on overdrafts. Within the past few weeks I have received ten communications asking whether the mea-

sure will apply to in the circumstances set out, and I find that it will give relief to three cases only, the other seven grazing selectors having to carry on under overdrafts.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Give us their names.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: I do not propose to introduce names into this discussion. I look upon the Premier as an honourable gentleman, and I ask him to accept my word. Nothing can be gained by giving the names. I plead with the Government to broaden the scope of the measure so that generous relief can be given to a large number of persons who are in difficulties. The amendment of the Leader of the Opposition will clear the air.

I am also desirous of getting some information from the Premier. He has always been noted for his courtesy, and for the fact that he is prepared to give a reply to a reasonable question. Although I am sorry to have to say that he sidestepped some of my questions and gave me absolutely no information. Now I propose to ask the hon. gentleman another question, and I will ask hon. members whether my interpretation of the Bill does not seem sound, especially in view of the fact that to-night we had the Premier giving a certain interpretation of the first clause and the Deputy Leader of the Government giving an entirely different interpretation. If two leading members of this Assembly differ in that way, surely I am justified in seeking some information on another matter! If the Premier's amendment is accepted, will the clause give relief to a large number of persons, particularly workers who have contracted to pay various sums of money in the purchase of articles under the hire-purchase system. Under that system, until the whole of the purchase money is paid, the articles are merely on hire. How then can it be said that those people have given mortgages and that this Bill will apply to them?

I should like the Premier to give us some information on that point. Further, a number of working people have purchased motor cars and other articles on terms; but, because of the reactionary policy of the Government, including wholesale wage reductions, they are now not in a position to meet their payments. Motor cars are purchased under a system providing for periodical payments to retire promissory notes signed at the time of purchase. These promissory notes are retired until the whole of the purchase money has been paid. The promissory notes appear to be more in the nature of money at call than as constituting a fixed mortgage. I would like to know whether they will come within the scope of the measure; and, if not, whether it is the intention of the Government to introduce legislation in the near future to give protection and relief to a number of our citizens.

Mr. BEDFORD (*Warrego*) [7.52]: This Bill in its original form so slavishly followed the New Zealand Act that one wonders why amendments have been made without any further explanation than has been given. The Premier objected very much to the question of interest being raised; but the question of interest has all the bearing possible upon the probable fore-closures which we wish to avoid, but which the Premier's amendment will make almost certain. There are

*Mr. Bedford.]*

selectors in my electorate who are paying 8 per cent. on floating liens to the banks. The Commercial Banking Company of Sydney is one of the banks; and in three cases it has refused to reduce the rate of interest. It must be patent to everybody that the higher the interest rate the greater the chance of foreclosure; and for that reason we wish to see these floating liens brought under the definition of "mortgage" in the Bill. Clause 2 was copied literally from the New Zealand Act until the present alteration was made. The Government have, at the expense of the State, reduced interest in certain cases by giving an extension of lease to such struggling selectors as the Australian Pastoral Company, the Scottish Australian Investment Company, such struggling selectors as the owners of Nive Downs and Burenda, who have not had bad times for many years in comparison with the small selectors working on too small an area, and are not only up against high interest rates but against low prices for their products and against drought. Seeing that the Government have been so kind to the Australian Pastoral Company and the Scottish Australian Investment Company, one argues that, in the interests of the general mass of selectors in this State, at least they should be protected against foreclosure. It must be patent to everybody that consideration of the interest rate is certainly cognate to the argument. It must also be patent to everybody that a floating lien with an interest rate of 8 per cent. is more certain of foreclosure than a floating lien with an interest rate of 6 per cent. It is for that reason that we support the amendment foreshadowed by the Leader of the Opposition.

The PREMIER (Hon. A. E. Moore, *Aubigny*) [7.54]: I am not likely to accept the amendment, because my amendment was moved deliberately to exclude the class of mortgage that it is now proposed by the Leader of the Opposition to include. The hon. member for Gregory and other hon. members opposite have suddenly awakened. When the Financial Emergency Bill was going through they were asleep, and did not bring forward the arguments they have advanced to-night. They have discovered that an election is coming along, and they believe this is a good opportunity to indulge in a little propaganda.

Mr. POLLOCK: If you could deal with interest in another Bill, why did you not do it?

The PREMIER: Because there was no necessity.

Mr. BEDFORD: You told me that the definition of "mortgage" covered an overdraft.

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. BEDFORD: You did.

The PREMIER: The hon. member for Warrego made one of his customary statements last night.

Mr. BEDFORD: I said that, and it is true.

The PREMIER: What did you say?

Mr. BEDFORD: When the Financial Emergency Act was being considered, I asked you whether the definition of "mortgage" covered floating liens and overdrafts, and you said "Yes."

The PREMIER: No. Here is another statement made by the hon. member for Warrego last night. He said that the Act introduced in the Victorian Parliament had been proclaimed, or could be proclaimed,

[*Mr. Bedford.*

against the banks in respect of interest on overdrafts.

Mr. BEDFORD: I said that under the Act the banks could have their interest fixed legislatively by proclamation.

The PREMIER: I will read, for the benefit of hon. members, what happened in respect to the Victorian Bill as reported in this morning's press—

"The Legislative Council to-night agreed to an amendment to the Financial Emergency Bill providing that the banks be excluded from the provisions of the Bill except by resolution of each House of Parliament. The Bill, as presented, provided for the inclusion of the banks in relation to interest reduction."

That just shows that what the hon. member said last night was not true.

Mr. BEDFORD: It was true when I said it yesterday, but it was not true this morning, as the Legislative Council cut it out last night.

The PREMIER: It was not an Act, as the hon. member stated; it was a Bill. The banks themselves have agreed to come down to the rate of interest which was agreed on.

