

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 26 AUGUST 1931

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WEDNESDAY, 26 AUGUST, 1931.

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

APPROPRIATION BILL, No. 1.

ASSENT.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have to report that I have this day presented to His Excellency the Governor Appropriation Bill, No. 1, of 1931-1932, for the Royal Assent, and that His Excellency was pleased, in my presence, to subscribe his assent thereto in the name and on behalf of His Majesty.

A message was also received from His Excellency the Governor, conveying His Excellency's assent to the Bill.

QUESTIONS.

ANNULLING OF CONTRACTS FOR SUPPLY OF "UBA" CANE BY CANE PRICES BOARD.

Mr. BUTLER (*Port Curtis*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

"1. Is he aware that the price of 'Uba' cane grown prior to 1926 and sold to Fairymead Sugar Company was in the nature of a contract mutually agreed upon between the grower and the mill?

"2. Will he inquire into the great wrong and injustice done to the said growers owing to the precipitate action of the Cane Prices Board by annulling the contract without either party being heard?

"3. Will he take the necessary steps to have the wrong rectified?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. R. M. King, *Logan*), for the SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. H. F. Walker, *Cooroora*), replied—

"1. I have no knowledge of anything 'in the nature of a contract mutually agreed upon between the growers and the mill' with respect to the price to be paid for 'Uba' cane as referred to; but no agreement approved or exempted by the board is disturbed by the award.

"2. The action was not precipitate, indication of the board's intention having been given in 1925.

"3. There is, therefore, no wrong to rectify."

RAILWAY FREIGHT CONCESSIONS TO COBB AND Co.

Mr. BEDFORD (*Warrego*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

"Is it a fact that the Surat store-keeper who purchased the trade-name of Cobb and Co. enjoys the freight concessions granted to Cobb and Co. when they were mail contractors, although Cobb and Co. are out of business?"

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

"No; but in 1923, on the representations of the hon. member for Warrego, this concession was extended to Mr. Reg. Green, mail contractor, from Quilpie to Eromanga."

ALSATIAN DOGS.

Mr. BEDFORD (*Warrago*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

"1. Has he read the account of an Alsatian's attack on his master, reported in the 'Courier' of 19th August?"

"2. As this is but additional proof of the treacherous temper of the Alsatian, will the Minister introduce legislation providing for the sterilisation of these half wolves before they become a menace to the pastoral industry and the public generally?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. R. M. King, *Logan*), for the SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. H. F. Walker, *Cooroora*), replied—

"1. Yes.

"2. The Department of Agriculture and Stock is now alive to dangers which may arise from introduced species of animals, and appropriate action can be taken as the necessity occurs."

ALLEGED APPOINTMENT OF MR. HOY LING TO COMMISSION OF PEACE.

Mr. BEDFORD (*Warrago*) asked the Premier—

"Seeing that the reply of the Premier to my question as to Mr. Hoy Ling, appointed by the Government as Government representative on Tara Hospital Committee, ignored the query as to Mr. Hoy Ling having been prosecuted at Melbourne for taking bribes to admit prohibited Chinese immigrants to Australia, will the Premier now state on whose recommendation the previous Government appointed Mr. Hoy Ling to the Commission of the Peace?"

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

"The appointment mentioned has never been made."

HEARING OF DIVORCE CASES IN CAMERA.

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

"Seeing that several women who seek a divorce from their husbands abhor having to go into court to fight their cases—due to the fact that they desire to study the interests of their children (if any)—is he prepared to allow such cases to be held in chambers?"

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. N. F. Macgroarty, *South Brisbane*) replied—

"Section 2 of 'The Matrimonial Causes Act of 1897' provides as follows:—The court may, on the application of either husband or wife, or at its own discretion, hear, try, and determine any matrimonial action in chambers, and may at all times in any such action, whether heard and tried in chambers or in court, make an order forbidding the publication of any report or account of the evidence, or other proceedings therein, either as to the whole or portion thereof, and the breach of any such order, or any colourable or attempted evasion thereof, may be dealt with as for contempt of court."

PARLIAMENTARY LIQUOR BAR.

Mr. DUNLOP (*Rockhampton*) asked the Premier—

"1. Seeing that I was informed when moving my motion 'That the liquor bar at Parliament House be abolished,' that the Government do not pay any license fee, is it his intention to arrange for the future that such fee be paid into the Treasury, thereby doing what he expects of all licensed victuallers?"

"2. Seeing that if any licensed victualler sells liquor after 8 p.m. he is prosecuted (if caught), is it his intention to see that the parliamentary liquor bar is closed immediately after 8 p.m. if not, why?"

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

"1. The charging of a license fee for the trading of the parliamentary refreshment-room would involve merely a loss of energy and material.

"2. The closing of the parliamentary refreshment-room at 8 p.m. would cause a small loss of revenue, and there could be no possible gain from any point of view. Surely the hon. member is not suggesting that the privileges of the refreshment-room, which are available to members only, are being abused?"

NUMBER OF RAILWAY REVENUE EMPLOYEES, 1929-1931.

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

"What was the number of revenue employees of the Railway Department as at the 30th June in the following years, respectively:—(a) 1929; (b) 1930; and (c) 1931?"

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

"(a) Employees on open lines, 18,870; (b) employees on open lines, 17,761; and (c) employees on open lines, 15,771, or 3,099 employees less than at the end of June, 1929. From 31st May, 1926, to 30th June, 1929—a period of Labour regime, during which there was comparatively no depression—the services of 3,344 employees were dispensed with from the Railway Department."

CLOSURE OF QUEENTON STATE SCHOOL.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Quenton*) asked the Secretary for Public Instruction—

"1. What is the attendance at the Queenton State school?"

"2. How many teachers are there on the staff?"

"3. Is the school being closed owing to the low attendance, or is it on the ground of economy?"

"4. If on the ground of economy, will all the schools similarly situated share the same fate, irrespective of attendance?"

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

"1. The average attendance at the Queenton State school for the month of July was 77.7 children.

"2. There are three teachers on the staff of the Queenton State school."

"3. As practically all the children enrolled at the Queenton State school reside within one mile of either the Millchester State school or the Charters Towers Central State schools, and as there is ample accommodation at these schools, Queenton State school is being closed in the interests of efficiency and economy.

"4. Should similar circumstances arise elsewhere, similar action will be taken."

BABY CLINIC REGULATIONS.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Queenton*) asked the Home Secretary—

"1. Have new regulations recently been issued in connection with baby clinics?

"2. Is it now imperative that expectant mothers visit the clinics, otherwise nurses will not attend to them?

"3. Is this regulation applicable to the whole State, or only to the metropolitan area?

"4. Will he state the reason for these regulations?"

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. C. Peterson, *Normanby*) replied—

"1. No; but I understand that the Brisbane City Council has made an ordinance requiring midwives to hand to each expectant mother a leaflet advising her to attend an ante-natal clinic.

"2. No. The methods of the baby clinics and ante-natal clinics are based on persuasion only. They never have adopted, and never will adopt, compulsory methods.

"3. The ordinance referred to above applies only to the city of Brisbane.

"4. I understand that the reasons for the ordinance are—(1) To reduce the present high mortality from childbirth and the large amount of unnecessary ill-health that at present follows from it. (2) To decrease the number of infants born dead, or so weakly that they can survive only a few days or a few hours. (3) To give midwives the advantage of having their cases medically examined at the ante-natal clinic, thereby freeing them from unnecessary risks that might have been foreseen and prevented, and thereby also increasing the number of normal cases that will apply to them for attendance."

COSTS OF MUNGANA COMMISSION AND TRIAL.

Mr. POLLOCK (*Gregory*) asked the Premier—

"When does he expect to be in a position to give to the House the exact detailed costs of the Mungana Royal Commission and the prosecution of the subsequent legal case, particularly the rates and totals paid to Messrs. McGill and Macgroarty?"

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

"There is no secrecy about this matter. The accounts when received have to be taxed, and the net amount will then be made public. This course is usual."

FEES PAID TO CROWN COUNSEL IN MUNGANA TRIAL.

Mr. DASH (*Mundingburra*) asked the Attorney-General—

"Re the Crown v. Reid, Goddard, and others—

"1. What was the amount of the fee marked on the brief of the Attorney-General?

"2. What was the amount of the fee marked on the brief of Mr. McGill?"

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. N. F. Macgroarty, *South Brisbane*) replied—

"1 and 2. No fee was marked on either brief."

PAPER.

The following paper was laid on the table, and ordered to be printed:—

Report of the Agent-General of Queensland for the year 1930.

TOLLS ON PRIVATELY CONSTRUCTED ROAD TRAFFIC FACILITIES BILL.

SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. Godfrey Morgan, *Morilla*) [2.51]: I feel sure that every State in the Commonwealth will desire to have a measure similar to the one now under consideration. As a matter of fact, we have had applications from several States for information as to the contents of this Bill, which, with certain modifications to suit the special conditions pertaining in those States, would be of great service. Indeed, I imagine that within twelve months this legislation will be in operation throughout the Commonwealth.

Judging by the opposition of hon. members on the other side when I introduced this Bill and before they knew its contents, I expect that the measure will be opposed by them at every stage. Of course, they object to the principle of tolls, and would prefer to see a large number of men unemployed or receiving the dole in preference to obtaining work such as is contemplated in this Bill.

Mr. DASH: What guarantee have you of work?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Provided persons are prepared to spend money in constructing facilities which are necessary—facilities which cannot be provided by the Government or the local authorities by reason of a lack of money—we have every confidence that considerable employment will be created if advantage is taken of this legislation. At the present time we have legislation empowering the Commissioner of Main Roads and the local authorities to construct toll bridges if they so desire; so that there is no necessity to deal with the matter so far as they are concerned. This Bill, therefore, deals with the extension of that power to private persons, so that, after completing certain formalities prescribed by the Bill, they may undertake work and control the completed work under such terms as will repay the cost of construction, etc. There is nothing new in this Bill.

We know that in 1811 in Great Britain toll gates and toll bridges to the value of £1,250,000 were in existence. When railways

became the method of travel, they displaced the ordinary horse-drawn vehicles, and it was found necessary to do away with these toll gates and toll bridges. Railways became common, not only in Great Britain, but in every other part of the world. Later on internal combustion engines were invented; and this power was used for the purpose of transport, displacing to a great extent horse-drawn vehicles, and to some extent the railways. The result was that people found it necessary to have much better roads. If we want to travel in a motor car in comfort, it is necessary to have much better roads than were necessary with the horse-drawn vehicles. Conditions have changed to a great extent, and in almost every country in the world bridges and road facilities are now being constructed under the toll system.

Mr. BEDFORD: They are doing away with them in America.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is not true. Since the hon. member previously made that statement, I have taken the trouble to go into this question, and I have ascertained that the toll system is going ahead by leaps and bounds in America. In that country franchises have been granted of late years, not only to local authorities and other governing bodies, but also to private individuals. On 1st August, 1930, there were 296 toll bridges in the United States. Of these, sixty-two were publicly owned and 234 privately owned. The total amount invested in these bridges was 547,000,000 dollars, the operating cost being 11.7 per cent. The port authority of New York has six toll facilities, one being the largest arch bridge in the world, and another the Hudson River suspension bridge, which has the largest suspension span, being twice the length of the Sydney Harbour bridge, or 3,400 feet. The Holland tunnel is another project. The Engineering Council of America, which is a very live body and one of the most important in the world, issued a report on 22nd January, 1931. They made certain recommendations to Congress in regard to the construction of toll facilities in America, some of which are embodied in this Bill, although when the Bill was drafted we were not aware of the recommendations which were made by this most important body of engineers.

At present toll facilities in the United States of America are granted by Congress; but it is not looked upon as a proper method, as abuses arise owing to the fact that Congress is responsible. The particular toll facilities asked for are submitted to Congress, and are granted by vote of the House; and that is not looked upon as satisfactory even in America, more especially from the point of view of those who are most interested in the construction of these facilities. The Engineering Council in America said—

“The present methods of granting franchises by action of Congress in each case are objectionable. Franchises should be given by some departments of the Government in accordance with general legal stipulations laid down by Congress.”

This is another recommendation which they make—

“Private capital should be encouraged to construct toll bridges, but privately-owned toll bridges should be permitted only where local authorities are not ready and able to construct a public toll bridge.

Further, a public toll bridge should not be built if the local authorities are ready and able to build a free bridge.”

That is the intention in Queensland. First of all, the local authority or the Government will have preference if they desire to build a bridge. We have several toll facilities in Queensland at the present time. The latest, and perhaps most up to date, is the Loganholme bridge. If we had not had power to build that bridge under the principle of toll facilities, I venture to say it would not have been constructed for many years to come. I, as Minister in control of the Main Roads Department, made the recommendation to the Cabinet for the construction of that bridge under the toll system. I certainly would not have recommended the expenditure of £25,000 upon the bridge if we had not been able to collect tolls. I knew of places where money could be spent in different parts of the State to better advantage than on that bridge for the production of wealth; and I would not have sanctioned the expenditure of £25,000 there had I not been confident that the money would eventually be returned to the Main Roads Commission for expenditure in other parts of the State. That is the intention of the Government in connection with this bridge. Tolls will be collected until the cost of construction is defrayed, and the money will go to the credit of the Main Roads Commission, and will be used in different parts of the State for the purpose of constructing roads for wealth production, and so enable the country to get out of the difficult position it is in at the present time.

Judging from present returns the Loganholme bridge is going to be very profitable. I am of opinion that those who use these facilities should pay for them.

Mr. KIRWAN: That is under the control of the Main Roads Commission. You are going to give this right to private individuals.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We are going to give it to private individuals only in the event of the local authority not being able, or not thinking it advisable, to construct a bridge under the same conditions as the Loganholme bridge. We do not intend to give these franchises to private people in place of the local authorities. It is only right that a local authority should have the option of saying whether or not it is prepared to construct a bridge under the toll system. The Main Roads Commission has the right, with the consent of the Governor in Council, to construct a bridge on the toll system, or even without the toll system. Failing that power being exercised either by the local authority or the Government, is it right that we should pursue the dog-in-the-manger policy of saying that the road facility shall not be constructed simply because the local authority will not find the money to construct the facility, and the Government are not prepared to do so because they do not think it advisable or may not possess the money to do so.

I think it is ridiculous, more especially when at the present moment, as never before in the history of Australia, it is important to encourage the spending of money, whether obtained locally or from overseas, to provide work for those unfortunate persons who are living on the dole. That is one of the objects of this Bill, and we should unanimously

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encourage money to come into the State, if it is not already here, for the purpose of providing work and giving road facilities which neither local authorities nor the Government are prepared to provide, because they do not possess the necessary capital.

Mr. HANLON: Have you had any intimation from private individuals that they intend to avail themselves of the provisions of this Bill?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There are several projects already. We have already entered into negotiations for the construction of the bridge at Lota. In that case it is expected that work will start almost immediately.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: Were tenders called?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes. If we do not have a single bridge constructed under this Bill, no damage can be done, and, if we have a number of bridges built under it, work will be found for men who desire it; so that, if it can do no good, it can do no harm. The opposition of hon. members on the other side is simply born of obstinacy, because they do not believe in the principle of tolls. They would sooner see men starve and walking about the streets without work. They voted against the introduction of the Bill before they knew its contents, clearly showing that they voted against it on principle, not caring whether it is going to find work for hundreds of men or not, because they do not believe in the principle of granting toll rights to local authorities or of their being enjoyed by the Government. They are opposed to tolls under any circumstances, but I think the principle is a splendid one. It makes the man who uses a road facility most pay most, and that is the only way in which we are going to get some road facilities. Why should we tax property-owners alongside a tourist road—practically tax them off their properties as we do—in order to construct those roads when those property-owners will not benefit from their construction? Why should we tax them practically off the land in order to provide a facility for other people to enjoy? Those who want to use such roads should be prepared to pay.

Mr. KIRWAN: They do pay. You are proposing to make them pay a double tax.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: If a facility is constructed under the toll system, the money will be returned in a few years for reinvestment in our far-western districts or some other portion of the State. This money can be utilised for the construction of roads into farming areas to enable the primary producer to convey his product to market instead of allowing it to rot on the ground, as often occurs during the wet season. If we can encourage private investors to expend their capital in this manner, then the money can be reinvested in the construction of roads and other facilities in other parts of the State for the benefit of the people as a whole. The engineering council further agreed—

“That costs of bridges should be filed with the Secretary of War and Chief of Engineers within ninety days after completion.”

A somewhat similar clause is contained in the Bill.

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The engineering council also agreed—

“That in granting a bridge franchise, careful consideration should be given to the probable effect on existing bridges and to the protection of the public, as well as to the property rights of the investors in the bridge.”

A provision to that effect is included in the Bill.

The engineering council also agreed—

“That all franchises granted should provide clauses permitting—

(a) Condemnation and purchase of the bridge at any time by such legal processes as are established in the State or States in which the bridge is located.

(b) Recapture of the bridge by local authorities, not sooner than twenty years after its completion at a price to be made up of the actual cost of construction, less reasonable depreciation, plus the actual cost of acquiring the real property, plus actual expenditure for necessary improvements.”

Provision has been made in the Bill for all that. In effect, we have adopted the suggestions and the recommendations of what might be regarded as the most important engineering council in the world.

As I stated previously, the object of the Bill is—

“to authorise the construction and maintenance of certain road traffic facilities by private persons, and the levying and collecting thereon of tolls from traffic using such facilities, and for other purposes.”

The Bill will enable the Governor in Council to authorise any person possessing sufficient financial resources to construct and maintain bridges, roads, and viaducts, or any combination of the same, and to levy and collect tolls thereon. The Bill provides that the person desiring to obtain a franchise under the Bill must satisfy the Governor in Council that he possesses sufficient financial backing to carry out the work in the manner laid down by the Bill. Unless the individual possesses that financial backing, no business will result.