Mr. BEDFORD: The Commercial Banking Company of Sydney has refused to cut down its rate of interest.

The PREMIER: Because the hon. member has got a letter from somebody which was written three months ago that does not make the statement it contains a fact.

Mr. BEDFORD: It was written only the other day.

The PREMIER: The banks have agreed to cut down their interest rates; and I have letters from the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney definitely stating that to be a fact. The hon. member is looking at the position in an altogether wrong perspective.

Mr. BEDFORD: I am looking at the position from the point of view of the men affected.

The PREMIER: If the hon. member for Warrego wanted to make a speech, why did he not conclude his speech when he was speaking a few moments ago?

Mr. BEDFORD: You are misrepresenting me.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The PREMIER: I am not misrepresenting the hon. member. The hon. member has an altogether wrong idea of the functions of a bank. A bank is the repository for people's money, to be kept carefully and safely, so that they can draw it out when required; or, if the money is placed at fixed deposit, it is the duty of the bank to lend the money out carefully in order to preserve the principal. If that is not so, there would not be any banks. The hon. member seems to think that a bank is a philanthropic institution, and is at the beck and call of everybody, and that the Government can go to it at any time when it requires money. He appears to make it the butt of his attacks because some impecunious people want to get out of their obligations.

Mr. BEDFORD: I am not saying that. I am only asking that people with floating liens should be protected.

The PREMIER: I have deliberately left such a provision out in order to help people on the land. If the Government made this

clause applicable to ordinary bank overdrafts or ordinary mortgages at call, the very object which the hon. member is seeking would be defeated.

Mr. BEDFORD interjected.

The PREMIER: The hon. member and some members of his party seem to be annoyed because the Government helped the wool industry.

Mr. BEDFORD: I am pleased.

The PREMIER: They have attacked the Government because we have reduced the rents of grazing farmers by 25 per cent., and made small concessions in the terms of the leases of pastoral lessees. We were the first Government in Australia to recognise the burden of interest charges, and we have done our best to get them down; and, having done that, hon. members opposite want us to go further. They say, in effect, that the Government have not done what they might have done, and, if they were on the Treasury benches, they would have done better. They were fifteen years on the Treasury benches, and they assisted the pastoral industry by increasing freights 150 per cent., increasing rents on all the properties that they possibly could, and by cutting grazing farms in halves. Then, after they had got the industry into a mess, they appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into the industry and get it out of the mess. They now attack us for what they did not do, and suggest what we ought to do. The very thing we are trying to do is to help the pastoral men; but we shall not be helping him by doing what the hon. member suggests and thus prevent him from getting an overdraft from his bank. I am concerned about these people getting ordinary accommodation from the banks.

Mr. BEDFORD: That is why you have cut them out.

The PREMIER: Perfectly true. That is why I omitted the banks from the operations of this clause, because it is essential that these people should get credit. The banks have completed their agreement in Melbourne, and have arranged to do what was decided at the Premiers' Conference. We have a letter from them saying that a statement will be made by them in this connection. They have even gone further than they agreed to go. Why should we bring them in again and doublebank them? The thing would be absurd. The banks are not there to be hit at and shot at. That may be very good electioneering propaganda; but what we want to do is to help the individual. That we can do by seeing that the banks into which the people put their money are safe. If the idea is going to be that by legislative action Governments are going to interfere with the banks, either by taking their money for governmental purposes or by destroying their business, then all faith will be lost.

Mr. POLLOCK: You are talking all round the question.

The PREMIER: I am not.

Mr. BEDFORD: We are only asking that these people be allowed to go to the court.

The PREMIER: After a mortgagee has already made a reduction, why should he be included here? The banks are not running round the country selling people up.

Mr. POLLOCK: They are selling people up.

The PREMIER: Even under this Bill some people will be sold up. Does the hon. member who interjects think that in a Bill like this we should protect the person who is unsatisfactory—who is probably prepared to sit down and let a property go to rack and ruin? Surely the hon. member does not think that that person should be treated most considerately!

Mr. BEDFORD: We are only asking that they be allowed to go to the court.

The PREMIER: I am not afraid of the large institutions, whose business is conducted in good conscience and good faith—whose business is properly managed in every way. This Bill would never have been introduced if that type of business only had to be catered for; but, if you are going to hamper these people in their ordinary overdraft business—

Mr. POLLOCK: Don't touch their 10 per cent. profit for God's sake!

The PREMIER: That remark does not cut very much ice here. The main purpose is to re-establish the credit of these people so that they can borrow sufficient money to carry on. If you are going to attack the financial institutions who are carrying not only the Government but this country at the present time—if you are going to legislate these people out of their contracts when they are carrying persons to the best of their ability; in these circumstances you are not going to do the country or the individual a service. Rather are you going to place people in the position of being unable to get money with which to carry on.

Mr. BEDFORD: You have not given much thought to this.

The PREMIER: I have given plenty of thought to the matter. I have not tackled the question off my own bat, so to speak. I have taken advice from all sections of the community as to how far a measure of this nature should go. Hon. members will realise that to introduce legislation which affects seriously the rights of third parties is a dangerous procedure, and may have far-reaching consequences. The wish of the Government is not to inflict damage, but to render assistance. By abusing the banks we shall not make the position any better. We want to remedy the position of a section of the community which is being hard hit and may suffer hardship owing to unscrupulous people wanting to take advantage of the present economic difficulties.

Mr. POLLOCK: Why not safeguard them?

The PREMIER: Because I do not consider it necessary. For another reason, I do not want to curtail their opportunities of obtaining credit.

Mr. POLLOCK: They could not possibly get a bob's worth of credit at the present time.

The PREMIER: It is all very well for the hon. member to smile in a mysterious sort of way; but I am afraid he has not had very much experience of financial operations with banks, otherwise he would recognise that the main factor in all sections of the community is confidence.