Mr. KIRWAN: Has not the Governor in Council power to vary the conditions laid down in the Bill?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes; but the Governor in Council need not exercise those powers. I have already stated that this is the first Bill of its kind introduced into an Australian Parliament, and I am prepared to listen to all objections that may be raised to it by the members of the Opposition; and I am also prepared to give consideration to any amendment that may be moved with the object of improving the Bill.

The Bill provides two methods of procedure, the first being that the Minister may publicly advertise for the submission to him of toll proposals. That means that the Government can follow the procedure already adopted in connection with the Lota bridge by advertising that they are prepared to receive applications from persons prepared to construct toll facilities on some particular road. Those applications, being in the form of tenders, will be considered on their merits.

The second procedure enables the Minister to consider proposals submitted without any advertising. That means that a firm or individual may intimate to the Government that he is prepared to submit a profitable project for a toll facility which will be of benefit to the State. That proposal will be placed before the Minister for submission to the Main Roads Commission for report. Any objections received will be considered. Eventually the whole matter will be reviewed and decided upon by the Governor in Council. The Commissioner may also report to the Minister on any proposal, and the Minister may accept or reject the proposal.

Mr. HANLON: Must the Minister accept the advice of the Commissioner of Main Roads?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We would naturally accept the advice of the Commissioner of Main Roads. Of course, the Minister may not altogether accept his advice, but in case of such officers as the Commissioner of Main Roads, who has competent officials under him, it is only natural that any Minister will be guided by the report and recommendations made by him in regard to such matters. If we are not guided by his report and recommendations, then we must accept the responsibility and be answerable to the people for any mistakes that may arise. When an acceptance of a proposal by the Minister is made, the person whose proposal is accepted is deemed to be authorised to construct and maintain the road traffic facility, when the acceptance by the Minister has been confirmed by the Governor in Council. The Governor in Council is the Cabinet.

The Cabinet accepts the full responsibility of deciding whether the road facility will be provided or not. The Minister may require security from the person who submits any proposal. That is only right and proper. We do not want to make investigations and inquiries into any proposal unless we are satisfied that it will be a convenience for the public. As the Bill is drafted to cover the submission of all types of proposals, and some of the terms and conditions affecting owners will vary in different cases, provision is made in the Bill for such varying conditions to be made by the Governor in Council at the time of authorisation of the person submitting the proposal to proceed with the construction. Such varying terms relate to—

“(a) Duration of the period during which the owner shall be permitted to levy and collect tolls on the road traffic facility;

“(b) The maximum amount of toll which the owner shall be permitted to levy.”

We have full control over that matter and over all matters to which I have referred, which will be embodied in an agreement.

The terms also relate to the exemption of vehicles owned by the Crown and other prescribed bodies. Of course, all vehicles belonging to the Crown, ambulance vehicles, and vehicles belonging to charitable institutions are exempted under the present legislation dealing with toll facilities. Certain exemptions will be made in this Bill so far as they are concerned. The method of collecting the toll will be laid down in the agreement, and, whether the facility be a

road, bridge, or tunnel, it may come within the scope of this Bill. The terms also relate to the method of collection of tolls, the site and nature of the road traffic facility, and the payment by the owner of certain charges for information supplied by the Governor in Council for the payment of certain inspection fees carried out by the Commissioner of Main Roads. That is to say, if a proposal is made, the Commissioner of Main Roads will be asked to make certain inquiries. Any expense incurred in doing so will fall upon the person or owner of the facility. Therefore, the Main Roads Commission will be recouped for any expenditure incurred in regard to any matter that has been placed before it for consideration.

The Governor in Council will insist on a certain deposit being made, which will be held as a guarantee of good faith on the part of the person who is entering into the agreement. The deposit will be held for a certain period. At a later stage I intend to move an amendment providing that, where a deposit exceeds £1,000, the amount shall earn interest at the prescribed rate during the time it is held by the Crown. If the deposit is less than £1,000, no interest will be payable; but it is considered only fair and reasonable that in respect of large sums of money—and in one or two facilities which we have in view the amount of the deposit may be considerable—interest at the prescribed rate should be paid during the time the money is held by the Government.

We also make provision that a certain franchise will be granted for a specified number of years. Should it be desirable for the Government or for a local authority to resume a road or other facility before the expiration of the franchise, it is provided that such power may be exercised on payment of compensation. It may be found that, say, ten years after the commencement of a twenty years' franchise, it would be a good investment for the local authority concerned to take over that facility, circumstances having arisen in the interim to justify the acquisition by the local authority. Power is given to the Governor in Council to acquire on payment of compensation.

Mr. DASH: On what basis is the compensation fixed?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The basis is laid down in the Bill, and provides for an average rate of 8 per cent. interest. Of course, for the first year or two the interest rate may be 3 per cent. or 4 per cent., rising to 12 per cent. or 15 per cent. in later years; but, generally speaking, having regard to the duration of the franchise, the rate of interest will be 8 per cent., which cannot under those circumstances be regarded as excessive. At a later stage I shall give hon. members one or two illustrations showing how that interest will work out in actual practice.

Mr. KIRWAN: You would not expect a company to part with a good spec.

At 3.23 p.m.,

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

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The basis of compensation will have regard to the takings of the facility; and in that respect provision is made for the accurate recording of all takings. Nothing will be

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hidden from the Government in that connection.

Mr. DASH: Will not the compensation be the difference between the profit made and the original cost?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There are certain ways in which that matter will be dealt with, and at a later stage I shall give concrete examples.

The facility must be kept in good order during the period of the franchise, and at the expiration of that time will be handed over to the Crown.

Mr. KIRWAN: Is there any provision for a certificate from an engineer to be obtained?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The measure provides that the Commissioner of Main Roads may inspect the facility at all times. Further, during its construction the Commissioner will have full control, and his officers are charged with the responsibility of seeing that the work is carried out in accordance with the plans and specifications which have been approved. It is incumbent on the holder of the franchise to keep the facility in good order so that it may be handed over in a thoroughly good condition when the franchise has expired. That responsibility is placed upon the shoulders of the Commissioner of Main Roads.

Provision is made for the period of the franchise to be fixed on two alternate bases. In one case the period may be fixed for a definite term of years, and in the other case the period of the franchise may be determined on the length of time required by the owner to recoup himself through toll collections for the whole of the costs of construction of the road traffic facility, together with the dividend on such cost prescribed by the Governor in Council. That is an important matter.

In the second case the period of the franchise will be fixed in accordance with the revenue derived from the facility; and the Governor in Council will set out in the agreement the dividend to be paid, and so on. When the owner of the facility has obtained sufficient money to meet all costs of construction, and so forth, the facility will become the property of the Crown. The franchise may be for a long period, or it may be for a short period.

Mr. PEASE: The periods will be more long than short.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It will all depend. Certain things may happen. A facility may be constructed in a certain place, and something may occur in that locality which will lead to an enormous increase in the population, with the result that the revenue from the toll facility will increase by leaps and bounds. While, during the first few years, it may appear that it will require thirty or forty years to obtain sufficient revenue to defray the cost of the facility, as a matter of fact sufficient revenue may be received in three or four years to defray the cost.

Before proceeding with the construction of the facility, the owner shall submit all plans and specifications to the Commissioner of Main Roads, and the owner shall not proceed with the construction of the work until such plans and specifications have been

approved by the Commissioner. That provision protects the Crown in every way.

Mr. DASH: What check is there on the Commissioner of Main Roads?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Commissioner of Main Roads will look over the plans, and in some cases provision is made that he shall draw up the plans and specifications of the work. In other cases the plans and specifications will be prepared by the owner of the franchise, and they will be submitted to the Commissioner of Main Roads for his approval before any work is done on the job. Provision is made that the owner of the franchise will be deemed a constructing authority under the Public Works Lands Resumption Act. That is only a matter of form. The owner of the franchise may be compelled by the Minister to acquire additional land at any time before the commencement of the franchise period, if the Minister is of opinion that such additional lands are necessary. That means that resumptions of land will be made at the request of the Minister. The Minister will have power to give the owner of a road traffic facility possession of Crown land necessary for the construction of the facility. Of course, in the case of Crown lands the owner will have to obtain the consent of the Secretary for Public Lands. He must give his consent before the road facility can be gone on with. All costs incurred in connection with any resumption of land must be borne by the owner.

The Governor in Council has power to fix a period for the construction of road traffic facilities. That is necessary because the work may occupy quite a long period. The Governor in Council may prescribe that the work must be carried out within a given period.

Mr. KIRWAN: Provided a person does not carry out his part of the contract, what happens then?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: First of all, we make inquiries into the financial standing of the person who makes the application. Then we ask for a deposit, which will naturally be for a considerable amount, so we are protected in every shape and form as far as it is possible to be protected by a Bill of this nature.

During the progress of the works they will have to be examined by the Commissioner of Main Roads, who will have power to see that the works are constructed in accordance with the plans and specifications previously approved. I have already explained that the whole of these facilities are under the control and supervision of the Commissioner of Main Roads. When the works are completed, the Commissioner will certify that the works are satisfactorily completed, and the date of this certificate shall be the date of the commencement of the franchise period. After construction of the road facility, the Commissioner will certify that everything is in order, and the franchise will commence from the date of the opening of the facility from a traffic point of view. Within six months of the date of such certificate the Commissioner of Main Roads is required to determine the fair original cost of the road traffic facility. Such cost shall be the sum of—(a) The fair cost of construction of the works; (b) The percentage (as approved by Governor in Council) of such cost to cover overheads during

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the construction period; (c) the interest on such costs during the construction period. That is one of the most important clauses of the Bill. The Commissioner must determine within six months the cost of the facility, so that there will be no dispute afterwards. Everything has to be taken into consideration, and it must be definitely laid down what is the cost of the facility, so that, in the event of its being resumed by the Crown or the local authority at any period, there will be no dispute in connection with the amount which is to be paid for the resumption of the bridge.

Mr. KIRWAN: Is the Commissioner's decision to be final?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: In the event of a dispute, arbitration will be brought into vogue to settle the dispute. There could be nothing fairer than that. It is only right that the owner of the facility as well as the Government should be protected. Disputes may arise, and there is nothing fairer than settling them by arbitration.

Provision is also made for additional construction during the franchise period. Such work may be necessary to provide for heavier traffic, and, if such work is approved by the Governor in Council, then the fair original cost of such additional work shall also be determined in the manner provided for the works as first constructed. Should it be found necessary after the facility has been used for some time to strengthen it in a manner which is not provided for in the original agreement, it will be possible for the Governor in Council to enter into an agreement for the purpose of doing the necessary work.

If, owing to the act of God or other unforeseen circumstances beyond the control of the owner, the road traffic facility, or part of it, is destroyed or damaged, provision is made for the owner to reconstruct such works, and such works shall be considered as additions to the road traffic facility, and the fair original cost of the same. The cost of reconstruction or repair of damage due to such unforeseen circumstances will be valued just the same as the original cost of construction, and will eventually become part of the original cost of the facility.

Mr. DASH: With an extended franchise?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It may be necessary to extend the franchise, or it may not be necessary. During the whole of the franchise period the owner must maintain and keep the road traffic facility fit for traffic. I have already explained that the responsibility is upon the owner to construct the facility properly, and that there is a responsibility on the Commissioner of Main Roads to see that the work is carried out in a proper manner.

The Governor in Council may exercise his right to acquire the facility after the time laid down in the Order in Council; and in that case the owner will be entitled to compensation equal to the fair original cost of the work, as I have already explained. The Bill makes very complete provision for the way in which compensation is to be fixed.

The Bill also provides that, if at the time of resumption the owner has received from the road traffic facility less than a certain amount per annum, to be prescribed by the

Governor in Council, then he will be entitled to receive, in addition, the sum of such differences during the period of the franchise that has elapsed, together with interest at 4 per cent. per annum on such differences. In other words, should the tolls collected on the road facility not cover the whole of the cost, the owner will be entitled to receive the difference between the collections and that cost, plus 4 per cent. That is to say, if a franchise is given in respect of a bridge which costs £20,000, and during the period of the franchise, say, twenty years, only £16,000 is collected, then at the end of twenty years, when the bridge becomes the property of the Government, the owner will be entitled to call upon the Government to make good the difference of £4,000, with interest at 4 per cent. for a given period. The owner is protected in the event of the facility not being as profitable as he expected.

The Governor in Council may decide to extend the franchise in respect of a given facility, and the local authority may be in favour of such a course, in which case no harm will be done. The matter then can be settled by way of arbitration, if the parties fail to come to an agreement on the point.

The compensation payable in respect of resumption shall not be chargeable against any local authority unless approved by a majority of voters in the local authority area concerned. That is to say, if at the end of the franchise the local authority has to find a certain amount of money, a vote of local authority voters is to be held to decide whether the facility shall be taken over or not.

Mr. HANLON: What would be paid then?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: As I have already indicated, the amount of money received during the period of the franchise may not be sufficient to pay for the facility. There may be a shortage of, say, £4,000 or £5,000; and in that case a vote of the ratepayers must be taken before the council takes it over.

Mr. HANLON: If they do not desire to take it over, what happens?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: If they do not desire to take it over, the Governor in Council may take it over and allow it to be run by the Commissioner of Main Roads, as in the case of the Loganholme bridge, or he may grant an extension of the franchise.

Mr. HANLON: The company must get its return of capital with interest.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is a fixed franchise. If it is for twenty years, and the owner has only received £16,000 instead of £20,000, it will be necessary for some arrangement to be made by the local authority or the Governor in Council for the future control of the facility.

Before a local authority will be permitted to take over the undertaking, a poll of the ratepayers must be taken. This poll can be demanded if there is a debt on the undertaking, even though the local authority may have agreed at the council table to take over the undertaking.

Mr. HANLON: The contracting company will obtain its full amount of capital and interest.

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The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes.

Mr. HANLON: The people will get the crow all the time.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No. The people will benefit by the use of the facility and by the expenditure of the money involved.

Mr. KIRWAN: They will have to pay for it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Governor in Council will have power to make by-laws dealing with road traffic facilities, and generally ensuring that nuisances and offences are not committed on the road facility. I repeat that I regard the measure as a most important one; and, whilst it may not meet with the approval of the Opposition, I feel sure that it will do a great deal for this State, particularly during a period when work and capital are urgently required. Toll bridges are in existence in different parts of Australia, including Queensland, and are to be found all over the world.

Mr. STOFFORD: Not controlled by private individuals.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes. There are 243 toll bridges in the United States of America. The Government believe that these facilities should be extended to private enterprise. We are not prepared to adopt the dog-in-the-manger policy of saying that, if the local authority cannot construct the facility and the Government are unable to construct it, it should not be constructed at all. We want work; we want progress; and we want capital; and this Bill will encourage work; it will mean progress, and will attract additional capital to the State for the benefit not only of the workers but of the State as a whole. I have very much pleasure in moving—

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

Mr. PEASE (*Herbert*) [343]: It is our duty to guard the public interest, and that is our reason for opposing the Bill. In introducing the Bill the Minister said that it was a most important one, and the first of its kind ever introduced into a Parliament in Australia. He promised to give the fullest information at the introductory stage of the Bill, but his remarks were confined to two columns of “Hansard.” He has not told us anything about the Bill, and what he did say really destroyed any merit that it had. What he did say condemned the Bill. I repeat, that the Minister promised to give the fullest information concerning the Bill, but his remarks were confined to two columns of “Hansard,” and now he tells us nothing despite the fact that the Bill is one of thirty-three clauses, and clause 6 occupies five pages, or 245 lines. Why, the Minister is the champion humorist!

The Bill takes us back to the dark ages. It is a highway robbery Bill. I remember, as a child, reading “Dick Turpin’s Ride to York,” and I clearly remember the part relating to his passage through the toll bar. We all remember that, and I can just imagine the Minister repeating the ride of Dick Turpin to York.

The Minister is a horsey man. He has been talking to-day of going back to the horse. He has been telling this House on this and other occasions that we should go

back to the horse. We can visualise the Minister going back to the horse, and riding the famous horse “Surilla” up to the toll bar and saying, “Stand or deliver! We want everything you have got, or you cannot go through this toll.” This proposal takes us back to serfdom, and no doubt we shall have a Bill later on that will also take the people back to serfdom. This Bill takes us back to the dark ages. The Minister may attempt to emulate Dick Turpin’s ride to York, but I hope that he will not paint the horse on the way.

This Bill absolutely ignores the local authorities. That is a feature which does not appeal to the Opposition. The people of Queensland have a Local Authorities Act Amendment Act which was given them by Labour. It gives to the people good methods of governing themselves in various local authority sections. Anyone who knows anything about local authorities knows that the people comprising those bodies take a great interest in their affairs. I am quite satisfied that, if any proposition is of any use and will be a profitable one, no local authority would stop for one moment to go ahead with it. The Minister might think that local authorities cannot borrow money. The Treasurer will probably say, “Where will the money come from?” Nearly every bank, including the Queensland National Bank, has told the people that their shareholders and depositors are looking for outlets to invest their money.

At 3.47 p.m.,

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. PEASE: I know something about private enterprise. I know that private enterprise will not look at any proposition that is not a 10 per cent. one. Private enterprise will not embark on building a road or bridge in Queensland unless guaranteed a 10 per cent. return. Those banking companies which are complaining that their customers are looking for avenues to invest their money, or any local authority, whose security is the best that any bank can have, would jump at a 10 per cent. proposition. The Treasurer knows very well that we on this side of the Chamber have at various times approached him for loans to various local authorities, and that he has turned us down. He has, however, granted local authorities permission to approach various associations, such as the Australian Mutual Provident Society, to obtain those loans, and, as a consequence, the money was obtained. Financial institutions recognise local authorities as being as good security as the Government. Any such loan has the backing of the Government. It, therefore, becomes a gilt-edged security. The fact that this money is not unlocked at the present time reflects a lack of confidence in the Government. The Premier told the people that, if they returned his party to power, the capital lying idle in Queensland because of lack of confidence in the then Administration would immediately become unlocked. That money is still in the State. Why has it not been unlocked? Why is it that the Queensland National Bank and other banks complain that they cannot find investments for their clients’ money? The hon. member for Toombul who knows something about finance, knows very well that no security is regarded more favourably by banking institutions than a local authority loan backed by the Government.

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If any proposition is worth anything at all and private enterprise is prepared to undertake it, then it is good enough for the local authority to take it on. I know of instances where the supply of electric power and energy has been undertaken by local authorities. The local authority in my electorate applied to the previous Government for a loan to embark on an electric light proposal. The Government authorities examined the proposal, found it sound, and the Government advanced the money. Any proposition that is found sound on examination will always command the necessary money. What is the result? The local authority controlling the supply of electric light in my area is paying interest and redemption, and, in addition, showing a profit. No one can tell us that private enterprise will jump at a proposition that a local authority will not undertake. The Minister did not tell us that private enterprise would take on any proposition that a local authority would turn down. I am quite satisfied that the Government are ill-advised in attempting any overriding of local authorities.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We are not.

Mr. PEASE: You are. It would suit the Government better to restore confidence in the country. The Government said they would do that and unlock all the money which should be available for reproductive work. No greater condemnation of the Government can be found than the report of the Queensland National Bank to its shareholders that there is plenty of money available, but that in the present state of affairs those who control that money will not let it go. In effect, they have no confidence in the Government. If they had confidence in the Government and in any of the propositions which the Minister tells us will be submitted, surely they would make that money available! The Government could allow the local authorities to borrow the money, and in those circumstances it would be a perfectly safe investment. The position is that money is available. All that is wanted is confidence, and what is preventing the return of that confidence is the policy of the present Government.

The TREASURER: The cause is your statement that you won't pay interest.

Mr. PEASE: The Government said quite definitely in the policy speech on which they appealed to the country that, if they were returned to power, people would immediately have confidence, and huge sums of money would be unlocked, resulting in everybody being prosperous. We have the definite statement that plenty of money is available in Queensland waiting to be unlocked, and I need hardly say that, as soon as there is a change of Government, that capital will be unlocked. (Government laughter.)

The Minister has really given us no information about this Bill. In order to ascertain its contents we have had to study it ourselves. One most significant statement was made by the hon. gentleman when, at the conclusion of his speech, he said that, no matter what else may happen, the investors must get their money back. That means that in the end the public have to pay for all the white elephants. The local authori-

ties concerned are not asked whether or not they approve of these propositions.

The PREMIER: Oh, yes, they are.

Mr. PEASE: There is no provision for a poll on the initiation of a scheme, although the Bill provides for a poll in connection with the acquisition of an existing facility. The position is far worse than that in respect of the tramways franchise which was given to Badger.

In this and in previous sessions of Parliament the Treasurer has said that we on this side of the House advocate increased taxation. Do the Government not realise that this measure means more taxation? The Government are going to tax people for crossing a bridge or crossing a road. No wonder this party has decided to oppose the Bill, which is not different from any other Bill which the Government have introduced, inasmuch as it means the taxation of the people. Not only that, but the taxation is not equitable. For example, what is going to happen to people who have no money, and who have to pay for the right to cross a road which is the subject of a toll? The whole position is absurd.

This Bill, like the Government generally, lacks principle.

Who asked for this measure? Did the Brisbane City Council ask for it? Did any local authority in Queensland ask for it? Did the people of Queensland ask for it? Did Public Developments Limited ask for it?

Mr. NIMMO: Yes.

Mr. PEASE: This is entirely a "go-getters" Bill. The Lord Mayor is not a Labour man. The Lord Mayor of this city has been elected by a considerable number of people, and he says—

"The council should be consulted about any proposal that may be advanced."

And then he goes on to say—

"Government interference in municipal administration has had unfortunate results."

The PREMIER: Quite right.

Mr. PEASE: Yes, and it is quite right to-day. This Bill is absolute Government interference in municipal administration so far as the city of Brisbane is concerned. Most of the facilities projected are in the metropolitan area; and the Government are arrogating to Cabinet the right to override the Brisbane City Council. They might as well wipe out the City Council altogether.

The PREMIER: We are doing nothing like your Government did in connection with the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board.

Mr. PEASE: The Government are doing worse than we did. This is entirely a "go-getters" Bill; and the only people the Government are concerned about are the "go-getters," who are out to make money by exploiting the people. In the Bill the principle of political patronage is introduced. The Government have it in all their Bills. According to the Bill, the Minister may publicly advertise for the submission to him of toll proposals for road traffic facilities; or he may consider proposals submitted without any advertising. That is not to protect the people, but to protect these "go-getter" companies which keep the Government in power to do exactly as they want them to do. This Bill is for the purpose

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of farming out concessions, as our Leader pointed out when he opposed the Bill at its initiatory stage. It is a "go-getters" Bill, and I am surprised at the Government bringing it forward. If there is any advantage in the Bill to private enterprise, they will want a return of at least 10 per cent.

Mr. NIMMO: Who said so?

Mr. PEASE: I say so. No private enterprise to-day will look at anything under 10 per cent. In the North we had people who were prepared to loan money to local authorities. Engineers and others were prepared to get money from overseas to lend to local authorities; and they wanted 10 per cent. before they would take on any project whatever. Naturally, the Government would have to turn such proposals down. Let us examine the two roads that are now operating under this toll system—the Tambourine Mountain road and the Cairns Tableland road. According to the figures supplied by the Minister in reply to questions asked the other day, the amount collected on the Tambourine Mountain road was £633 3s. 9d., and the cost of collection was £204 1s. 8d. The net revenue was £429 2s. 1d. in eleven months. On the Cairns Tableland road the amount collected was £914 3s., which cost £622 5s. 5d. to collect, leaving a net revenue of £291 17s. 7d. in ten months.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It did not cost that amount to collect.

Mr. PEASE: That was the cost in ten months. That is the answer to the question asked.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Read it!

Mr. PEASE:—

"When questioned by Mr. G. Pollock (L. Gregory) in the Legislative Assembly yesterday, the Minister for Railways and Main Roads (Mr. Godfrey Morgan) said that there were only three toll bridges or roads in Queensland—the Tambourine Mountain road, the Cairns Tableland road, and the Loganholme Bridge. The gross tolls and the cost of collection were as follows:—Tambourine Mountain road, from 8th August, 1930, to 30th June, 1931, £633 3s. 9d. and £204 1s. 8d. respectively; Cairns Tableland road, from 1st September, 1930, to 30th June, 1931, £914 3s. and £622 5s. 5d. The toll collection on the Loganholme Bridge commenced on 1st July, 1931."

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You left that out.

Mr. PEASE: I have not left anything out.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Read from "Hansard"!

Mr. PEASE: The hon. gentleman is talking about building tourist roads. The Premier asked why the local authorities should be saddled with the cost of tourist roads which are practically non-payable. Will private enterprise build tourist roads if they are non-payable? Private enterprise will build nothing that is not profitable.

The Opposition oppose the Bill because it is totally against the public interests. There is also another great danger in the Bill. The Bill permits of this principle being extended to other things besides roads—it can be extended to roads, railways, and harbours and rivers. I refer now to an

article in "Truth," which also contained the photograph of the hon. member for Enoggera. It states in the prospectus in regard to the making of an agreement that a certain company is formed—

"To acquire the right . . . to charge tolls in respect of the use of such constructions, and later, to construct tramways, railways, bridges, harbours, reservoirs, watercourses, wharves, telegraphs, telephones . . . sawmills, hotels, transport, and postal arrangements."

That is the "nigger in the woodpile" in this Bill. I recognise that no business proposition will take on anything that will not show a profit of 10 per cent., and I know of no tourist roads or bridges in Queensland that will return 10 per cent. If you extend this proposal to railways, harbours and rivers, and other things, there may be something in it. That is what we are afraid of. This Bill will give the Minister power to give concessions to build railways and to take over harbours and collect dues.

When the Minister was in Cairns not long ago, he pointed out to a deputation with regard to the harbour board that, in his opinion, harbour boards might be abolished and the Railway Department or other department might take them over. If he had that in mind, he probably has now in mind the giving of a concession in respect of harbours and railways. What is to prevent him giving a valuable concession or monopoly to a shipping company? The Minister has power under the Bill to give concessions to a shipping company, enabling it to exploit the people in connection with a harbour.

I notice that the Government are giving certain concessions which involve the building of a harbour in Cardwell. There is a possible concession there which might be very valuable. The Bill will enable the Government to give concessions with regard to railways, harbours and rivers, and other matters. It is significant that the ideas contained in the prospectus of the "go-getting" company in which the hon. member for Oxley and the hon. member for Enoggera are interested are contained in this Bill.

Local authorities already have power to do everything contained in the Bill. What more do the people of Queensland want? If a proposition is not good enough to justify a local authority going in for it, then it is no good to anybody. If it is good enough for a local authority, if it will bear inspection by the Government's officers, and if it will show a good return, then any local authority can get the necessary money either from the Government or from people outside with the backing of the Government. I am quite satisfied that there is plenty of money in Queensland for any local authority proposals which will pay interest and redemption.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: You can't have had any experience.

Mr. PEASE: I have been on many local authorities, and I know very well that a local authority's backing is considered by a bank or any other lending body as quite equal to that of the Government. The Council of the City of Brisbane has authority to borrow money in London or elsewhere overseas; and no man can tell me that the

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local authorities will not build bridges or roads if they are payable. In any case, this Bill is not designed to build bridges and roads which are not payable. It is designed to give valuable concessions to "go-getting" companies. It can be extended to railways and harbours. Knowing the Government, we know why they are seeking to give this opportunity to other persons than local authorities. Local authorities are not availing themselves of their powers, because such propositions are not payable. If they were payable propositions, the local authorities in and around Brisbane would be the first to get the money and carry them out themselves. They would not touch anything which is not sound; and before they can borrow money for any project the Commissioner of Main Roads or other officer has to pass it as being sound. That is the only consideration which should weigh with us; and it proves that the Bill is not desirable. I am satisfied that it is not designed to enable anybody to build bridges and roads which are not payable propositions. It is designed to give concessions similar to those which were given to their friends by the predecessors of hon. members opposite. It is designed to give franchises to "go-getting" companies.

We have heard a good deal about private enterprise as being superior to governmental or municipal control. It is a very common thing for newspapers and people throughout Australia to decry Government trading or enterprises, and to say that only private enterprise pays. Let us review the position as it is summarised in the "Monthly Bulletin" on Australian business condition, published by the Hemingway and Robertson and Alexander Hamilton Institute, recognised accountancy advisers throughout the Commonwealth. In the issue of October, 1929, dealing with a review of public finances of governmental activities, that organ says—

"Criticism has also been levelled at what is deemed to be the unprofitable use of loan money. It should not be overlooked, however, that it is manifestly impossible to get the maximum efficiency in the administration of borrowed money. The expectation of 100 per cent. efficiency in such administration can, under present imperfect conditions, never be realised. A margin for uneconomic expenditure should be allowed, even though it may be indefensible in principle, for it is not always the Governments who are to blame. For example, popular sentiment after the war forced the issue over the settlement of the returned soldiers, with what result we have been made only too familiar. If a thorough analysis could be conducted, it would probably be found that not more than 75 per cent. to 80 per cent. of borrowed money is efficiently used in any country. Even so, this ratio of success to failure is greater than is commonly experienced in private industry, which is not subject to the elaborate and concentrated public analysis usually applied to Government enterprise."

The point I am trying to make is that the people are too fond of decrying municipal enterprise and saying that private enterprise is much better. Everyone realises that private enterprise fails in exactly the same way as municipal or State enterprises.

Mr. NIMMO: But only the individual suffers in the case of private enterprise.

Mr. PEASE: The City Electric Light Company in Brisbane has a concession in connection with the supply of electric energy to Ipswich, and it is making a handsome profit by exploiting the people.

Mr. NIMMO: That is wrong.

Mr. PEASE: It is not wrong. The company is exploiting the people because it must obtain profits to enable it to pay dividends. If that electric light undertaking were controlled by the Brisbane and Ipswich City Councils for the benefit of the people, the cost of the electric energy to the people would be reduced and the public would benefit.

Let us examine what is happening in Townsville, Cairns, and Innisfail, where the electric light schemes are controlled by the respective local authorities. The Government granted the franchise, the local authority borrowed the necessary money, and went ahead with the electric installation. The people in those areas are enjoying cheap electric energy; and the local authority is able to pay interest and redemption in addition to providing sufficient income to enable it to reduce the cost of the electric energy to the people. In the case of the local authority the whole of the profits go to the people, but in the case of private enterprise the profits go to "go-getting" companies. The Government are now anxious to extend these trading facilities by their application to roads and bridges. The Minister in charge of the Bill said that the Opposition were foolish to oppose a Bill which would provide work for the people; but I would remind him that the hon. member for Oxley in particular and the hon. member for Enoggera were interested in a proposal to construct a bridge over the Brisbane River at Indooroopilly under a scheme enabling workers to be employed for their tucker. They were to receive coupons in return for their labour.

Mr. KERR: That is untrue.

Mr. PEASE: That was one of the terms of the proposal, according to the press. No money was to be paid, but coupons were to be issued redeemable by the butcher, the baker, the grocer, and other trades. The Minister said that the Bill would provide work; but there is no provision to that effect in the measure. There is no provision that the work shall be carried out on the basis of award rates. The Government are going to allow private enterprise to exploit the people. Do the Government propose that these works shall be carried out on the relief work basis; or is private enterprise to be given the right to exploit the worker?

Mr. KERR: No.

Mr. PEASE: The Bill is a further example of the Government's complete lack of sympathy in matters where the public interest is concerned. Like all their legislation, it is conspicuous by the fact that it makes no attempt to justify or to enunciate any sound principle. The Minister did not justify the Bill in any particular. The fact that local authorities which now have power to levy tolls have not proceeded with works under the toll method indicates that the people regard this principle as obnoxious and as a relic of centuries ago. The Opposition

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are opposed to the Bill. We say that it is a "go-getters" Bill, and that certain provisions of it can be applied to railways, harbours, and goodness knows what else. It is a dangerous Bill, and the House would be well advised to vote against it.

Mr. NIMMO (*Oxley*) [4.14]: I hope that the Bill will be passed through all its stages.

Mr. PEASE: Of course you do.

Mr. NIMMO: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition made a great song about tolls; but I would remind him that a toll must be paid on every letter deposited at the post office. He referred to railways; but this facility and other facilities demand a toll charge for services rendered. The Bill is not an entirely new one, because it is well known that toll bridges are in operation in many parts of the world. There are many toll bridges in Scotland and the United States of America. The principle is a good one.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition referred to the connection of the hon. member for Enoggera and myself with "go-getting" companies. I admit that the hon. member for Enoggera and myself were associated with the formation of Public Developments, Limited; but our association with that company was merely to endeavour to stimulate some public interest in a proposition which was destined to absorb a large number of unemployed in the metropolitan area. I am not afraid to explain everything in connection with the matter. I never hide anything. I come straight out into the open. I am pleased to say that, as a result of our efforts, public interest was stimulated. As soon as the company was registered, both the hon. member for Enoggera and myself withdrew from it.

Mr. HANLON: You withdrew as soon as you were exposed.

Mr. NIMMO: There was nothing to expose in the matter. As a matter of principle, I will not associate with anything of a public nature while I am in public life from which I am likely to make a profit.

There is nothing wrong with the construction of toll bridges. Only those who use them will be called upon to pay the toll. The cross-river commission recommend the construction of a bridge across the Brisbane River at Kangaroo Point.

Mr. WILSON: Why did your Government turn it down?

Mr. NIMMO: There was no possibility of the City Council securing the necessary finance.

Mr. HANLON: You authorised the construction of a bridge where it was not wanted.

Mr. NIMMO: I admit that the Grey-street bridge will not be of the same service as a bridge built at Kangaroo Point; but I believe that the Kangaroo Point bridge will be built. It will carry as much traffic as the Grey-street bridge will carry. I am sorry that so much money has been spent on that bridge.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition referred to the concessions given to the late Mr. J. S. Badger to construct tramways in this city. He mentioned that matter in bad taste. A great wrong has been inflicted on this city by the hon. member's Government forcing the Brisbane City Council to take over the tramway system. It would have

been far better for them not to have interfered with it. During the war period Mr. Badger desired to increase the price of penny tram fares to 2d., but he was not allowed to do so. Yet almost immediately after the Brisbane City Council assumed control of the tramways the price of tickets for the first section was raised to 2d.

There is a tendency all over the world to-day to encourage private enterprise. It is recognised that it is the only possible way we can get out of the slough of despond in which we find ourselves to-day. Millions of pounds were wasted by the late Government on State enterprises; and, should they be returned to power again, I am sure they will not again embark on such futile trading. If these toll concessions fail, then only the few individuals investing their money in that enterprise are affected; but, if a public enterprise fails, the whole community is taxed to make good the loss. No hardship will be inflicted on any person by the construction of toll bridges and roads, because in most cases alternative facilities are available, although the latter may not be quite so convenient. People will not be forced to use these toll facilities.

Mr. DUNLOP: Then, why build them?