Mr. POLLOCK: I have had a lot of experience of people who have had a bitter experience of the banks.

*Hon. A. E. Moore.]*

The PREMIER: The hon. member knows there are people who borrow every penny they can get, just as the Government which the hon. member supported did, and who left a legacy behind them. We do not want to place these institutions in a position in which they will have to curtail credit.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*) [8.5]: The Premier has talked all round the subject without coming to the main point of the amendment. He tried to give the Committee, and, through the Committee, the people outside, the impression that my amendment is devised in such a way as to undermine the credit and stability of the financial institutions. The facts are that this Bill enables mortgagors to get a stay of proceedings and prevent foreclosure for a definite period until 1932. Any advantage that the measure gives—and that advantage is very meagre—is a form of limited moratorium for debtors who cannot pay their way and meet their mortgage liability in the ordinary course of events. In such circumstances the mortgagor can go to the court—either a magistrates court or the Supreme Court—and ask for a revision of the terms and conditions of the mortgage for a period. It is the duty of the court to take into consideration all the factors involved in the case, and the court is given supreme authority as to what relief, if any, shall be granted. It may dismiss the case, or it may vary the terms and conditions of the mortgage for a period, but the decision must be based on the facts of the position. The whole measure is devised to protect the mortgagee's security and his rights ultimately. There is no provision for a reduction in capital. There is no provision for the writing off of interest. There is a provision, however, whereby interest may be funded, or capital repayments may be suspended and interest only be payable for a time.

The Premier has shown great and tender regard for the banks in this case. He said a previous Bill dealt with interest and this Bill does not. This Bill does deal with interest to some extent, inasmuch as it can deal with the funding of interest or the arrears of interest, and that naturally would be a factor that would be involved in the event of any proposal to foreclose. Unless there were arrears of interest, the situation that gave rise to this Bill would not have arisen, so that interest payment is an important integral part of this Bill, although I admit that the Bill of itself does not give the court authority to reduce the rate of interest. That is done in another measure under certain types of mortgages. In some cases the same mortgagor will have to take action under two different Acts in order to get the advantage of both measures. The Premier included in the Financial Emergency Act a clause of similar import to this, and a similar definition excludes this type of mortgage from the interest reduction that is capable of being made under the Financial Emergency Act. The hon. gentleman has a tender regard for the banks in that respect. Any other type of mortgagee will be subject to the operations of that Act, and reductions of interest can be granted, but in connection with advances made under the terms and conditions that he now excludes from the ambit of this Bill no interest reduction can be effected by means of the court, and no stay of proceedings or prevention of foreclosure can be granted. In both measures

[*Hon. A. E. Moore.*

the Premier is showing that tender regard for those who dictate his policy which is typical and symptomatic of the general policy he pursues. He says, "If you do this sort of thing, future credit will be killed." The people who will come within the ambit of this Bill are people who have not got credit at the present time. If the Bill is to any extent a success, it will be by enabling people to grapple with their immediate difficulties so that later on they will be able to meet their liabilities, and only when they are in a position to meet their liabilities will they have any credit. Can the Premier seriously urge that a man who comes within the limited scope of this Bill will have sufficient credit to borrow new money?

The Bill does not deal with the cases mentioned by the hon. member for Oxley, who would be well advised to read the Bill before rushing to the rescue of his leader. He spoke of a case in which an overdraft of £500 is granted, of which £50 has been advanced, and he says that under this measure the mortgagor in question would have no chance of getting any further advance. That is not the kind of case which is dealt with in this Bill. This Bill deals with debts that have already been incurred.

Mr. NIMMO: You are absolutely wrong.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: It is only in connection with a debt contracted as between mortgagor and mortgagee that the court will have any jurisdiction. How could it have jurisdiction unless the debt is subject to a contract? If it is subject to a contract, that contract will still stand.

Mr. NIMMO: Not at all.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: Of course, it will. Every time this Parliament endeavours to deal with the financial institutions and bring them into line with the general reduction of interest or other advantages which may be given from time to time, the Government rush to the rescue of those institutions. It does not matter to them that men may be driven off the land, and that farmers may have foreclosures by these institutions. Any advantage the debtors may get from a bank or financial institution has to be *ex gratia*—at the sweet will of the bank concerned—different methods being adopted to meet different sets of circumstances. Where the Government have power to deal with the worker and the small individual it is done arbitrarily with the maximum of harshness, but in the case of financial institutions the Government expect other people to follow their example, and get down on their knees and ask courteously for some concession. No good reason has yet been advanced why the operations of this measure, limited and incomplete as it is, should not apply to forms of mortgage and so give all sections of the community such advantages as may be offered.

Mr. FOLLOCK (*Gregory*) [8.14]: The Premier has at last admitted that the issue is fairly clear. He wants to exclude the people whom we have mentioned from having the right to approach the court. We wish to include them. Obviously it is as competent for us to do so under this Bill as it is for him to exclude them with the support of his majority. The Premier endeavoured to show that he was excluding those people who are thousands of pounds behind and unable to carry on because he feared that, if he included them and gave them the same right

to go to the court, their credit would be very seriously impaired. The credit of the people of whom I am speaking could not be impaired, because they have not got any credit. The vast bulk of the selectors in Western Queensland—

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Are being carried on.