Mr. NIMMO: What we most urgently want to-day is the construction of desirable facilities which will provide avenues of employment for numerous persons who are unemployed at present, and which will at the same time be self-supporting. If the three bridges contemplated in the metropolitan area are proceeded with—more particularly the Kangaroo Point bridge—it will have a beneficial effect on the community.

Mr. BEDFORD: This is only a big Ballarat. Brisbane is not a city; it is only a big village.

Mr. NIMMO: The trouble with hon. members opposite is that they have done everything they possibly can to discredit the country. In Queensland we have one of the finest countries in the world, and it is unfortunate that, to a certain extent, we are not allowed to carve out our own destiny; otherwise we could do much more than we are doing.

Only recently the Government constructed a bridge at Coomera, which provided a considerable amount of work, and now renders a great service to the travelling public. The construction of a bridge over the Logan River was made on sound business lines, and it is anticipated that in three or four years the cost of that bridge will be recovered by means of the toll system, under which the same charge is made as was made for the less convenient ferry facility, which often entailed a delay of three or four hours to travellers. Surely hon. members opposite will agree that, under those circumstances, we are proceeding on sound business lines. I am vitally interested in the proposed Indooroopilly bridge, which will be of considerable benefit to the whole of the people in the western suburbs. After all, a toll bridge will entail no more expense on the users than the existing ferry does, besides which the bridge will be much more convenient. That bridge will serve other localities, including Ipswich and the country extending from there to the Darling Downs. A traffic bridge at Indooroopilly will give these people a perfect gateway to Brisbane, free from the present congestion at Victoria

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Bridge. As a matter of fact, the congested nature of the traffic on Victoria Bridge is viewed with considerable concern by many motorists, so that a clear run through to Brisbane per medium of the suggested bridge at Indooroopilly would be of benefit in more ways than one. People will be able to drive straight from the city over the Indooroopilly bridge to the western suburbs without any congestion at all. The Indooroopilly bridge will also provide the missing link of a very fine tourist run for visitors, who we hope will come here in increasing numbers. I refer to a run from the centre of the city to the beautiful suburbs in the western area—Chelmer, Graceville, Sherwood, and Corinda—returning via Yeronga and Annerley. I am pointing this out to show that the people who are investing their money in the bridge, while providing a large amount of employment, will have a wonderful investment for themselves. There is no possibility of the Government or the City Council building that bridge, but private enterprise is going to build it.

Mr. HANLON: It is?

Mr. NIMMO: Yes.

Mr. HANLON: What are the terms?

Mr. NIMMO: According to my reading of the Bill, the terms are that these people must get the whole of their money back plus whatever percentage is arranged.

Mr. HANLON: Where is the risk you were talking about a while ago if they must get their money back plus interest at the rate of 8 per cent.?

Mr. NIMMO: The people who build the bridge will run no risk because there is no doubt that this State will come into its own. This city will be a very flourishing centre, and the people who build the bridge will get the whole of their money back plus 8 per cent.

Mr. HANLON: Has this company got the money to build the bridge?

Mr. NIMMO: Certainly.

Mr. HANLON: Why can't they lend it to the City Council?

Mr. NIMMO: The bridge will connect up the suburbs on the north and south sides of the river. I understand a great deal of the capital is coming from overseas, and we ought to give every encouragement for outside capital to come to this State. If we can get outside capital invested in the State, every person who invests that capital is going to be interested in the progress of the State.

Mr. STOPFORD: You know you won't get that capital.

Mr. NIMMO: If we took any notice of hon. members opposite or of their Deputy Leader, we would not get the capital, because, according to those hon. members, they would not pay any interest.

Mr. STOPFORD: Who said that?

Mr. NIMMO: Your Deputy Leader said so. I am speaking absolutely as a Queenslander, and not as a politician. The hon. member for Warrego shakes his head, but God help us if we were all like him. We all ought to co-operate and put this Bill through as quickly as possible. We should get right on the job, and get one of these projects started immediately. We ought to get to work immediately; and, if we do,

it will help to restore the confidence in the State which has been so lacking during the past five or six years, but which is gradually being regained. The Kangaroo Point bridge will provide so much employment that it should be the aim of every hon. member to get that bridge constructed. The whole of the bridges are going to be constructed by local labour.

I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill, and in congratulating the Minister on the very explicit manner in which he explained the wonderful safeguards which are placed in the Bill to protect the public. Every clause of the Bill has been most carefully gone into, and the interests both of the public and the investors are protected. I hope the Bill will go through quickly.

Mr. COOPER (*Bremer*) [4.31]: If one wanted any knowledge on the point, I think the speech we have just heard from the hon. member for Oxley has convinced us that this is another illustration of the great rush that capital is beginning to make in directions in which it has been prohibited in the past. It is now attempting to invade the domain from which it was specifically excluded by the wise legislation of past decades. It is regrettable that in this year of grace an attempt is being made to attack the rights which have been recognised as belonging to the people. Probably it was about a hundred years ago that the exchange of commodities between communities led to the expansion of trade and commerce; but one of the greatest hindrances to the expansion of trade and commerce in those days was the toll gate on the King's highway. The turnpike was recognised as one of the stumbling blocks to an expanding communal service and the requirements of the whole community. The destruction of the turnpike was an evidence of the onward march of civilisation.

Mr. NIMMO: There is no similarity between the two.

Mr. COOPER: The hon. member says there is no similarity between the two, but that is because he does not want to see the similarity. The destruction of the turnpike was undoubtedly a blow at one of the things that kept back the growth of a great nation. When the turnpike was abolished and the toll became a thing of the past, there was an interdependence between communities, which gave England independence, and made her sturdiness recognised throughout the length and breadth of the world. No one can doubt that who cares to read the history of the abolition of the toll gate and the turnpike.

Trade and commerce depend absolutely upon communication. Nation must get into touch with nation. Every civilised community in the world has recognised that trade and commerce within a State must be as free as possible; and to encourage trade and commerce they have made it as free as they possibly can within the limits of their own borders. Trade and commerce are the blood stream of the community and of the nation, and anything that interferes with the blood stream is likely to interfere with the life of the nation. The wholesaler must get into touch with the retailer, and the retailer must get into touch with the purchaser; and anything that hampers that touch between customer and customer and between

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trader and trader is to the detriment of the State; and it is on those things that this Bill must be judged.

The PREMIER: Is that why your Government imposed a heavy vehicles tax?

Mr. COOPER: That was to protect a public utility, and to save it from being ruthlessly destroyed by people who had no right to do it. The Premier knows very well that the reason for the heavy vehicles tax was to prevent very heavy vehicles destroying a utility that was not prepared for the use of such heavy vehicles.

Mr. DASH: And to help the local authorities.

Mr. COOPER: Yes, and to preserve an asset provided by the local authorities, and, in many instances, by the State. Heavy vehicles were using the highway in such a fashion that 10 or 12-ton loads were being hauled on roads which were designed to carry only 3 tons, thus destroying the roads and dissipating the wealth which the community had put into them.

The PREMIER: I am not denying that, but you were talking about the absolute freedom of traffic.

Mr. COOPER: Freedom is only given within limits.

The PREMIER: That is all.

Mr. COOPER: The greater the freedom, the greater the restriction in many cases. The more laws we have giving us greater freedom, the more laws have we restricting the people from abusing that freedom. There is a difference between license and freedom, and evidently the Premier is an advocate of license as against freedom. I am surprised that the hon. gentleman has not yet grasped the truth that freedom is one thing and license is another; that freedom to use the highways is there for everybody, but that the license to abuse the highways should not be given to anybody. That was one reason for the heavy vehicles tax.

The hon. member for Oxley mentioned the post office, and said that we have to pay for its services and also for the services of the railways. There is a difference between those services and the service we are now considering. The postal service is a great illustration of what can be done for trade and commerce by service which is absolutely disinterested. A postal service, in order to be efficient, must be sure, it must be quick, and, above all, it must be disinterested. That cannot be said for anything that would be built under this Bill. It might be sure, it might be quick, but it would not be disinterested. It would be built for the purpose of profit, and, where profit is concerned, there is an interest, and that would probably count before service to the community. On the other hand, the post office does help trade and commerce. Well organised postal and sister services are the greatest pillars trade and commerce have. Without them, it would fall to the ground. Every merchant in Brisbane knows that he can post a letter in Brisbane before 8 o'clock to-morrow and stake his life that it will reach Sydney the following afternoon, and be delivered there within a certain radius of the city. We can all stake our lives on the sureness and quickness of that service. It handles millions of letters annually, many of them incorrectly addressed: yet the letters that go astray are very few

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indeed. It is a marvellous service, and so sure that, although a letter from here to Sydney may be handled by twelve or fourteen persons, we can stake our lives it will reach its destination. The great thing is that it is disinterested. It is not there for profit. Every community recognises that that great service must be free from the consideration of profit-making, but I notice that in the articles of association read out by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition there is a proposal that the company concerned may acquire postal facilities. Surely that shows a move in a direction never contemplated when this Bill was framed! As the postal service is a great service, so the highway service can be a great service, and the difference between a 2d. charge on a letter and a charge on a road or highway depends to a great extent upon the fact that the latter is dependent upon the people who live along its borders. It is they who make the highways possible. Aeroplanes, railways, and other communication services are different from a highway service. If we will have additional services, then, as the Premier stated, let us pay for them. For that reason, we pay specifically for our railway service. But the highway is something that the community has given to itself, something that belongs to the community, and something that must not be taken from the community.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: It is no more the property of the community than a railway.

Mr. COOPER: The highway is an alternative free service to the railway of which the Premier spoke a while ago. I think the Minister stated that in any case where a facility was granted under the Bill it would be seen that there was another way round that would be free. That is the very essence of a highway. The very essence of a highway communication is its freedom; and anything that will take that freedom from the people is something that is undoubtedly to the detriment of the State.

There will be those who will contend that the measure is not general in its application, that it is intended to meet specific cases; and it will be contended that those specific cases differ widely from the general, and that thereby the Bill is justified. That is the basis upon which we might broadly consider the Bill. If the House is to give a just decision upon the measure, then it need not go any further than the speech delivered by the hon. member for Oxley. That hon. member showed quite clearly that the Bill was for a specific purpose; and that specific purpose was the making of profit. At the introductory stage the Minister made some reference to the fact that in some miraculous way population might grow so rapidly that the bridge might be paid off in a year or two; but then the hon. member for Oxley rose in his place and said that the facilities would be built only in places where the population was already settled, and he enumerated Indooroopilly and Kangaroo Point. These facilities would be constructed only where the contracting parties were absolutely certain in the matter of profit.

If we examine the Bill at all closely, we shall find that it proposes to constitute an owner. The owner is to be the owner of the road facility; and not only is he to be the owner of the actual building for the

time being, but he is to be the actual owner of the road. He can take for himself property of a local authority or of the Crown; and nothing whatever is to be paid for the ownership in the way of compensation for the roadway, which should belong to the local authority, or for land taken for his own use which should belong to the Crown. For that he has to pay nothing by way of rent, and he has to pay nothing whatever to the State or to the local authority for its use. Over and above that, he is to be allowed to levy tolls on persons and moveable things—upon such things as telephones, telegraphs, water supplies, gas supplies, electrical supplies, and on other services. The Bill specifically says that a maximum toll is chargeable in respect of persons and moveable things; but there is no limit to the amount of toll that may be charged to a local authority for its water service crossing that bridge; there is no limit to the toll that may be charged a gas company, or an electric supply company for its services crossing the bridge. There is no limit whatever. One can very easily see that an interested utility owner having a bridge at Kangaroo Point or a bridge at Indooroopilly might allow private enterprise to carry its gas mains and electric light cables across the bridge at a very cheap toll indeed, at the same time imposing such a high toll upon municipally-owned gas and electric light undertakings that their services could not be carried across. It is remarkable; nevertheless, the possibility is there. Whilst the tolls chargeable upon persons and moveable things may be limited by Order in Council, no limit whatever is imposed, and the Governor in Council has no right to impose any limitation upon the tolls chargeable upon telephone services, telegraph services, electric light services, water services, gas services, and the like.

The main provision is that the owner of the facility shall be fully recouped for the interest on his outlay, plus reasonable profits; but the outlay may be so great that there is no possibility of recompensing him within a decently reasonable time. If this was the disinterested affair that the hon. member for Oxley would lead us to believe, if it were being undertaken solely for the purpose of giving work, and if it were being undertaken solely for the purpose of advancing the interests of the State, then so much stress would not be laid on the provisions of this Bill dealing with profits. Profits are not to be based on the general outlay, but are to be estimated; and, over and above that, there must be a yearly profit before any money goes into the sinking fund for redemption. As a matter of fact, so much may be allowed for profit that no money at all may go into the sinking fund, and the facility may remain as a profit-earning facility for fifty, seventy-five, or one hundred years. There is no possibility of such big undertakings as the Kangaroo Point and Indooroopilly bridges being paid for in twenty-five or forty years. It is more than likely to be a matter of fifty, seventy-five, or one hundred years. One can see that, with the natural growth of the city, when traffic demands, when trade and commerce demand, and when community interest demands, that that facility shall belong to the people, what a great lever the owner of that facility will have for compensation! There is every possibility that he will have to be compensated for fifty or seventy years' profits.

It has been said that this is one of the greatest "go-getting" measures ever brought into this House. It is a bad Bill, and one which this party will oppose at every stage.

The Bill as brought down stifles close examination. One of the clauses contains something like 245 lines, and, on an average of nine words to a line, there are over 2,205 words in that clause, or about two columns of an ordinary newspaper. Is it conceivable that one clause of a measure which we are asked to consider and debate should be as long as two columns? There is a sentence in that clause containing over 250 words. It is so long that, when you get to the end of it, you forget what it is all about. Let us consider the clause in detail and what it covers. It covers the powers of the Governor in Council—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not in order in discussing the details at this stage.

Mr. COOPER: I am not discussing the meaning of the clause, Mr. Speaker; I am just saying what the clause seeks to do.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order in discussing what the clause contains at this stage.

Mr. COOPER: I think, Mr. Speaker, that your reading of that portion of the Standing Orders is wrong; nevertheless, I accept your ruling.

The Bill has been so badly framed that no one should support it. This extraordinary clause to which I have referred covers the powers of the Governor in Council, the further powers of the Governor in Council, the duration of the period of the life of the concession, the maximum tolls, the exemptions, the method of collecting tolls, the payment for information, and further provisions for the duration of the franchise period. It also contains a number of other provisions. The clause should be broken up into a dozen or fifteen clauses.

The Bill also gives to the owner of the facility the rights and powers of a constructing authority. Constructing authorities in this State are very few indeed. The Commissioner for Railways is one, and the Commissioner of Main Roads is another; yet the owner of the facility that is to be given a concession under this Bill is to have the rights and powers of a constructing authority.

The Bill protects the owner in every instance in the case of mishap. In many ways the owner is given the standing of a local authority. Can we conceive the great difficulties that will arise when we have a company having all the rights and powers of a local authority? The Bill goes so far as to say that any person injured owing to the negligence of this constructing authority or the owner of this facility may recover damages. Then it has this particular saving part—that, so far as damages are concerned, the owner of this utility shall be no further liable to damages than if the facility were constructed by a local authority.

Hon. members who have been members of a local authority and many unfortunate people outside this House know full well how difficult it is to obtain damages from a local authority. It is almost impossible to obtain damages from a local authority

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in respect of damage caused on the highway.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Yes, if you have not sound grounds to go on.

Mr. COOPER: Everybody knows that a local authority can plead things in court which a private individual cannot plead. The Minister who interjects ought to know that. The Bill we are now discussing gives to the owner of the facility the rights of a local authority where damages are concerned.

The hon. member for Oxley made one definite appeal in his advocacy. He said, "We want work! We want capital." That appeal would probably have been absolutely complete had the hon. member added one other thing. That is, "We want profits." If the hon. member had added that, one could have listened with pleasure to him, because it would have been an open confession. The hon. member was careful to omit that.

Mr. WARREN: Do you think these people are charitable institutions?

Mr. COOPER: I have no illusions on that point. I know they are not going to be charitable institutions. I know they are going to make a profit out of the very people the hon. member represents—the primary producer, who gets his money from the big Brisbane markets, and will be required to pay when travelling to that market over toll facilities. Yet the hon. member sits unconcernedly in his seat and wants to know what is wrong with the whole business! Why, in England, the class of people whom he represents comprised a great section that led the attack on the toll-bar system, and got it abolished. Now we have the hon. member for Murrumba coming at this hour of the day and attempting to destroy all the things which have been won for the people whom he represents. If the hon. member is fair to the people he represents, if he is fair to the great primary producing interests of this State, who are entitled to a free highway—above all people they are entitled to a free highway—his place is on this side of the House. To see that he gets here I shall move an amendment to the effect that all primary producers be allowed to travel free on all facilities constructed under this Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Would you allow all the railwaymen to travel free on the railways?

Mr. COOPER: May I remind the Minister that, when they have time for travelling, the railwaymen get a free pass from the Minister, and at times when they are not entitled to a free pass he sees that they get a railway concession at one quarter of the ordinary rates.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Are you opposing that?

Mr. COOPER: No, but I am pointing out to the Minister, in reply to his sneering remark, that, when it comes to the primary producer being given the right to travel free over these facilities, he is going to sit tight, because he has a greater regard for the "go-getter," the profit monger, and for that section of the community which wants to make profits out of the public facilities which go to make a great State.

I am opposed to the Bill on the principle that it is giving away rights that belong

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to the people. It is giving away things that should be entirely in the hands of the people. It is imposing a specific tax upon specific portions of the community that should not be imposed. It is tending to hamper trade and commerce. Without free trade and commerce in this State we cannot grow and make that progress that we should. It is a step backwards; and any step that is taken backwards cannot be a step to the eventual gain of the community.

Mr. DUFFY (*Eacham*) [4.56]: I rise to support this Bill, because it will give the people an opportunity to get these facilities much earlier than would otherwise be the case. In listening to the arguments of the hon. member who has just resumed his seat, one would think that this Bill was going to prohibit local authorities building bridges and roads that they wish to construct. The hon. member can be quite satisfied that it is only after consultation with the local authority concerned that the Minister will grant private enterprise the right to build any road or bridge. It does not prevent the local authority from building the road or bridge. If the local authorities had not a right to be consulted previous to any franchise being granted, I certainly would not be prepared to support the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They will have first opportunity of building the facilities.

Mr. DUFFY: If a local authority feels that it will in the near future be able to build any utility, it will be able to say to the Minister, "We are unable to build it to-day, but we will make provision for doing so in the near future, and we will not agree to a franchise being granted to private enterprise." That being so, I am prepared to support the Bill.

I could not help but be interested in the argument put forward by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. He almost fainted at the idea of the people using these facilities having to pay for them. To put the other side of the question: Who has to pay for them if they are built by the local authorities? The landowners in the district have to pay in those cases; and the hon. member is prepared to allow the landowners to carry the whole of the burden of these public utilities that are to be built, yet he almost faints at the idea of the people using them being asked to pay for them. Local authority representatives are elected by the rate-payers; and, if they decide that it is not a utility that they are going to carry out themselves, why deny the people the use of that utility if private enterprise will build it, always remembering that the public are well protected in the franchise? There is no desire to grant these franchises indiscriminately or without proper protection. They will all be carefully examined to determine first of all whether the specifications are of the standard required by the Commissioner of Main Roads, and later the public will be protected by the local authorities and the Minister in charge.

I do not see that there is any going back to the dark ages, as stated by the hon. member for Herbert, but quite the reverse. He stated that we were going back to the dark ages, but in those days the toll bars were for an entirely different purpose to the toll bridges to be constructed under this Bill. The taxes in that case were collected

for the upkeep of private persons. The franchise under this Bill is for a limited period, and, when the cost has been defrayed, the facility will pass over to the local authority.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition quoted the answers given by the Secretary for Railways to a recent deputation.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He misquoted it.

Mr. DUFFY: The Cairns Range road is in my electorate. It was not necessary to read the Minister's reply to know that the statement of the hon. member for Herbert was misleading. The hon. member said that he quoted the whole of the Minister's reply. I was rather surprised that the hon. member should take up such a misleading attitude, when he must know that the facts are available.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: What are you reading from?

Mr. DUFFY: I am reading from the "Votes and Proceedings" of the Legislative Assembly of the 25th instant. One would expect that the hon. member for Herbert would not try to mislead within twenty-four hours of the question being answered. The question was—

"1. How many toll bridges or roads are now in existence in Queensland?"

"2. What was the aggregate toll collections derived from these public facilities, if any, during the last financial year, and what was the cost of collecting the same?"

The answer was—

"1. Three—Tambourine Mountain road, Cairns Tableland road, and Logan bridge.

"2. Tambourine (from 1st August, 1930, to 30th June, 1931)—Gross tolls, £653 3s. 9d.; and costs of collection, £204 1s. 8d. Cairns Tableland (from 1st September, 1930, to 30th June, 1931)—Gross tolls, £914 3s.; and costs of collection, £622 5s. 5d."

The hon. member said he quoted all the answer, but he did not. I will quote the balance of the answer—

"The Cairns Tableland costs include costs of gatekeepers who also control traffic on the range section. No additional cost has been incurred by adding the collection of tolls to their duties."

That is the part he left out.

Mr. PEASE: That makes no difference.

Mr. DUFFY: The inference the hon. member wished to convey was that the tolls collected on the Cairns road only resulted in a benefit of about £300 to the ratepayers in that district. I say that the ratepayers received the benefit of the full £900.

Mr. PEASE: Who will pay the rates when private enterprise gets it?

Mr. DUFFY: They have not got it.

Mr. PEASE: I am saying that your Government may hand it over to them. They would give away anything that it suits them to give.

Mr. DUFFY: The gatekeepers are there to control the traffic on that road, as well as to collect tolls, thereby requiring a gatekeeper at each end, whereas one only

would be required if the duty was just to collect tolls.

Mr. PEASE: Who would control the traffic for private enterprise?

Mr. DUFFY: That does not excuse the hon. member for trying to mislead the House. I must say that, in common with others, I would not have agreed to a toll being put on the Cairns Range road if it had not relieved the ratepayers to the extent of the amount collected by tolls.

Mr. POLLOCK: Does this Bill not give control to those collecting tolls on these new roads?

Mr. DUFFY: Not necessarily, because on a road of that nature you would need to have some control of the traffic. It is quite possible to imagine reasons which might induce private enterprise to construct roads and bridges which local authorities would not undertake. Take, for instance, the Tambourine Mountain road. The burden may be very heavy on the ratepayers; but it is possible that, had that road not been constructed by the State, a private company might have built the road with the right to charge tolls, because it might take into consideration the possibility of providing attractions at the mountain end for tourist traffic. Such a company might go further than just building roads and bridges. Knowing that in every case they must be properly constructed and the community is fully protected so far as I can see, I intend to support the Bill.

The hon. member for Herbert made the point that, if the local authorities constructed these facilities, all the profits would go back to the people; but do they always go back to the people? Where are the profits of the State enterprises? They did not go back to the people.

Mr. PEASE: What are you referring to?

Mr. DUFFY: That would be the case if some of these roads and bridges did not turn out to be profitable. The ratepayers would not be saddled with the burden. Already the burden of rates in many shires is very heavy, and anything that will relieve the ratepayers in that respect will have my support.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*) [5.8]: I most heartily support this Bill. I have been advocating toll bridges and roads for years. In my opinion, it is the only way in which we shall ever get many roads in the near future. The Bill will assist the construction of roads and other means of communication to most inaccessible places. Not long ago some enterprising people suggested the bridging of Bramble Bay. I am sorry to say that that proposal fell through; but another enterprising gentleman is now considering a project for a viaduct from Brighton to Clontarf. That is a big enterprise, and it would never be undertaken in our time or anywhere near our time by the local authorities.

I was very much surprised to hear the hon. member who spoke last from the opposite benches talk about the wants of the producer, and about the necessity for considering him. The hon. member himself helped to put very heavy burdens on the producer, and had no consideration at all for him. We should endeavour to put less taxation on the hard-worked producer. There are roads on the North Coast to-day

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which are not being used by the producer to any great extent, and a toll on the main North Coast road would be a splendid proposition, for the users of that road would contribute towards its cost and help to build up a real North Coast highway.

We should have controlled the roads and tried to cater for the tourist traffic along the North Coast. If a Government had any foresight at all, it would cater for the tourist traffic; but how are we to do that with the limited amount of money at our disposal to-day? It is impossible, and there do not appear to be any indications that this traffic will be catered for by any Government in the near future. If we can encourage people who have sufficient enterprise and sufficient pluck to construct a highway, a bridge, or a viaduct under a scheme providing for a limited franchise, then it would not be good business to ignore such an opportunity.

Mr. DASH: The Bill does not limit the franchise.

Mr. WARREN: It does. No Government would permit individuals or corporations to construct bridges under a scheme providing for an unlimited franchise.

Mr. HANLON: In some cases eternity is the limit under the Bill.

Mr. WARREN: There is no such thing as having eternity as a limit. Whatever is to be done will be done in a businesslike manner. If these people are able to make a little money, then, good luck to them. I want to see them make some money. It would be a great pity if these people had sufficient pluck to build a bridge and then the enterprise failed. I am sure that every decent man would be sorry for such an individual. If we can induce these people to construct roads or bridges, and there is a primary producer with a mean enough soul to say that he does not stand for such a scheme, then I would be sorry for such a primary producer, and I would not like to represent him in this House.

Mr. DASH (*Mundingburra*) [5.12]: I am surprised that the Minister did not give us a little more information when he delivered his second reading speech. I congratulate him upon omitting to refer to a most important feature. Listening to hon. members on the Government side of the House, one would think that private individuals and corporations were prepared to construct roads and bridges all over Queensland; but that is not so. These interested parties are going to construct roads or bridges only in thickly populated centres. What would be the use of constructing a road a few miles from the city where there was no traffic? It is all moonshine for the farmers to expect roads to be built to their farms under this Bill.

At 5.13 p.m.,

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

Mr. DUFFY: They do not anticipate that at all.

Mr. DASH: After listening to hon. members opposite, one would conclude that roads were going to be constructed to all the farms in Queensland.

Mr. DUFFY: Nobody said that.

Mr. DASH: There is no doubt that the Minister strongly inferred that. The Bill gives the power to the owner of the under-

taking to levy tolls in respect of it, which means that every working man who finds it necessary to cross the facility must pay a toll. No exemption is granted for pedestrians. So far as I can judge, no road or bridge will be constructed unless the franchise is for a period of twenty to thirty years or over. The Minister said that the franchise is to be given for a limited period.

Again, the fact must be taken into consideration that the owner of the toll facility will not be at any loss. He will not miss the dividend expected in any one year, because provision is made that, in the event of a loss, it is to be made up by an extension of the franchise. The owner must also be recouped for any repairs undertaken to the bridge or road facility. The limitation of the franchise, therefore, must go by the board.

Mr. BRAND: Do you think this Bill will create any work?

Mr. DASH: That is only a "stall," with the object of getting the Bill through without opposition. No loss can come to the owner of a toll facility. Every expenditure is covered, even to postage stamps and telegrams expended in obtaining the franchise. After the road or bridge has been completed, the Commissioner of Main Roads must make an estimate of the cost of such road or bridge. He must take into consideration the fact that the work is to be carried out in a businesslike and workmanlike manner. Then arises the question of the resumption of the necessary land. For instance, the owner of the Kangaroo Point bridge franchise will have power to resume land necessary for the construction of that facility and for the workshops that will have to be built in connection with the work. Immediately the land is resumed it becomes the property of the Crown, and the owner of the road or bridge is to be compensated in connection with the resumption. There is no provision in the Bill that immediately the facility is completed the workshop is to be demolished and the land submitted to auction. Unless the Minister or some of his supporters can satisfactorily explain that clause, then it seems to me that the owner of the toll facility can erect business premises on that land, and retain those premises until the bridge is paid off, therefore, he will be on a good wicket by having that side line. The Minister informed us that the local authorities concerned would have free access over the road. Many local authorities do their works by contract, and their contractors' vehicles must pay the toll when using the road or bridge. That extra cost will have to be paid for by the local authority. If in fifteen years, when that prosperity which the Government say will come has eventuated, industries may be established in the vicinity of a toll concession and residences built on residential sites. We know that certain areas are now set aside under the Local Authorities Act as business and residential sites respectively.

It may happen that on one side of the river you have a town and on the other side some industrial undertaking. Workmen travelling to and from work will be required to pay a toll. That will be most expensive to workers who, in the circumstances, are probably receiving only a miserable wage.

Mr. DUFFY: But they have to pay to-day.

[Mr. Warren.]

Mr. DASH: No; the highways are free to-day.

Mr. DUFFY: But the tramways and ferries are not.

Mr. DASH: We have to safeguard the position of the worker in this particular instance.

The Minister may publicly advertise for the submission to him of toll proposals, or he may consider proposals that may be submitted without any advertising. So far as I can see, it is not compulsory that tenders shall be called. Further, when a facility is completed, the Commissioner of Main Roads goes into the whole question of costs in order to ascertain what is a reasonable toll rate. In arriving at his figures he will be required to take into consideration all moneys expended in the construction of the undertaking, as well as any expenditure incurred by the Crown.

The hon. member for Bremer touched on the question of telephone facilities in relation to these toll facilities which we are discussing. It may also be necessary to lay gas pipes or electric light cables along a road or over a bridge which is the subject of a franchise under this measure. It will be a very costly business if the authorities concerned in those utilities are required to pay toll on all occasions when their employees enter upon the franchise property in the performance of their duties.

We are told that a franchise may be interminable, and that vehicles belonging to the Crown will be exempt from the payment of tolls. One matter which I think should be considered is this: It may happen that a stretch of road is good at both ends, but that for 10 miles in between there is a particularly bad portion that may be the subject of a franchise under this Bill. In those circumstances, a toll will be collected from traffic in respect of that small portion, although the local authorities concerned will be required to keep both ends of the road in good order and repair, and they will not be able to charge anything in connection with it. There is nothing in the Bill to say that authority shall be granted to construct a facility from one town to another. One company may be granted a right to build one-half of the road, while another company may have the right to build the other half; and both these companies can charge a toll between city and city or town and town. There may be half a dozen owners on one stretch of road, and a person may be compelled to pay a toll every 8 or 10 miles along the road. There is nothing in the Bill to prevent that sort of thing. A franchise may be granted for the construction of 80 or 90 miles of road facility; and there is nothing to say that the work shall not be let in subcontracts, with each contractor levying a toll over his portion.

Every facility is given to the owner of a road in arriving at the amount of the toll. He has to be paid the prescribed dividend. Whatever dividend he states in his prospectus and is agreed upon by the Minister or the Governor in Council has to be paid before any amount is placed in the sinking fund. Directors' fees and managerial expenses have also to be paid. Anything left over after all these charges are paid is placed in the sinking fund. The cost of collecting the tolls and the cost of upkeep are also to be a

charge on the facility. If there is any loss or any damage to a road, that has to be made up; and the tolls are to be continued until the owners of the facility have been recouped for every penny of expenditure incurred. There is no risk to the owner of the road. There is no risk of him losing any money in the concern. The only risk the holders of the franchise may have is in the event of their funds running short when they are constructing the facility, and they are unable to secure further sums and become bankrupt. Then the Commissioner of Main Roads may offer the facility for sale; and, if the amount received is not sufficient to pay for the facility, the Crown has to carry on the work and charge a toll until recouped for the outlay, and then, if it chooses, it can hand the facility back to the company. It will thus be seen that the company has nothing to lose and everything to gain.

The Minister says he can fix a definite period for the franchise. No doubt he can fix a definite period for the franchise; but, according to another portion of the Bill, he must guarantee the owner of the franchise against any loss.

There are several other matters in the Bill which can be better dealt with in Committee. I protest against the long clauses in the Bill. Some of them are of such length that hon. members will be deprived of an opportunity to discuss them properly. That should not be the case in an important Bill like this. Hon. members are only allowed twenty-five minutes' discussion on each clause of the Bill, and it would take twenty-five minutes to read some of the clauses, let alone discuss them. The clauses could have been divided up so that hon. members would have had an opportunity of getting at the truth in regard to the Bill.

The Bill simply enables the Governor in Council to hand over any roads and bridges to local authorities at the cost of construction without any reference whatever to the local authorities. Should the time arrive when the Government want to unload a facility on a local authority, all they have to do is to start an agitation to induce the people in the local authority area to take it over. That is the only time local authorities have a say as to whether they will have anything to do with the road facility or not. They have no say in the construction of it, nor as to what tolls are to be levied. The primary producers will have to pay a toll if they only cross the road. If they only live half a mile away from the gate, they will have to pay the toll. There is no provision in the Bill to exempt primary producers in the district from having to pay the toll on the road. Government members may think that the farmers are breaking their necks to have these road facilities foisted on them; but they are not if they are to be charged for travelling over them.

There is also no limitation as to the distance which they have to travel before a toll has to be paid; and it is just as well that farmers should know that. The Minister should exempt farmers from having to pay a toll when they merely cross the road.

When a dispute occurs in connection with the facility, and the owner of the road disagrees with the certificate given by the Commissioner of Main Roads to the Governor in Council, or if the Governor in Council is

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not satisfied with the Commissioner's estimate of cost of the road facility, the matter may be referred to arbitration under the Interdict Act of 1867. If the decision is not accepted, I gather from the Bill that there is an appeal to the Land Appeal Court under "The Land Act of 1910," which decision is final.

Again, there is nothing in the Bill, so far as I can gather, providing that all these costs will be costs against the facility. There is an opportunity given to these facilities to go on for, say, fifty or sixty years, regardless of any dispute which may arise as to the cost of the facility.

Mr. BUTLER: You are against the Bill.

Mr. DASH: Yes, I have been against it all along. The hon. member will find that the farmers up his way will not be in favour of it. There will only be one facility built under this Bill, and that will be a bridge across the Brisbane River at Kangaroo Point or some other place. So far as road facilities are concerned, I do not think there will be one road constructed.

Mr. MAHER: Why worry?

Mr. DASH: It is as well to point out what we think of the Bill, and not allow it to be foisted on the community without a protest. Even the unemployed will not be exempted from paying a toll if they have to cross a bridge built under this Bill. They will not be allowed to cross, because they will not have the money to pay the toll. They may even have to swim across the river.

The Bill makes no exception in favour of swagmen or other people out of work, and I do not think there is much in the claim that the measure will create employment, because I do not think that much work will be done under it.

The Bill contains many provisions to which we object, and in Committee on the clauses involved we shall point out to the people what they really mean, so that there will be a complete understanding as to the effect of the measure.

Mr. BUTLER (*Port Curtis*) [5.36]: I have very great pleasure in rising to support this Bill. The Minister in his second reading speech gave a very clear and full explanation of its provisions.

Mr. POLLOCK: Would you mind explaining clause 6?

Mr. BUTLER: The Minister has already done that. Hon. members opposite who have spoken on this Bill have talked as though the only works to be constructed under it would be roads, whereas I think the principal works likely to be built under its provisions will be bridges—in places where it is not possible to get such facilities under any other circumstances. Such facilities will be welcomed by the primary producers as well as by the travelling public throughout Queensland.

I personally welcome the Bill for three reasons—first, because it will mean the introduction of new capital; secondly, because it will provide work; and thirdly, because it will relieve local authorities of some of their burdens.