Mr. POLLOCK: They are being enabled to remain on their selections—the hon. member for Dalby can tell hon. members this as well as I can—they are getting the same wages as a boundary rider, and the same limited rations. They are merely favoured employees of the banks; and they remain there until the banks can get other persons to purchase the properties. They are being treated by the banks as bailiffs. They are going to be sold up in most cases as soon as the banks can get buyers; and we are asking that at least they be given a chance to get out of their difficulties and become prosperous settlers again. Is not the selector already on the land, who has gone through a drought or a couple of droughts, who has been there perhaps fifteen or twenty years, a better man than the new chum? Of course he is. If that is the case, why should he not have the right to approach the court? He has nothing to lose. His credit cannot be impaired. Why not give him the right to some consideration in order that he may have the opportunity of getting on his feet again? When one raises a question of this kind, the Premier says that it is propaganda. I think we have made out an excellent case—a case that no party pretending to stand for the man on the land can argue against in any way. The Premier has done everything, even to the extent of trying to get you to rule the proposal out of order. Mr. Roberts, so that he could dodge discussion.

The PREMIER: You are quite wrong. You are getting away from the question.

Mr. POLLOCK: I have not departed from the fact that an overdraft is a mortgage. It may be called by another name, but it is a mortgage, and the interest is concerned under this Bill.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: No.

Mr. POLLOCK: If the interest is not concerned under this Bill, what is?

The PREMIER: Not the interest, but the terms on which the money is to be paid.

Mr. POLLOCK: We are trying to get interest covered, and there is no reason why it should not be covered. We believe that our case is a good one, and the Country party should support it.

Mr. NIMMO (*Orly*) [8.19]: The Leader of the Opposition referred to some earlier remarks of mine, and said that I did not understand the Bill. I am afraid that the hon. member has not read his Bill, or does not understand it. It is a marvellous thing that men can hold seats in Parliament and be so devoid of understanding of the actual effect of any measure before them. If the amendment of the Leader of the Opposition were accepted, it would simply mean that these people would be put out of court altogether. How many men are up to their limit with the bank and the bank is still carrying them on? If this Bill applied to the banks, would these people be carried on further? If a man has arranged for a limit of £500 or £1,000 and he has only got a

portion of his advance, the bank is not going to allow him any further advance, for the simple reason that the Bill will tie his property up. If the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition is carried, it will have a disastrous effect upon western people and upon the business people in the city who have arranged for overdrafts. We must avoid that state of affairs, and seek to encourage confidence so that the people who loan this money will know that it will not be tied up indefinitely.

Mr. HANLON (*Itawa*) [8.21]: It is amusing to see how heated the Premier can become when any suggestion is made about bank overdrafts being brought under this Bill. No matter how calmly he may listen to the troubles, the worries, and the suffering of the community, he generally gets heated when any attempt is made to interfere with the privileges of the banks of this State. He handles their case particularly well and with a good heart. There is no doubt that ever since he has been Premier he has been doing his best to defend those in receipt of fixed-money income from any share in lightening the burdens of the community.

The PREMIER: It looks like it when I have introduced this Bill.

Mr. HANLON: Some sort of demonstration has to be made at election time with a view to convincing the people that something is being done. That is quite in keeping with the actions of the Government. They make some sort of demonstration to the people when an election is coming on. In every possible way the Premier has endeavoured to limit the operation of any legislation to give relief to people in distress. That is my complaint. Every Bill introduced into this Parliament by the Premier in response to agitation not only in this Chamber but from those in the community who need assistance has been limited in scope to the fullest possible extent. That happened in connection with the Financial Emergency Act and in connection with legislation giving relief to the purchasers of homes. Every Bill that the Premier has placed before this Parliament to give relief to the community has been kept as narrow as possible in its scope so that it will benefit the least number possible in the community who need relief. On every occasion the Premier has spiritedly and vigorously defended the rights of the bankers and financial institutions who do not desire to share in the loss from which the community as a whole is suffering. The hon. gentleman is very fond of pointing out that the national income has been reduced, and that we must all share in the loss; but any attempt to call upon people with fixed-money claims to bear their share of the loss brings the Premier to his feet in a fighting mood. It is time that he put just about half as much spirit into his work for the people who are in dire straits in the community as he does in defence of the banks and financial institutions. In his defence of the banking institutions to-night the hon. gentleman did not hesitate to misrepresent what has happened in Victoria. He read an announcement from the press of to-day.

Mr. MAXWELL: Do you say he misrepresented the position?

Mr. HANLON: Certainly.

The PREMIER: I merely read the press announcement.

Mr. HANLON: Still, the hon. gentleman misrepresented the position. I cannot believe

*Mr. Hanlon.]*

that he is ignorant of what has happened in Victoria, because the subject has come up in this Chamber on a couple of occasions. I have asked questions on the matter myself. He quoted from the press to the effect that the clause in the Victorian Financial Agreement Bill, providing for a reduction of interest on the part of the banks, has been deleted.

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. HANLON: That was announced by the Premier of Victoria a fortnight ago. He announced that the Government had agreed to drop that clause because the banks had agreed to do what the Bill provided in the first place. We know that no fish ever fought on angler's hook as did the banks to avoid granting any concession to the people. The Premier knows that the Victorian Government stuck to their guns, and insisted that effect be given to the agreement arrived at in Melbourne; and the clause was only dropped after an agreement had been arrived at between the Premier of Victoria and the banks. Mr. Hogan caused the banks to give him an assurance that the rates of interest would be reduced by 1 per cent. all round by 1st October. The Premier to-night accuses us of misrepresenting what happened. He knows what happened.