As to the first consideration, we should give every inducement for capital to come to Queensland. The reduction of interest

[*Mr. Dash.*

which is taking place under the loan conversion proposals is, in my opinion, going to direct capital to Queensland for the financing of safe propositions such as will be covered by this Bill. Interest on Government loans has been reduced to 4 per cent. and less in some cases, and capital looking for a safe investment and a good return will have the opportunity of coming to Queensland and getting a far better return than could be obtained from Government loans, and at the same time doing that on perfectly safe propositions.

The hon. member for Herbert this afternoon, in reply to the Secretary for Railways, said that the banks had any amount of money for investment, and would be only too pleased to finance local authorities, and that there was no necessity for such a thing as this Bill, which would open the door to private enterprise. That is a most ridiculous statement. The hon. member must know perfectly well that, if he goes to any bank with all the security in the world, he will find it very hard to borrow any money at the present time. If the banks have plenty of money and they are looking for business, why are they not lending to primary producers and other people who can give them all the security they want? Because they have not got it. The banks only buy and sell money just as other people buy and sell tea, flour, sugar, etc., and naturally the man who has money locks up his funds unless he can use them profitably. The statement of the hon. member for Herbert was so foolish that no one in his ordinary senses would take any notice of it. The banks would be acting against their best interests if they were to do as the hon. member for Herbert suggests.

The hon. member for Bremer stated that the Bill permitted a franchise up to fifty, seventy-five, and even 100 years.

Mr. DASH: That is possible.

Mr. BUTLER: Would any person with ordinary common sense or any corporation or company invest money in the construction of a bridge or any traffic facility knowing that the money would not be available to them for a period of 100 years, except by dribs and drabs, representing a few pounds per annum? The statement of the hon. member is too ridiculous for serious consideration. No one in his sane senses would advance money for investment if he knew that he could not recover it again for seventy-five or 100 years, except by dribs and drabs.

The hon. member for Bremer also stated that the local authorities were being pushed out by this measure, and that the way was being made clear for private enterprise. Why did not the local authority controlling the Loganholme area construct the bridge across the Logan River? We know that the person controlling the ferry at that point paid as much as £4,000 per annum for the right to levy tolls on the ferry; and we also know that he bid as high as £11,000 for the toll rights on the bridge. If the banks have the necessary money and if the local authorities were prepared to construct the bridge, then why did the local authorities not build this bridge themselves? They did not build the bridge because they were unable to obtain the necessary finance. The entire opposition to the Bill is based upon a hate to see private enterprise given a chance to make a little profit. Hon. members opposite do

hate to see anyone given the opportunity to invest money with a view to a profitable return; but it is the policy of our Government to extend every facility to private enterprise. That is what we are doing in passing this Bill. It will result in the attraction of new capital, which, in turn, will provide much needed work. The Opposition appear to be entirely ignorant of the fact that the more capital attracted by the Bill for traffic facilities the more work there will be available, and less unemployment will follow. That is a very important aspect of this subject. I have already stated that I approve of the Bill on the third ground—that it will provide relief for local authorities. I speak with a knowledge of local authority matters, because I was a local authority man myself for many years. The local authority with which I was associated constructed roads through the shire area, but 90 per cent. of the traffic over the crossings represents traffic passing right through the area. That means that only 10 per cent. of the traffic over those crossings represents the traffic constituted by the ratepayers. Is it a fair thing to expect the ratepayers of a local authority area to provide facilities such as expensive bridges across rivers when only 10 per cent. of the traffic is constituted by the ratepayers themselves? In the area to which I refer 90 per cent. of the traffic represents through traffic constituted by people who do not contribute any revenue in that area by way of rates. The local authorities throughout Queensland will welcome the Bill; and, if the proposals are made sufficiently attractive, a sufficient amount of new capital will be forthcoming for the construction of traffic facilities in many places.

Hon. members opposite have twitted Government members with the statement that the primary producers will have to pay the toll. As a primary producer, and as the representative of a large number of primary producers, I welcome this Bill. In many instances it will provide traffic facilities in the shape of bridges and roads, which will be utilised in the main by thorough and tourist traffic. Primary producers will welcome the opportunity of having a first-class facility constructed over an impassable river or bad crossing. It will be constructed by private enterprise and eventually become the property of the local authority without any cost. I welcome the Bill, and I am satisfied that the local authorities and primary producers will also welcome it. The more traffic facilities we have built under this Bill the better it will be for Queensland and for the man on the land.

Mr. KIRWAN (*Brisbane*) [5.46]: I certainly am prepared to agree with the Minister to the extent that this is an important measure, although we may disagree on many of its provisions.

The hon. member who just resumed his seat questioned the statement made by our Deputy Leader in connection with the funds of banks. He said it was a ridiculous statement to make that the banks were unable to get their funds placed at the present time. The Deputy Leader clearly enunciated that the statement was not his statement, but merely an extract from the report of the last annual meeting of the Queensland National Bank. For the benefit of the hon. member for Port Curtis and other hon.

members, I will read the specific statement which justified the Deputy Leader in reiterating it in this House—

“The balance-sheet has been in your hands for some time, and I will briefly refer to it. Let us take the profit and loss account first—the net profit shows a drop of £62,665, increased income tax paid during the period under review compared with the previous year is responsible for £27,135, and, owing to the unsettled state of affairs generally, we have not been able to fully employ our funds.”

Mr. PEASE: The Commercial Bank of Australia said the same.

Mr. KIRWAN: There is a very definite statement. It is an effective reply to the hon. member for Port Curtis and his statement that the utterance of our Deputy Leader was ridiculous. I will read the remaining paragraph—

“Our percentage of cash to total liabilities stands at 21.84, and our liquid assets to total liabilities at 48.94, being the highest for years and over-strong.”

At 5.49 p.m.,

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. KIRWAN: This statement in the report evidently escaped the notice of the hon. member for Herbert, and it is another effective reply to the hon. member for Port Curtis—

“We are granting all sound applications for accommodation, but there is very little demand.”

What has he to say to that? It would seem to indicate that this restoration of confidence of which we have heard so much has not arrived as per time-table. It is running late. I hope that the Treasurer will do something to accelerate the arrival of this confidence we heard so much about. We were given to understand during the last election campaign that, provided the party which now adorns the Treasury benches were returned to office, there would be a restoration of confidence and an influx of capital, which this State so badly needed. The Treasurer stated the other day that, owing to the Lang Administration in New South Wales, something like £250,000 had come from that State to Queensland for investment. Is it possible that this Bill is associated with the arrival of that capital? Is any of that capital to be used in the construction of the Kangaroo Point or Indooroopilly bridge?

Mr. BUTLER: What is your opinion of the Bill?

Mr. KIRWAN: I am opposed to the Bill because it is a reactionary measure, reverting, as it does, to a principle which was abolished in British communities many years ago. The reign of office of the present Government has been productive of such a state of affairs that they are unable to obtain the money for the construction of important public facilities.

In introducing the measure the Minister referred to a committee appointed in the United States of America which had reported adversely on the approval by Congress generally of agreements dealing with facilities such as we are now discussing. The Minister's reference was, no doubt, intended to justify the action of the Government in allowing him to deal with these

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agreements. I say definitely that, in view of the tremendous sum of money involved, a proposal to build a bridge at Kangaroo Point, Indooroopilly, or any other place is of sufficient importance to justify a special Bill being passed through this Parliament to ratify each agreement entered into. That would give Parliament an opportunity of discussing the details of any such agreement.

In analysing this Bill, one is startled to find an important departure from public policy in this State, inasmuch as the Minister is given full power to deal with these important matters. As a matter of fact, the Minister can either invite tenders or consider proposals for the construction of, say, the Kangaroo Point bridge. I understand that representatives from Messrs. Dorman, Long, and Company, Limited, recently considered such a proposal, and submitted a proposition to the Brisbane City Council. That proposition was unacceptable. There is nothing to prevent the Minister from considering that proposition; and he is not bound to give another firm an opportunity of submitting a proposition which may be more favourable. Under this measure the Cabinet will be empowered to close with any particular offer.

Another extraordinary power in the Bill is that which gives practically legislative authority to the Executive. I have a definite recollection of an address delivered shortly after the last elections by the Secretary for Public Instruction, at, I think, the Constitutional Club, in which the hon. gentleman said that one of the main principles of his Government would be the restoration of the principles of democratic government. No one in his sane senses would dare to suggest that the restriction of parliamentary privileges now being carried out is in accord with the hon. gentleman's remarks.

No Bill has been introduced into this Assembly during the reign of the present Government that has not contained a clause giving the Governor in Council power to do this or to do that; and, if there is anything left out of the Bill, then the Governor in Council has power to make regulations, which is tantamount to usurping the powers of this Parliament.

Mr. TOYER: You will find that that power was cut out of several Bills.

Mr. KIRWAN: That power is contained in this Bill. It is rather strange that a Government, which set itself up as being a Government in favour of restoring the fundamental principles of democracy, should, immediately it assumes the reins of power, be responsible for placing in every Bill introduced a clause containing this obnoxious principle. I do not intend to dilate on this question beyond saying that no less an authority than the Lord Chief Justice of England has seen fit, in a book which he wrote some time ago, to refer to this matter as the "The New Despotism." We know that some of the leading barristers in this city have also spoken on this matter, and recently the "Daily Mail" was so perturbed at the drift that was taking place in regard to the Governor in Council usurping the privileges and functions of Parliament that it had a special article on the subject, and it would not be out of place to quote that article. After pointing out the various Acts which contain this power

and making special reference to the Income (Unemployment Relief) Tax Act of last year, the "Daily Mail" of 29th June last had this to say—

"Actually, a survey of the legislation of the last session will make it clear that the present Government has failed lamentably to check the practice to which its members had taken strong exception. Not the least serious aspect of the whole development is the attempt which generally is made to establish beyond all possible dispute the validity of the Order in Council. This is not merely done in general terms; occasionally the attempt is more specific. For example, in the Unemployment Relief Act of 1930 it is declared that the regulations made 'shall not be challenged in any proceedings whatsoever.' This is an extreme example; but it is typical of the movement which aims not merely at acquiring legislative powers for departmental officers, but which aims at withdrawing departmental legislation from the supervision of the courts. It seems to be quite certain that the general public is unaware of the significance of these developments; and it is high time that public criticism was brought to bear upon the efforts of departmental officers who have been allowed to assume the power which should rest in Parliament alone. If proof were needed that this process is still developing, it is to be found in the Financial Emergency Bill passed during the special session of Parliament last week, which leaves more to the Governor in Council than is accomplished in the Bill itself."

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: That principle was introduced by the Labour Government.

Mr. KIRWAN: Listen to the hon. gentleman making an excuse of that kind! Just imagine the hon. gentleman getting behind the skirts of the Labour Government and attempting to justify the Government's policy because the Labour Government which preceded him introduced this principle into Parliament! The hon. gentleman and his colleagues should practise what the hon. gentleman preached at the Constitutional Club. The "Daily Mail" pointed out that, when hon. members now supporting the Government were on this side of the House, they condemned in the strongest language this principle being included in any Bill—and now they are on the Government benches they are extending the principle.

The other day the Secretary for Labour and Industry proclaimed again for another period an Act of Parliament which had expired. That certainly is a most extraordinary power to be vested in any Minister or Cabinet. Although that measure was passed by this Legislature to operate for twelve months only, there is a section in it which enabled the Minister to re-enact it for another period. Commenting on that particular act of administration by the present Government, the "Daily Mail," in an article of 1st July last, said this—

"A striking illustration of the extent to which Parliament has allowed the Executive to usurp its functions is offered by the gazettal of an Order in Council

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extending the operation of the Unemployment Relief Tax Act for another year. This is an order imposing taxation. The necessity of continuing the unemployment relief tax is not questioned, but the principle that no taxation should be imposed without the consent of Parliament has hitherto been regarded as an essential safeguard of democracy."

There you have that fundamental principle flouted by the Government, who told the people at the last general election that they were going to protect the fundamental principles of the Constitution, and to see that democracy would be given effect to in administration.

The Secretary for Railways stated that he believed that the farming community of this State would be much better off under the toll system. I do not know exactly how he arrives at that conclusion.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I never mentioned that.

MR. KIRWAN: The hon. member for Port Curtis justified the stand which the Minister took, and the hon. member for Murrumba said that he would not feel at all flattered if he represented a farming community that was not prepared to pay for services rendered. He stated that, if there was a district in his area where a bridge was essential to enable farmers to get their produce to market and the local authority would not build the bridge, if some firm of contractors was prepared to build the bridge, the farming community would be prepared to pay for the services rendered by the bridge.

Speaking of the toll system, at the weekend I happened to be at Tambourine Mountain, where the toll system is in operation. I found that the people who own land on Tambourine Mountain, whether it be town lots or farms held under ordinary agricultural conditions, pay their share of taxation as the owners of the land, and they also pay the toll every time they come down the mountain.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The toll was put on to relieve them of their taxation, and they were satisfied.

MR. KIRWAN: In this instance they are not only paying local authority taxation, but they pay the toll every time they use the road.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: All the money goes to relieve the farmers from taxation.

MR. KIRWAN: The Minister laid much stress on the suggestion that it was rather strange for the Opposition to oppose this Bill, since it would help to find work for the unemployed.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Hear, hear!

MR. KIRWAN: The hon. gentleman reiterates that suggestion. We were told that the Bill, the Industries Assistance Bill, which was passed by this Government, would have the effect of causing a large number of new industries to spring up and would go a long way in the direction of relieving the unemployment problem. I do not question the good faith of the Government in passing that measure. I think that when they passed it, they honestly believed the result would be that a number of persons would take advantage of it to establish new indus-

tries or extend others already operating, and for that reason they were inclined to believe that it would assist in relieving unemployment.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You know why it has not had that effect.

MR. KIRWAN: All I have to say is that the Act has not realised expectations.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: And you know the reason.

MR. KIRWAN: There is no reason for believing that the confidence that this measure would create employment—which was largely responsible for its introduction—will be realised. Anyone who has carefully studied the Bill must realise that it practically provides for carrying out works which are now within the province of the local authorities and the Commissioner of Main Roads. The suggestion is made, however, that the local authorities cannot do such work. Take, for example, the erection of a bridge on some road which may be termed a highway—that is to say, a road used not only by the people of the district in which it is located for the purpose of going to the railway station, perhaps, but a road such as that between Brisbane and Gympie, which is used as a general thoroughfare by the travelling public as well as by local residents. We passed a Bill last session to give power to local authorities to erect bridges and construct roads under the same circumstances as those laid down in this Bill—that is to say, to enable them to call upon the people who use the roads to foot the bill involved in giving them the benefit of that service. I am told that it was not uncommon to see a string of motor cars a mile and a-half to two miles long waiting for their turn at the Coomera ferry; and there is no question that a large number of those motorists were prepared to pay a toll of even half-a-crown to get across there without delay. What I want to know is how the Minister or the Cabinet can arrive at the conclusion that, if a local authority cannot borrow the money to carry out an essential work like that, a private company can secure the money. Nobody can say that the security of a local authority, backed by the Government of the State, is not at least as good a security as that which a private company could offer. I doubt very much whether in the present conditions of finance in this State or elsewhere in the Commonwealth or in Great Britain any company would be able to raise money as advantageously as those which could be obtained by a local authority whose security was guaranteed by the Government. I am inclined to think that, if the Government of a State or the local authorities within a State are unable to raise the money to carry out these very necessary public works and public utilities, then there is no reason for believing that any company will be able to do it.

MR. BRAND: Why?

MR. KIRWAN: Let me revert for a moment to a period a few years back, when the financial conditions were very much more favourable than they are to-day, and when the rate of interest was very much lower. It was then very much easier for Governments, local authorities, or companies to obtain all the money they required, and in that connection I would like to refer

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to the experience of the New South Wales Government, who entered into a contract with a company which said it was prepared to construct bridges, roads, railways, and a number of other things for the benefit of the public. Hon. members opposite may know something about the history of the Norton Griffiths scheme in New South Wales in this connection. The offer made to the Government of that State was so tempting, so alluring, and so splendid that they entered into a contract with the Norton Griffiths Company. This was not an Australian firm, but a well-known English firm with a large amount of financial backing and all the necessary organisation. The hon. member for Warrego informs me that one of its special pleas for preference in the Dominions in the carrying out of these undertakings was the fact that it was an English firm. This company entered into a contract with the Government of New South Wales, and it cost the Government £300,000 to get out of it. The company did not fulfil its undertaking. Hon. members need not take my statement on that matter. Sir Thomas Henley, when speaking in Committee of Supply in the New South Wales Parliament, as reported in "Hansard" for that State for the session of 1920, said—

"Under the head of 'Miscellaneous Services' an old friend crops up in the item, 'Norton Griffiths and Company—compensation in connection with termination or cancellation of portion of agreement, £60,000.'

"Mr. Lang: I explained that.

"SIR THOMAS HENLEY: I was away when this infamous transaction occurred. I think the total compensation this State has to pay as the result of the blunder committed amounts to about £300,000. The contract entered into was a great wrong done to this country. I protested for hours against it, and the justification for that protest is shown by the fact that the State has been landed in this enormous loss. I mention the matter now in order to tell the House the experience of Canada. Last year, when I travelled through the Dominion, I found that the same firm had entered into a contract there. I applied to the Minister for Public Works for information, and I found that Norton Griffiths had run the Canadian Government into the carrying out of work involving an expenditure of some 4,000,000 dollars. The experience of Canada was similar to our experience here, with this difference, that in Canada the officials must have been cleverer than ours, because, when the Government cancelled the contract, it did not give the firm one penny compensation. The contract was cancelled because Norton Griffiths did not fulfil the conditions, and no compensation was paid."

I have quoted those remarks to emphasise that I am not at all inclined to believe that all this good work in connection with the construction of bridges in this city and in other parts of the State is likely to come about. There we have an illustration in connection with a very large English firm, with splendid organisation and considerable financial backing. No one can question the fact that they were in a position to employ first-class engineers possessing all the expert knowledge requisite to the efficient carrying

out of public works. Yet they failed both in New South Wales, where the Government, unfortunately, through their officials, did not draw up a sufficiently water-tight agreement to compel the company to carry out its contract according to conditions and allow of cancellation without compensation, whereas in Canada the Government cancelled the contract without compensation because the company was unable to fulfil the conditions of contract. Whether the Secretary for Railways will meet with a similar experience it is difficult to say; but that is sufficient to demonstrate that the Government are not likely to meet with the measure of success that they so exuberantly anticipate from the passage of this Bill.

Mr. KELSO: Under this Bill the person or company seeking a franchise must produce security before any franchise is granted.

Mr. KERR: They have also to lodge security.

Mr. KIRWAN: This Government may be an extraordinary Government. It may possess all those qualifications that the Governments of Canada and New South Wales did not possess in dealing with the Norton Griffiths Company.

Mr. KELSO: How many years ago was that?

Mr. KIRWAN: It was since the war. I am justified in asking how, if a firm of the standing and reputation of Norton Griffiths and Company failed to carry out contracts entered into with the Governments of New South Wales and Canada, the Government of this State can hope to get some mythical company to construct a bridge over the Brisbane River at Kangaroo Point.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: Do you want the bridge there?

Mr. KIRWAN: A special commission was appointed to report on the most suitable site for the erection of a bridge across the Brisbane River, the idea being to relieve the congestion of traffic at Victoria Bridge. That commission reported in favour of the Kangaroo Point site; but at the time we had in power in the City Council a lot of business men, well-known Nationalists, and they decided to construct a bridge where it was not recommended, and at a point where any man not possessed of more than average intelligence knows that immediately the bridge is built across the river at Kangaroo Point the bridge at Grey street will be practically useless.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: Do you want a bridge over the river at Kangaroo Point?

Mr. KIRWAN: If the bridge were to be constructed, it should have been constructed at Kangaroo Point, for the simple reason that it would prevent all the heavy traffic going up the main streets of this city.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: Then you do not want a bridge at Kangaroo Point?

Mr. KIRWAN: I want the bridge; but I am not prepared to have that bridge built under the conditions laid down in this Bill. I am not a prophet, nor am I the son of a prophet; but I can venture the opinion that that bridge will never be built under the conditions laid down in this measure.

[Mr. Kirwan.]

Mr. DUNLOP (*Rockhampton*) [7.20]: I desire to make a few observations on this Bill, which, to be consistent with my vote at the introductory stage, and in accord with my attitude last session, I most strenuously oppose, because I object to the principle of tolls. Much talk has been indulged in by hon. members on both sides on this particular measure; and it is to be regretted that the Secretary for Labour and Industry does not now act up to the spirit of the amendment which he moved last week on a motion submitted by the hon. member for Gregory. Hon. members will remember that the Minister concerned moved an amendment to provide that on the question then being discussed all parties in this Chamber should co-operate in the interests of the country.

This Bill provides that certain work shall be given to private companies, because neither the Government nor the local authorities are in a financial position to carry out those works. There are many hon. members on the Government side who are opposed to this Bill, but under the wretched party system they have to choose the lesser of two evils. Why make a party question of a matter like this? It merely proves that the two Independent members of this House—we have not both spoken yet, and no doubt we may differ on this particular Bill—(laughter)—can get up and speak according to our conscience, and act in the best interests of the country. That is my reply to the Secretary for Labour and Industry.

A considerable amount of twaddle has been spoken on this matter; and my only regret is that the windows of this Chamber were not thrown wide open to let the absurd words escape more freely, because they are not conducive to a careful consideration of this important question.

An attempt was made to create the boggy that neither the Government nor the local authorities can afford to carry out these works. My attitude is that such matters should be decided by the will of the people concerned. If the people in a particular locality are in favour of permitting private enterprise to do the work, and are also prepared to pay the toll charges fixed after a consideration of all matters, then it is a matter for them to decide. After all, that is democracy for which I stand. This Bill, on the other hand, does not mean democracy. We have the spectacle of hon. members representing country constituencies trying to make us believe that they are out to help the man on the land, when we know perfectly well that their attitude on this Bill points in an opposite direction. Only the other night I stated emphatically that any policy which the Government brought forward to assist the man on the land would have my support, because I consider that the primary producer is the backbone of the country. This is going to be a further tax on the community in the centre where any bridge or road is constructed. That is quite wrong. If I am any judge, the Premier is really opposed to this principle.

The PREMIER: I am not. I think it is much better that the people who use a bridge should pay for it.

Mr. DUNLOP: I heard the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Brisbane state that certain banks had indi-

cated that they had the necessary wherewithal to lend, but they had no one coming forward asking for loans. Any local authority like the Rockhampton City Council and others which pay their interest and redemption—I am proud to say that the Rockhampton City Council stands as high as any municipality in Queensland—can offer ample security for a loan.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What about the Rockhampton Harbour Board?

Mr. DUNLOP: I own up to the position in regard to the Rockhampton Harbour Board. The construction of roads and bridges should be carried out by local authorities. Hon. members on the Government side can laugh and interject, but, when you find such inane interjections being made, it shows it hurts them. Apparently I am getting under their Nationalist skins, and they do not like it, but that does not perturb me in any way. This is work that the local authorities should carry out.

Mr. KERR: If they won't do it, what then?

Mr. DUNLOP: Then let the people have a vote as to whether they want the facility or not. Why should the Government foist it on to them? I am not against the principle of private enterprise in certain respects.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: What are you in favour of?

Mr. DUNLOP: I am up against a lot of those things that the hon. gentleman nonsensically argues in this House. I am not against the principle of private enterprise, but I am against private enterprise being given the privilege of making a 10 per cent. profit and charging a toll, thereby putting further taxation on the people who are over-taxed now. The Treasurer was taken to task in the newspapers because he was supposed to have said that, if the conversion loan is not a success, there is a likelihood of further taxation following, and he stated that we are heavily enough taxed already. This is nothing more nor less than a further tax, and it is going back to the dark ages, irrespective of the interjections of those who differ from me on the Government and Opposition side, and for whom I hold no brief.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: You have expressed no opinion at all.

Mr. DUNLOP: That stupid interjection shows that I am hitting hard. The hon. gentleman does not like it, but he can take it standing up or sitting down so far as I am concerned.

Last year the Secretary for Mines introduced private Bills validating agreements made with private companies to work certain mining areas. That was quite all right. There was no toll in those cases. Why cannot the Government make a similar arrangement to get these bridges or roads constructed so long as they can get the necessary security from the centres in which the facilities are to be built? Why not give them an agreement, the same as was given to these mining companies which desire to work the mining areas? I have not heard that the Government are prepared to do anything for Mount Morgan in that direction. This is the curse of party politics. No matter what may come from the Government side, it must be supported, no matter whether it is

Mr. Dunlop.

a good thing for the State or not. Granting that what the Deputy Leader of the Opposition said is not altogether correct, there is a certain amount of money received from toll bridges or roads. I think he instanced one case of £900 being received while the cost of collecting was in the vicinity of £600, and in another case £400 or £500 was collected at a cost of £200. If it costs that to collect the tolls, the system is absurd.

Mr. KELSO: How much will it cost if the local authority does it?

Mr. DUNLOP: The local authorities know how to run their business.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: They do in Rockhampton, anyhow.

Mr. DUNLOP: One thing I can say is that the Premier and Treasurer are proud of Rockhampton, where affairs are run properly and the liabilities to the Government are paid, and the Home Secretary will back me up on that.

If private enterprise comes in to do the work under proper arrangements, it will be all right. I am not against capital coming into the country. Anyone who is against capital coming in to foster industries in the State does not know what he is talking about. Capital is required to finance the different industries of this State.

This Bill contains thirty-three clauses. Clause 6 covers four and a-half pages, and it is too much to expect hon. members to assimilate such a big clause in Committee, but apparently it is a bit of Nationalist strategy. Right through the Bill, as was pointed out by the hon. member for Brisbane, there is nothing else but provision for being ruled by Orders in Council and Executive minutes. He quoted the "Daily Mail"—and I may point out to the press in the precincts of this Chamber that Brisbane papers never have any time for me, nor do I care about that. (Laughter.) When I rise and speak in this House the Nationalist press keep it out of the papers, as they do not wish what I say to reach the electors; but, thank God, we have an impartial paper in Rockhampton, which, although opposed to me in politics, is large-minded enough to give a just report. Hon. members will remember that I made it my business to draw special attention a few weeks ago to a leading article in the Rockhampton "Bulletin," taking the Government to task for administering affairs so much by Orders in Council and Executive minutes. That is one of the strongest Nationalist papers in Queensland outside the metropolitan area. This system of government by Order in Council is a rotten principle, and should be discarded. Why do not the Government govern the country entirely by Orders in Council, and thus throw a boomerang which will return on themselves? The Premier read the leading article referred to; I sent it to every member of the Cabinet. It was plain common sense that the "Morning Bulletin" gave us, and I regret to see that the Government are still acting on the same principle. If they can do that, why not govern the country entirely by Orders in Council made by the Cabinet, instead of asking seventy-two members to pass legislation in this Chamber?

I noticed when I first entered this House that the Crown lost no opportunity of escap-

[Mr. Dunlop.

ing payment where it could, and I see that one clause of this Bill absolves the Crown and local authorities from paying tolls.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. DUNLOP: I am against that principle; but, if you rule, Mr. Speaker, that I cannot deal with it until we reach the Committee stage, I will abide by your ruling. I see nothing in the Bill about the employees of these road facilities or their rates of wages. Are they going to have the right of going to the Industrial Court?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They are under it now.

Mr. DUNLOP: Possibly workers under the intermittent works scheme will be employed. I consider that workers engaged in bridge making and road construction should get the basic wage; but the Minister said nothing about it in his speech. It was very hard to follow him, and he did not tell us how the men would be engaged or paid. Will he say that they will be paid the basic wage and have the right of access to the Industrial Court?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes; they will get the award rate of pay.

Mr. DUNLOP: And have access to the court? That is quite satisfactory to me. Wherever the Government can get somebody else to foot the bill they are only too ready to do so. Last session the same Minister introduced the Railway Superannuation Bill. My own opinion was that he did not so much want to do justice to the railwaymen as to have the use of the large amount of capital which he would receive out of the payments. So also here he wishes to get out of the responsibility of providing these facilities and dump it upon somebody else.

The hon. member for Oxley absurdly, though no doubt quite sincerely, drew an analogy between the facilities to be provided under this Bill and the post office. The hon. member knows that the postal department is governed by laws passed through the Federal Parliament, and gives a service throughout Australia. How, then, can it be compared with a toll bridge or a road? When the hon. member for Oxley was speaking, I saw the Premier smiling up his sleeve; I could almost feel his smile trickling down his back. (Laughter.) It is far better to smile than to growl. It has been stated that the people will not be compelled to use the roads or bridges; but I believe that it is proposed to carry out certain works that will enter into competition with the railways; and I also understand that the Secretary for Railways has a great objection to the construction of a road parallel to and in competition with the railway system.

The Bill is a Committee Bill, and I shall not delay the House very much longer. I voted against the toll system on a previous occasion, and I am satisfied that Rockhampton would not welcome the toll system there. It is regrettable that after forty years the Government should return to the toll system. After all, a toll amounts to a tax, small though it may be; but the aggregate of these small taxes has a serious effect upon a worker in receipt of a small wage. Any married man with a wife and family knows how hard it is to make ends meet even on £4 5s. per week. It has been stated that the

people are called upon to pay tram fares for services rendered; but it is possible that they will now be called upon to pay a toll in addition. I am against the proposal, not out of any spirit of bitterness towards private enterprise, but I am opposed to the type of private enterprise which permits companies to levy tolls upon the people. We, as a democratic country, are going back to the dark ages, and I congratulate the Opposition upon telling the Government that they are returning to the dark ages. As an independent member, I would like to lift the Government into the age of light, so that they will know where they stand. Members of the Country Party section of the Government retort, "Absurd!" as if they knew everything and nobody else knew anything. I propose to vote against the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. BEDFORD (*Warrego*) [7.43]: This Bill certainly carries preference to unionists, the unionists being the "go-getters" association, but in no circumstances will it be found that any bridge or any great public work will result from it. It is merely wasting the time of this House to provide a vehicle by which capital may be attracted; and it is a dead certainty that, if there is any taint on Australian credit, State or Commonwealth, then that taint cannot be got over by attempting to arrange for private capital to come in to carry out these works for which there are no public funds.

The proposal to build some of these bridges for a community of 330,000 people is utterly ridiculous. It is a fact that the Kangaroo Point bridge should have been constructed in preference to the Grey-street bridge; but, having built the Grey-street bridge, there is no reason to suppose that we are going cheerfully to attract capital on anything like fair terms to duplicate a bridge facility in this city with a population somewhere in the vicinity of 330,000. It was only the other day that in New York, with a population of 7,000,000, they ceased to have a ferry across the Hudson River.

The Hudson tunnel was constructed, not by private ownership, but by a trust of men representing all the local authorities in New Jersey, Manhattan, Long Island, and other parts of the New York State, who joined together for the purpose of building this work as a public utility. While there is a population of 3,000,000 on Long Island, there are only four bridges over East River. Already this country has gone so far ahead of itself that we find that a million-pound town hall has been built on the old village duckpond; and it is such a costly thing that it is already making the people in this city merely tenants of the City Council, and in many cases tenants at will. Because of this insensate desire and ostentation of both municipal and public works, I know of a place in Queen street which was bringing in a rental of £32 per week, whilst the rates are £56; and yet another building which has a rental result of £60 per week, whereas the water rates alone are £1,300 a year. This would seem really to give the halt to any of these ambitious projects if we did not know it was utterly impossible that they should be built.

The position also in London is that, with a population of 7,000,000, they have nothing like the number of bridges that would be

represented proportionately by three bridges across this one river for 330,000 people. In talking to-day about franchises in the United States of America, the Minister left out of consideration the fact that the United States of America is the home of the belief, founded in the very early days of the nation, that it is not the function of the Government to build railways, tramways, waterworks, telephones, hydro-electric works, or any other utility; but out here it has been our political religion in regard to public works that the Government or local authorities should be the owners. We see already the beneficence of that policy.

It is idle to say that just because this is a time of depression, therefore the whole scheme of public ownership of utilities should be dropped, notwithstanding that Dr. Duhig has suggested that our State railways should be sold. Dr. Duhig mistakenly thinks that all the other railway systems of the world have been constructed by private enterprise without having given credit for the enormous amounts that have been written off those railways in their early stages; and he compares the Australian railways with their heavy cost, allied to heavy interest rates, allied to badly-contracted, short-dated loans without any sinking fund, and omitting the capital value of the land; and, therefore, he concludes that the railways of other countries have cost less. As a matter of fact, they have cost more. There is not one railway across America which not only had the land through which it ran given to it, but which was not helped by tremendous State subsidies. For instance, in the middle West there were three or four lines which have been consolidated into the Union Pacific, St. Paul's-Milwaukee, or some such big system—which represented to the States a debt of £45,000,000, which has never been repaid. The British railway systems would never have paid only for the fact that they ruined thousands of their early shareholders. The first and second companies were ruined, and the third company got the system at a scrap price. Therefore, before considering or condemning the whole question of public ownership, it is necessary to get at the bookkeeping by which these alleged results have been obtained. In every case we find that the American railways were not only subsidised at critical times by large loans of State moneys which they never repaid, but also, notwithstanding the objection of men like Lincoln, obtained a free grant of land through which the railways passed. It took thirty years before there was a State Commission in America, which prevented these railway companies from penalising certain people by refusing to carry their freight at any price.

The toll system has its principal objection to us in its inequality. Tolls properly and equitably applied would only have the result of releasing indirect taxation in favour of more direct taxation; but, in the case of the railways and roads, the Government are asked to discriminate against certain people who can afford to pay. I believe that, in the case of a bridge, especially where it is anything like a tourist road, the people who use that road mostly for pleasure should be paying directly, and not the people who are living in the locality—

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bedford.]

Mr. BEDFORD: But for the purposes generally of roads the policy of the Government is to give franchises which must call for heavy tolls. (Opposition laughter.)

The scheme of the whole system of tolls is that it has always been associated with the proposition by which the Government built the public utility which fed the private toll system. For instance, the Government in New South Wales built a railway station some distance out of the city, and then built an elaborate system of street railways all over the eastern suburbs. Then they built them down to Circular Quay; and then built some more railways on the north side of the harbour in order to feed the private enterprise ferries. That is the kind of abuse which is making the Australians awake to the general foolishness of these propositions.

Now, it is alleged, for instance, that Australia cannot find money because it cannot attract money from overseas. If there is one thing we do not want to do, it is to attract money from overseas. If there is one thing Australia should now set its face against, it is the scheme of making any more overseas commitments which are to be paid by us by goods which we can well produce here. The Premier and the Treasurer are going shortly to a Loan Conference, at which the whole position of Australia will have to be again fully and frankly discussed. People who believe that the loan conversion has now put us in a position in which we can go in for a system of public works constructed by overseas borrowed money simply argue an inability to see the facts. The loan conversion does not mean any new money, nor does it mean any new energy. It only means that a little bit of the old overhead has been reduced. How can anybody think that this country can go on as it has been doing with the debt to be palliated with some presently unnecessary bridge which may have to be built sooner or later, when the real scheme of the internal development of the country is wanting—that which would be productive in goods which would be sold overseas—the locking of the rivers, the linking of the railways, the spending of £100,000,000 or £150,000,000, which, put into a sinking fund at 6 per cent. interest per annum, would mean that in fifteen years these works would be owing no money. Under the Government system, if a bridge is built, at the end of the franchise term we shall have a bridge more or less a monument to white ants, because it would be allowed to run down as a private utility reverting to the central authority always is allowed to run down.