It is important to remember the attitude of the Premier of Queensland as compared with the attitude of the Premier of Victoria. The other day I asked him a question drawing attention to what happened in Victoria, to the relief which the banks had been compelled to give to their clients, and asked him would he compel the banks of Queensland to give similar relief to our citizens. I did not ask him what the banks were prepared to do. I understood that the Government in this Chamber were the Government of the State. The hon. gentleman said that the banks' intentions would be made known in a few days. Who is governing this State? My question was, "What action is the Government prepared to take?" but the hon. gentleman's answer was that the banks would make known their intentions in a few days. It is nearly time that the Premier realised that this situation needs tackling, and tackling fairly and honestly. It is nearly time he realised that the spirit of the Premiers' Conference, which was to give general relief to the citizens of Australia, should be carried out. It is nearly time that he fell into line with the Premier of Victoria and the Premier of South Australia, who are endeavouring to carry out the spirit of that conference. He must realise that he must carry out the spirit of that agreement, faulty and all as it was; but its one bright feature was the general relief in interest burden promised to the community. They are not getting that relief. It is useless for any hon. member to try to convince me or the public that the community is getting that relief. Included in that relief was relief from all those fixed money claims which demand their pound of flesh of industry, whether industry is paying or not. That is what we are after. We want relief to be given to those engaged in industry, who, through being kept to their commitments to-day, are being forced to the wall. Some of those causes are to be seen in preference shares, interest, leases, various overdraft interests, and other matters which are just as important to industry as any other form of interest.

[Mr. Hanlon.]

In order to get a reduction in the overdraft interest, it was the duty of this Government to reduce interest on fixed deposits and overdrafts. The same relief was due to fixed money claims in the form of rent. People in this State and in the country are to-day paying rents based on a value basis of 1927 and 1928, when the earning capacity of property was three or four times what it is to-day. At the present day our shopkeepers cannot earn nearly the amount of revenue that was earned three or four years ago; and these people are being forced to the wall simply because money which should be remunerating their employees or someone else is being ground out of them by landlords who are sticking to their agreements. Hon. members will remember that three or four years ago no property in the business section of Queen street could be obtained except at a fairly high rent and on a fairly long lease. Now those people are suffering, and need relief just as much as any other section. They need relief far more than the Australian Pastoral Company.

Mr. NIMMO: They are getting it.

Mr. HANLON: Possibly another Bill dealing with the relief of leases will be introduced.

Mr. NIMMO: No; the owners are giving the relief voluntarily.

Mr. HANLON: Some suggestion has been made that another Bill is to be introduced to give relief in some other direction. Where are these Bills going to stop? Why not give all the relief required under one Bill? We now have a Bill giving some relief to "Bill Smith" in this direction; another Bill to give relief to "Jack Brown" in some other direction; and another to give relief to some one else. It is getting ridiculous. We are having a new Bill every week or so to deal with some fresh aspect of the case as it crops up. This is all one problem. It is a problem of fixed claims on industry which were agreed to when industry was prosperous and could meet them. To-day, industry cannot meet those claims; and the Premier is not doing his duty unless he gives relief to every class which is oppressed by money claims. He has no hesitation in saying that the worker, whose wages were fixed in times of prosperity, must immediately and without any argument, or by your leave, lose some share of his income, because, according to the Premier, industry will not stand the rates of pay which were fixed when times were good. There is no more cause for reducing wages of employees in industry than there is for breaking contracts for leases of premises or reducing rents. Of course, hon. members opposite look upon contracts such as leases, etc., as being more sacred than human life. We do not; and I make no apology for saying that. I believe there is no more sanctity in an agreement between a banker and his client than in the contract of the Premier to see that wages should not come down. If the breaking of one contract can be justified, so also can every other contract. Every bill of sale, time-payment agreement, mortgages of all descriptions—all these things are pressing upon the people, and it is the duty of the Government to give all-round relief. What is the good of tinkering with the position by introducing a new Bill every time some section is sufficiently weighty to have its representations

given effect to? I hope the Premier will agree to the amendment. I trust also that hon. members opposite will be broadminded enough to realise that, if, as the Premier says, we have no power at present to give relief from interest on overdrafts and fixed deposits, they will support a measure that will repair the breach.

The PREMIER: You have just been complaining about my bringing in too many Bills, and now you are wanting me to bring in another.

Mr. HANLON: My contention is that the State's financial trousers are patched too much, and that they cannot stand any more stitches. Far better to have a new pair; in other words, to introduce one Bill that will deal with every aspect of the position.

Mr. KENNY (*Cook*) [8.32]: I have been trying to analyse the arguments of hon. members opposite; but it was not until the hon. member for Ithaca spoke that I realised that the real objective of their speeches is to get in some propaganda for the next election. One would imagine that hon. members opposite were anxious to expand credit throughout Queensland; but I ask the Leader of the Opposition in all seriousness what effect his amendment would have on the expansion of credits in Queensland. There are a number of Western pastoralists who are working on bank overdrafts to-day. Under the hon. member's amendment those pastoralists could appeal against the actions of the bank; but we must not be unmindful of other considerations. Hon. members opposite allege that the Premier is looking after the banks; but they fail to realise that our main consideration is the credit of Queensland. If this amendment is given effect to, is it likely that banks will make credit available to people to whom it is absolutely necessary when the banks will have practically no security? If the banks are not likely to give credit under those circumstances, how can hon. members opposite justify their claim that the acceptance of their amendment will mean an expansion of credit throughout Queensland?

Mr. POLLOCK: We only want to give them the same right to go to the court as other people are getting.

Mr. KENNY: Hon. members opposite are looking only for political propaganda in their discussion on this measure. They are attempting to mislead the people outside into believing that the Government are concerned only with the big financial institutions. That is not so. The position is that the Government must be very careful in a measure of this kind that they do not go too far. The Opposition amendment, if accepted, would not lead to the expansion but to the restriction of credit, and under those circumstances I know the Premier will not accept it.

Mr. BRASSINGTON (*Balonne*) [8.35]: The speeches of hon. members opposite have certainly made it very clear that the policy of the Government is one to assist the banks, where possible, and to neglect the welfare of a large number of grazing selectors, workers, and others throughout the State who are badly in need of assistance. I have been seeking information with regard to the position of a large number of workers who have purchased motor cars, homes, and

other things under time-payment agreements. I asked the Premier whether this measure would apply in those cases, and the hon. gentleman has not replied to my request.

The PREMIER: What you ask is covered under this Bill.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: Government members are somewhat confused as to what the Bill really stands for. As I mentioned previously, the Premier gave one interpretation of a certain clause, the Deputy Leader of the Government gave another interpretation of the same clause, and, lastly, the hon. member for Oxley spoke for a quarter of an hour and virtually confessed that he did not know what the Bill contained; consequently I am glad to have the assurance of the Premier that the Bill covers the points I raised, and that a large number of workers who are badly situated will receive protection when this measure becomes law.

Mr. COOPER (*Bremar*) [8.37]: From the speeches of hon. members opposite one would imagine that all overdrafts existing in Queensland to-day are entirely new things. The hon. member for Oxley suggested that, if a man obtained an overdraft from a bank for £500 and he had only drawn £50, he would not be allowed to draw the balance of £450. Could anything be more ridiculous? No bank would grant an overdraft of £500 unless it was satisfied that the security was ample.

The PREMIER: That is why they have big reserves.

Mr. COOPER: If a bank is any way scared about the matter, why cannot it go to the court the same as any individual? Subclause (f) of clause 7 reads—

"Whether any relief granted by the court pursuant to this Act would be reasonably likely to enable the mortgagor, having regard to his circumstances and the conditions mentioned in the last preceding paragraph, to meet his liabilities under the mortgage within such time as the court deems reasonable."

Under those circumstances the banks will not run any risk. Much as one would like to do so, one cannot take the assurance of the Premier that the interpretation he has given is at all correct. When the Financial Emergency Bill was before the House, the hon. gentleman assured this party that overdrafts were subject to a reduction under the Bill.

The PREMIER: I said they were outside the Bill.

Mr. COOPER: The hon. gentleman said they were absolutely inside the Bill, and to-night he said the Opposition has just wakened up; that, where they should have dealt with interest, was under the Financial Emergency Bill, which is now an Act. He said they had lost their opportunity.

Dealing with the interpretation of "mortgage," the hon. member for Warrego, Mr. Bedford, said—

"The interpretation of this clause seems fairly complete. There are a couple of matters on which I would like some information. Does the definition of 'mortgage' apply to overdrafts given by a bank on security of a title lodged with it?"

"The Premier: Yes.

"Mr. BEDFORD: It would apply to the overdraft?"

"The Premier: Yes."

*Mr. Cooper.]*

To-night, when the hon. member for Warrego said that the Premier had misled him into believing that overdrafts were covered, the Premier replied, "I said no such thing."

The PREMIER: That does not apply to an ordinary overdraft.

Mr. COOPER: That part of the Bill dealt specifically with this question. Section 17 of the Financial Emergency Act reads—

"This part of this Act shall apply to all mortgages existing at the coming into operation of this part."

To-night he invited the Opposition with having been asleep. One generally accepts assurances from the Premier.

The PREMIER: What I said was quite right there, but you have altered it.

Mr. COOPER: I have not altered it. I am reading the report as it appeared in "Hansard."

The PREMIER: You are putting a different construction on it.

Mr. COOPER: I am merely reading the words that were used. Unfortunately, the Committee is not receiving the explanation which it ought to get. The banks ought to be in no different position from anybody else. Hon. members opposite try to mislead people into believing that they have only got a set sum of money to deal with; but we know that money comes in day by day; and a bank rarely gives an overdraft exceeding the value of the security. In any case the banks are well protected by clause 7, which gives the court ample power to say that the mortgagor shall not get any further money and that the mortgagee may take the security.

Question—"That the words proposed to be omitted (*Mr. Moore's amendment*) stand part of clause 2"—put and negatived.

Question proposed—

"To insert the words—

'but not including a mortgage payable on demand.'

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*) [8.43]: I beg to move the following amendment:—

"To omit from the words proposed to be inserted the words 'but not.'"

If those words are deleted, the definition of "mortgage" will include a mortgage payable on demand.

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

AYES, 29.

Mr. Barnes, G. P.	Mr. Maxwell
" Blackley	" Moore
" Boyd	" Morgan
" Brand	" Nimmo
" Butler	" Peterson
" Costello	" Russell, H. M.
" Deacon	" Russell, W. A.
" Duffy	" Swayne
" Fry	" Walker, H. F.
" Grimstone	" Walker, J. E.
" Jamieson	" Wienholt
" Kelso	
" Kenny	<i>Tellers:</i>
Dr. Kerwin	" Hill
Mrs. Longman	" Tedman
" Maher	

[*Mr. Cooper.*

NOES, 20.

Mr. Barber	Mr. Mullan
" Bedford	" Pollock
" Bow	" Smith
" Conroy	" Stopford
" Cooper	" Wellington
" Dash	" Wilson
" Foley	" Winstanley
" Hanson	
" Hynes	<i>Tellers:</i>
" Jones, A.	Mr. Brassington
" Kirwan	" Hanton

PAIRS.

AYES.

NOES.

Mr. Barnes, W. H.	Mr. Collins
" King	" Bulcock

Resolved in the negative.

Question—"That the words proposed to be inserted in clause 2 (*Mr. Moore's amendment*) be so inserted"—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 28.

Mr. Barnes, G. P.	Mr. Moore
" Boyd	" Morgan
" Brand	" Nimmo
" Butler	" Peterson
" Costello	" Russell, H. M.
" Deacon	" Russell, W. A.
" Duffy	" Swayne
" Grimstone	" Tedman
" Hill	" Walker, H. F.
" Jamieson	" Walker, J. E.
" Kenny	" Wienholt
Dr. Kerwin	<i>Tellers:</i>
Mrs. Longman	" Fry
Mr. Maher	" Kelso
" Maxwell	

NOES, 21.

Mr. Barber	Mr. O'Keefe
" Bedford	" Pollock
" Bow	" Smith
" Brassington	" Stopford
" Dash	" Wellington
" Foley	" Wilson
" Hanton	" Winstanley
" Hanson	
" Hynes	<i>Tellers:</i>
" Jones, A.	" Conroy
" Kirwan	" Cooper
" Mullan	

PAIRS.

AYES.

NOES.

Mr. Barnes, W. H.	Mr. Collins
" King	" Bulcock

Resolved in the affirmative.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Miran*) [8.53]: I should like to obtain some information from the Premier relating to the purchase of sugarcane farms. Very often these properties are purchased upon conditions providing for payment in accordance with the crop yield for the year, generally on the basis of 60 per cent. to the farmer and 40 per cent. to the vendor. When these arrangements were made, the price for cane was £1 12s. upwards; but this year operations have been commenced on the basis of £1 3s. per ton. It will be seen that 40 per cent. of £1 3s. per ton is very different from 40 per cent. of £1 12s. per ton. In fact, the payment of 40 per cent. of the lower price would leave barely sufficient to pay harvesting costs, including the cost of cutting and carting. Will it be possible under this Bill to apply for a variation of the terms of contract, allowing, say, for a seventy-thirty basis, or something similar? This will not reduce the purchasing price, but will merely vary the amount payable at stated periods, so extending the term. It seems to me that this type of agreement does come within the scope of the Bill; but, in view of its importance, I would like to hear from the

Premier whether it comes within the scope of this measure.

The PREMIER (Hon. A. E. Moore, *Aubigny*) [8.56]: I understand that an agreement such as the hon. member for Mirani mentioned is covered by the Bill.

Mr. SWAYNE: Thank you. It will help a number of farmers.

The PREMIER: It is an agreement for sale, and the terms can therefore be varied.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: Provided the balance of the purchase money is by mortgage.

The PREMIER: It would not apply in the case of an ordinary share farm. The agreement mentioned by the hon. member for Mirani is an agreement for sale.

Clause 2, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 3—"Application of Act"—

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*): I beg to move the following amendment:—

"On page 2, lines 43 to 47, omit the following paragraph:—

'(b) Any other mortgages or class or classes of mortgages from time to time exempted from the operation of this Act by the Governor in Council by Order in Council published in the 'Gazette.'"

Amendment (*Mr. Smith*) agreed to.

Clause 3, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 4—"Limitation of rights of mortgagors"—

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*) [8.58]: I beg to move the following amendment:—

"On page 3, line 15, after the word—  
'Act'

insert the words—

'or to file a bankruptcy petition against the mortgagor in respect of any debt arising out of any covenant, condition, or agreement expressed or implied in a mortgage.'"

This clause is pretty wide in its application. It deals with classes of agreement that are covered by the Bill. It later prescribes that certain proceedings shall not be taken. In the event of a mortgagor seeking to foreclose, the mortgagor can immediately seek the protection of the court. That applies all right in the case of landed property or personal property; but the clause deals with other forms of property, including chattels; and proceedings may be taken in bankruptcy to circumvent the operation of the Act, and prevent the debtor getting the advantages it offers. The amendment will not interfere with the objects of the Bill, but will give further protection by not permitting proceedings in bankruptcy with a view to circumventing the Act.

The PREMIER (Hon. A. E. Moore, *Aubigny*) [9.0]: It would not be wise to accept the amendment, because bankruptcy proceedings are entirely a Commonwealth matter; therefore it might affect the constitutionality of the Bill. It would not be wise to accept an amendment which might prove to be quite useless.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*) [9.0]: It is true that, by interstate agreement, bankruptcy administration has become the function of the Commonwealth, and to that extent there may be a difficulty, as the

Premier suggests. If the draftsman has advised the Premier that such an amendment as I suggest would be unconstitutional, then it would be unwise to proceed with the matter. Of course, even if that were so, it would not vitiate the whole Bill but merely the clause concerned. However, in view of the position, I ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause 4 agreed to.

Clause 5—"Procedure to be adopted by mortgagors before proceeding to exercise certain powers"—

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*) [9.1]: I am of the opinion that the time for notice of intention to issue process of execution in respect of chattels is insufficient, being only ten days. I realise, of course, that chattels are different from land, inasmuch as land is immovable. At the same time, however, the ten days' notice as provided is scarcely sufficient in view of the extensive area of a State like Queensland, where considerable time may elapse before an individual could exercise his rights under this Bill. I suggest that the period be extended to fourteen days.

The PREMIER: I will accept an amendment to that effect.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: I beg to move—

"On page 3, line 40, omit the word—  
'ten'

and insert in lieu thereof the word—  
'fourteen.'"

Amendment agreed to, together with a consequential amendment on line 46, page 3.

Clause 5, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 6—"Application by mortgagor to Supreme Court for relief"—agreed to.

Clause 7—"Matters to be considered by Supreme Court on application by mortgagor"—

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*) [9.6]: I beg to move the following amendment:—

"After line 34, page 4, insert the following paragraph:—

'(g) Any other relevant consideration.'"

This is the clause that determines the powers to be exercised by the court; and, if there are any other matters than those mentioned in the clause that deserve consideration, the court should have power to take them into consideration.

The PREMIER (Hon. A. E. Moore, *Aubigny*) [9.8]: I cannot see what other considerations there can be except those enumerated here. I cannot see that anything is left out.

Amendment (*Mr. Smith*) agreed to.

Clause 7, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 8—"Nature of relief that may be granted by court"—

Mr. DASH (*Mundingburra*) [9.9]: This clause appears to provide for a two years' moratorium as a maximum. It appears that twelve months is the longest time that can be given at one period; but before that period expires the mortgagor can apply for an extension for a further twelve months.

The PREMIER: Yes, any relief given before the proclamation expires can be renewed for a further twelve months upon application.

Clause 8 agreed to.

*Mr. Dash.*]

Clause 9—“*Special provisions as to cases where powers have been exercised between the commencement and passing of this Act.*”—

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*) [9.10]: I would like some information from the Minister as to what is meant by this clause. The second paragraph of subclause (2) reads—

“Provided that no order shall be made under this section in any case where the property in respect of which such power has been exercised or such act has been done has been sold at the time of or after the exercise of such power or the doing of such act to a person other than the mortgagee and such sale has been completed by the payment of the purchase-money and the delivery of the property and the documents of title (if any) before the passing of this Act.”

It is not very clear as to what that means. It is involved, and I would like the Premier to explain it. Then subclause (4) reads—

“No application to the Supreme Court under this section shall be heard by the court unless the application is made within one month after the passing of this Act.”

It is provided in clause 1 that the Act shall be deemed to have come into force on 1st August. Does this subclause mean from 1st August.

The PREMIER: A month after the passing of the Act.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: There is an apparent contradiction between this clause and clause 1. There is a limitation in this clause to any application unless made within one month after the passing of this Act. There is an apparent contradiction.

The PREMIER: There is no contradiction.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: I would like an explanation as to this apparent contradiction, and also as to subclause (2).

The PREMIER (Hon. A. E. Moore, *Aubigny*) [9.13]: There is really no contradiction. The Act is to be deemed to come into force on 1st August. Subclause (1) of this clause reads—

“Where, with respect to any mortgage to which this Act applies, the exercise of any power or the doing of any act defined in paragraph (a) or in paragraph (b) of section four hereof has been completed (whenever commenced) after the commencement of this Act but before the passing thereof, the mortgagor may apply to the Supreme Court for an order setting aside the exercise of such power or the doing of such act.”

If a mortgagee has taken action between the 1st August and the passing of this Act, and the purchase-money has been paid and the transaction completed, it is too late for action to be taken; but, if the action has not been completed within a month from the passing of the Act, this clause gives the mortgagor the right to apply to the court and have the matter dealt with.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: Provided it has not been completed.

The PREMIER: Yes.

Clause 9 agreed to.

Clause 10—“*Procedure*”—

Mr. BRASSINGTON (*Balonne*) [9.14]: This clause lays down the procedure the

mortgagor must follow when seeking relief. I might ask why the whole onus is placed on the shoulders of the mortgagor to force him to make immediate application for relief. Surely there should be some responsibility placed on the shoulders of the mortgagee! It is reasonable to assume that the person seeking relief is in poor financial circumstances. In order to secure relief in accordance with the provisions of this measure such person has to bear all expense by way of making application to the Supreme Court or a magistrates court, as the case may be. Take the case of a man who has been out of work for a considerable time and has very little money to spend making application to the magistrates court in regard to the foreclosure on a worker's dwelling! When making application, he must naturally state a case to the court, and that is a job for a lawyer.

The PREMIER: Not necessarily.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: It is an involved matter. There is an application to be made out, and it is necessary to attend the court, and state a case. The average man in the street, especially the man who is unemployed and worried financially, can hardly be expected to go to a court and go through the legal procedure necessary to making out a case and to do justice to it. If such an applicant does not feel disposed to accept the responsibility of making the application himself, he must go to a lawyer. I understand that in the case of the magistrates court the lowest possible costs would be something like £5 5s., whereas in the case of the Supreme Court the ordinary charge for stating a case is £10 10s., and, if the case be a long one, considerably more than that. I suggest that the making of applications should be made as easy as possible, and legal formalities should be dispensed with. The Government should appoint an arbitrator to attend specially to applications under the Act, so that those desirous of relief could come to him and state their case without legal formality, and thus save expense. That is a sound proposal, and should be adopted, if possible. I hope the Government will extend this consideration to a large number of persons who have purchased homes and are faced with foreclosure, and who will find it necessary to avail themselves of this measure.

Clause 10 agreed to.

Clauses 11 to 14, both inclusive, agreed to.

Clause 15—“*Orders*”—

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*) [9.18]: The last paragraph of this clause reads—

“The provisions of this section shall also apply and extend in the case of any order made pursuant to ‘The Purchasers of Homes Relief Act of 1930.’”

That Act was passed in 1930, and contains full power to give the class of relief which may be granted under it. This Bill is in a somewhat different category; but it would appear that we are using one of its clauses to amend a section of that Act. I would like the Premier to give us any information he has as to the extent to which the Purchasers of Homes Relief Act has been availed of, and whether any order made pursuant to it requires the assistance of this Bill.

[*Mr. Smith.*

Again, the second paragraph in the clause reads—

“ Provided that in any case where a mortgagor to whom an order of relief has been granted by the court neglects or contravenes or fails to comply with the provisions thereof, it shall be competent for the mortgagee to apply to the court for a cancellation thereof, and the court on such application may make such order as it shall deem fit and proper.”

I take it that is provision to enable the mortgagee to see that the mortgagor does the fair thing after the order has been granted. Have any cases arisen where the order granting relief has not been complied with by the mortgagor?

The PREMIER: I do not know of any; but it was thought advisable that this power should be provided.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: There is a remedy under “The Purchasers of Homes Relief Act of 1930.” The court can prescribe the conditions of relief, and the order is binding upon both parties. If one of the parties does not carry out that order, then the court will have power to consider the question *de novo*.

The PREMIER (Hon. A. E. Moore, *Aubigny*) [9.21]: There was some doubt as to whether the magistrate had power to cancel the order; and it was considered advisable to make it quite clear that he would have the power if his order was flouted.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: Can he do it of his own motion?

The PREMIER: No.

Clause 15 agreed to.

Clauses 16 to 20, both inclusive, and the preamble, agreed to.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with amendments.

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

The House adjourned at 9.23 p.m.