Certain journalistic fuglemen have been urging this thing. I am surprised to see an excellent newspaper like the "Courier" saying this—

"The objection to the toll system has itself become as striking an anachronism as the toll system itself was believed to be."

And it goes on to argue about tolls. Then the sting comes in these words—

"Private enterprise will come to the help of this State in the way of undertaking very necessary works if it is encouraged to do so; and if those works are to be done by private enterprise it will be necessary to allow private enter-

{*Mr. Bedford.*

prise to make a profit on its undertakings."

The TREASURER: Hear, hear!

Mr. BEDFORD: The Treasurer may say "Hear, hear!" (Opposition laughter.) The hon. gentleman has a habit of regarding himself as a financial genius because of his successful auction of fowls in Roma street. (Opposition laughter.) Really it does not apply. He regards all these things very superficially. Most of his Treasury ideas are got from those merchants of routine, the Under Secretaries, who, after all, are probably still back in the middle ages. Their jobs being secure, they have no reason to think out things for themselves. A report published in America dealing with toll bridges says—

"Three-fourths of the present toll bridges are private ventures. The public builds the road, encouraging traffic. But where the road meets a stream somebody puts up a bridge and makes the public pay to get across. In many cases the charges are extortionate. At one bridge in North Dakota, which cost 300 dollars, the toll is 50 cents."

The 300-dollar bridge is one of the tremendous public works that the Minister quoted this afternoon—

"One in Maryland was called 'The Gold Mine Bridge' because the owners made 1,000,000 dollars in fifteen years. Another, over a similar period, earned every year a gross income equal to three-fourths of its original cost."

The "Courier" then goes on to say this—

"The hostility of the Labour Party to private enterprise is past all understanding"—

I suppose like the love of God—

"It is continuously condemning somebody because of the increasing unemployment, yet it is continuously trying to thwart proposals that will assist work and development."

As a matter of fact, the old City Council objected to this because somebody came along proposing to build millions of public works although they only had £76 capital, less Tully and Wilson's bite or costs—

"The Labour Party repeats in parrot fashion: 'Let the Government or the local authority do the work.'"

See how the concession-hawkers in the past have given Australia a bad name. Take the Chillagoe railway. That was entirely dependent on metal prices, but the Midland Railway Company in Western Australia was not. It was a land grant railway built through land that is now the best wheat-producing area in the State. It has never paid a penny to anybody but its promoters. It never made a profit, and it wasted all the capital it had in useless appeals to the Privy Council objecting to the Government building a railway anywhere near it, and then the Government had to take it over. The Emu Bay Railway was built in the same way.

There has apparently been a hoodoo on private enterprise constructing public utilities ever since the beginning of Australia. The Van Diemen's Land Company came to Australia for the purpose of taking up land. They landed at Circular Head, and from afar off they could see all the good land and those tremendous trees that would break

anything but an Australian bushman's heart, big blue gums, and also they could see those big marshes that grew nothing but button grass and were so valueless that their only product is marsh flies. It is a spring mattress still, building on itself year after year, and it will grow nothing. It is valueless for anything and the good God decided that they should pick out what they called "The Downs."

They also said they would not go into the forest, because they were afraid of what they called quaintly enough "the Indians." As a result the Van Diemen's Land Company never got any of the great agricultural property of Tasmania. It missed by the same good luck both the Mount Bischoff and the Mount Lyell Commonwealth lodes, and finished its inglorious career. It has been taken over by an Australian company which is to market the swamp gum for paper pulp, and similarly with the Australian Agricultural Company and the Peel River Land Company.

No matter how evil a Government's reputation in the money markets of the world is—and I consider the reputation of the present Queensland Government must be evil abroad, because the Premier says the only method of enabling him to get a loan is by giving to the overseas investor a new Upper House, which proves that the overseas investor is getting more soft-headed than ever, and that he lends money for God's sake.

Let us take the case, then, of the most humiliating attempt of Australia to get away from its proper job of the Government constructing public works. It is no use considering the case of any other country, because there is no parallel. America has largely got rid of its public estate. Queensland has 450,000,000 acres, of which it still owns 403,000,000 acres. The present Government have not much time to give much of that away before we get back to office.

In the case of the Norton Griffith's business, it was immeasurably a worse state than one could get from the hon. member for Brisbane's reading about Sir Thomas Henley from the New South Wales "Hansard." Mr. Holman broke away from the Labour Party on the conscription question to form a Nationalist Government, and therefore had to be a strong Empire supporter. They gave this contract to the Norton Griffiths Company, sounding the slogan of Empire, and this was the evil arrangement entered into. They were not to find the money. The Government were to guarantee them, which meant that the Government were finding it. The Government were to give them the full resources of the Department of Public Works, the full resources of the draftsmen's end of the department, the Harbours and Rivers Department, and the general engineering facilities under Government control. The Government were to find all the money. The iron and steel came from their friends, and, on the top of that, they were to have a bad English way of getting paid. They were to get 5 per cent. on all they spent, which, of course, was the worst incentive to economy that I know of. They did that, and finally the Government had to pay £300,000 to get rid of them. It is a freak arrangement to get finance, especially in connection with companies in Australia that even British private enterprise adopts.

The Commonwealth Oil Corporation was formed in London. It wasted £4,000,000 capital, and then did not finish the job. It was formed to exploit certain large oil fields at Wolgan, New South Wales. The manager got 5 per cent. on all he spent. The New South Wales Oil Shale Australian Company, with retorts made of firebrick and bonded with old railway iron, had been turning out crude oil and kerosene for years. Then this tremendous collection of geniuses from the other side of the world came over, threw out the old retorts, and put in 123 retorts from Scotland at a cost of £128,000, ignoring the fact that the shale they had to retort in Scotland ran 18 gallons to the ton, and that the shale they had to retort in Wolgan ran 90 gallons to the ton; consequently, ten minutes after those retorts went in, you had an explosive mixture working inside and a number of wild Scotch gentlemen running away like those who fled with Wallace.

Then take the prosecution the other day of Lord Kysant, whose practice it was to get paid by results. They did not pay a salary—a large salary—and then have seventeen auditors to watch him day and night. They decided not only to give him a salary, but also something on the alleged earnings, which at last decided him that there were earnings of half a million or so that were not there. In Commonwealth Oil case they paid the man £5,000 a year and 5 per cent. on all he spent, and in five years he got £65,000. The inevitable reconstruction came, and they "kidded" him to put back into the reconstruction all the money he had got, and now he is back where he was in the beginning, doing 7s. 6d. assays in a cellar at Westminster.

Coming to the provisions of this Bill, speaking in this House on 21st August, 1930, on the motion regarding means for reducing the cost of litigation—when everything I said was made germane to the question by the rather good amendment moved by my friend, the hon. member for Mount Morgan. I said this—

"It proposes to build a railway from North Sydney to Manly at a cost of £4,500,000, and to hand over the railway line free, and the power-houses and rolling-stock at a valuation at the end of the time. We all know what that means. The capital cost of £4,500,000 will be spread over sixty years, which is the proposed franchise. In sixty years, at the present rate of growth, the population of Sydney should be somewhere about 7,000,000. Long before then the right to overcharge passengers will be worth great profits on the £200 a day represented by capital costs. Help of that sort would be worse to the country than an attack of pneumonic plague.

"There is another instance in the case of the Renown Rubber Company, in connection with which the Government foolishly arranged that it should be tax free for some years, irrespective of any injury that might be done to the Dunlop, Perdriau, and other companies already operating here. In this connection someone has already gone to London to get some money which may or may not be in existence. There was registered on 6th March, 1930, a company called Public Developments Limited. It has a nominal capital of £2,000 and a capital

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in real money of £76. Its nominal capital is as modest as its objects are ambitious. Its nominal capital and real money do not constitute a great financial preparation for its intentions. Its signatories were E. G. Parnell, Alderman Dart, J. C. Kerr, Harding Frew, A. S. Hudson, J. S. Kerr, M.L.A., and T. Nimmo, M.L.A. Its solicitors are Tully and Wilson, and L. C. Wilson, solicitor, and E. K. Tully, solicitor, are shareholders. A little later, after some publicity and after the company approached the Government for concessions and the Premier replied that the hawking of any franchises or permissions would not be permitted, J. S. Kerr transferred his five shares to L. C. Wilson, Harding Frew, A. S. Hudson, E. G. Parnell, and Alderman Dart—one each—and T. Nimmo transferred his shares to E. K. Tully. On these seventy-six shares £1 per share had been paid. That is to say, £76 has been received for shares, and from this has to be paid out of the funds of the company 'the charges, fees, and other expenses in connection with the promotion, formation, and incorporation of the company' in the words of the clause in the articles of association governing that particular activity. Tully and Wilson are the solicitors, and were entitled to be paid their fees and charges; and it is unlikely that sufficient money remains of the £76 subscribed to build all the bridges, railways, waterworks, and other public utilities mentioned in the memorandum of articles of association as being the objects of the company.'

I do not wish to go any further into that subject except to mention that the hon. member for Oxley, in a speech which he made on the same subject, said this—

"It is a pity that the very good motion put forward by the hon. member for Mirani should have been clouded by so many side issues. Certain charges have been made against me of being interested in a company called Public Developments, Limited. The history of the whole company is that, being vitally interested in securing employment for men in Queensland and being at the same time interested in the construction of a bridge across the Brisbane River at Indooroopilly—a bridge that would be of immense benefit to my own electorate as well as the electorates of Enoggera, Toowong, and Ipswich—I was partly responsible for the company being inaugurated. I was personally advised not to let my name appear on the ground that a parliamentarian should not have his name associated with such a company. I said, 'I have nothing to hide, and I want it to become public property that I am interested.' Does it not show something of the standing and integrity of the hon. member for Enoggera and myself that, although that company was started with a few paltry thousands, it now has a couple of million pounds behind it."

A couple of millions pounds? £76! It has a capital of a couple of million pounds where the Rockhampton Harbour Board has

[*Mr. Redford.*

its couple of million pounds—down the sink. And so he goes on—

"I resigned from the company because, as a public man, I refused to be associated with any company which is going to make money out of the people of Queensland."

So he came back to facts at the finish. Last year I was under the necessity of bringing up the case of the Renown Rubber Company. The Government had decided to try to help to establish a new industry here, which they were perfectly entitled to do. This company misused the statements made by the Premier in his letter and the statements permitted to be made in the prospectus based upon the letter from the Under Secretary, Chief Secretary's Department, with the result that the Premier had to cable to London to ask that the advertisement be withdrawn.

He will soon have to do the same in the case of the Commonwealth Preliminary Mines Syndicate's advertisement in the "Financial News." Last year this syndicate was granted 109 square miles of mining areas on the Palmer River and other places. Hon. members on this side opposed it, but our objection was of no avail. The statements made by members on this side have now been used in that advertisement as showing what the Government have done for the company. There is no attempt to come out here and mine. The statements that we made when opposing the Bill in this Chamber are now being published in full-page advertisements in the "Financial News," asking the investing public to notice the tremendous value of the concessions granted by the Government. For instance, in one place they say: "Copied from the Under Secretary for Mines' Report." I will hand this matter to the Premier later on. "The event of the year has been the discovery of some thousands of ounces on one of the fields," so they say, although no date is mentioned. An attempt is being made to delude the people into believing that it is an event of this year, whereas it is an event of nearly forty years ago. These are misrepresentations, but the Government are not to blame for them. I am only trying to point out the pitfalls that they will have for any shred of integrity that they have left, and the trouble that is open to them by reason of this misconception—if anybody can misconstrue a clause four pages long with sentences like those uttered by the hon. member for Rockhampton in his speeches containing 245 words without any controlling punctuation. Public works, but not these particular bridge works, are necessary. The country is not old enough for these additional bridge works. The mistake has been made at the other end, and should not now be repeated. We should not repeat the mistake such as constructing a town hall believing that someone else's capital will come here to enable the work to be carried out, and that we shall have a rake-off, represented by the wages to be paid. That will do no good for the country in the long run. Waste is waste, no matter who practises it or who pays for it.

But there is a way out. The Premier and the Treasurer are to go to a Loan Council meeting very shortly, and I ask them to get away from their hide-bound opinions as to what constitutes money and what does not. The money that we borrowed overseas did not come here as money, but

came here in the form of goods when we could have made the goods ourselves. I can see nothing else for Australia but a gradual descent of the morale of the working man on the dole. There are thousands of good men taking the dole who will not be good men in two years.

I cannot understand the tremendous fight on the part of the Nationalists against the proposed fiduciary issue of £18,000,000 when their god, the Bank of England, has already reached a fiduciary issue of £475,000,000, reducing the ratio to gold by £75,000,000 until it now represents 12½ per cent. of the total note issue. I ask the Premier and the Treasurer to get away from the superstition of the gold issue—a gold issue which is never used—one that has been down as low as 2½ per cent. in the history of the Bank of England, and the bank and the country were not a penny worse off. They should try to realise that it is safe to have a fiduciary note issue of £18,000,000, which they have been content to condemn, and that it is perfectly ridiculous to spend £24,000,000 in the soul-destroying dole in a period of two years. They should try to see that it is the duty of every good Australian to endeavour to get the 400,000 unemployed men back to payable work by expanding credits and stabilising prices at a level that existed a little while ago.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: How can you do that?

Mr. BEDFORD: It can be done. Let me put it this way: Supposing, for instance, £100,000,000 were lent to us from England to-morrow?—

Mr. KERR: What has that got to do with the Bill?

Mr. BEDFORD: It has a great deal to do with the Bill. I am pointing out how these great public works can be met without this Bill. If £100,000,000 were made available to us in London to-morrow, it would not come out to us in cash; it would come out to us in goods. As a result of that credit, supposing these men were put back to work at the end of fifteen or twenty years, having paid £6,000,000 a year in interest, we would still owe the principal, whereas under this scheme of stabilisation of prices, and owing to the fact that the extension of currency was sufficient to put these men back to work, thus destroying the dole for ever, and a sinking fund of 6 per cent. being established, then in fifteen years the people would have the works for nothing and the credits would be wiped out. That is the way out instead of the pettifogging way that has been suggested.

I do ask the Premier and Treasurer, when they are speaking for Queensland at the Loan Council—and on them will largely depend how the case for Queensland is put before the Loan Council—to get away from their old book superstitions, and their old ideas, which have no further use in these times now that the old superstition of the gold standard has been exploded, and also to release themselves from the tyranny of the British banking system.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*) [8.18]: It seems to me that there is a contest between the hon. member for Herbert and the hon. member for Warrego for the position of Treasurer should by any possibility a Labour Ministry come into existence. That will probably happen in fifty years hence.

The hon. member for Brisbane appeared to me to imitate a very old and respected statesman of Australia who has "gone west." I refer to the late Sir George Reid's "Yes-No" attitude. He took up the attitude that the Kangaroo Point bridge was an essential public utility, but, largely owing to the policy of his party, he could not submit to this Bill, which proposes to enact a system of tolls on bridges constructed under it.

Mr. POLLOCK: He did not say anything of the sort.

Mr. MAXWELL: That was the inference one gained from his remarks. I desire to reply to remarks of the hon. member for Warrego, who referred to the City Hall as a building which had been erected on what he termed a duckpond, which was not true. The hon. member also referred to the system of rating in the City of Brisbane. As these matters link up with the building of bridges and roads, I think I am in order in replying to the statements made.

Anything that was done in connection with the building of the City Hall—and in this matter I am with my friend, the hon. member for Fortitude Valley; we can both claim to have had a good deal to do with it—everything that was done was done perfectly legal, and I am very proud of my association with it. The Labour Government were in power at the time. If there was anything wrong with the building of that structure, how is it that, when the civic authorities advertised that it was their intention to borrow a certain sum of money for the work, there was no objection by the people concerned, and they were the persons who were mostly interested, having to pay? Further, the Labour Government gave their consent to the local authority's action. The building of the City Hall, which is one of the finest structures of its kind in the Southern hemisphere, provided a great deal of employment, and assisted considerably in the development of Brisbane. In view of the fact, also, that the Labour Government issued an Order in Council approving of the action that was being taken, it ill becomes the hon. member for Warrego to speak in the ridiculous strain he did to-night.

The hon. member also referred to the rating system here; but I reiterate the statement which I have frequently made in this House protesting against the heavy taxation on our citizens, and holding the Labour Government responsible for a position whereby certain ratepayers can scarcely get any money for their property. Let me recall the attitude adopted by the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board, who at that time said it was necessary to alter the method of rating. The idea of the board was that the basis of rating should be services rendered. The Labour Government said that was not their policy—that the whole of the taxation must be imposed on the unimproved value of the land.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I would ask the hon. member to connect his remarks with the Bill.

Mr. MAXWELL: I am merely replying to statements made by the hon. member for Warrego, who pointed to the heavy rating in the Brisbane area, and the possibility of something similar accruing under this Bill. That being the case, I want to draw attention to the fact that the heavy

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rates that the people of Brisbane pay at the present time can be laid at the door of the Labour Party in refusing to alter the policy of their party by accepting the recommendation of the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board to rate upon services rendered instead of upon the unimproved value of the land.

The hon. member for Brisbane told the House that bridges were a necessary public utility. I can understand the hon. member's attitude in connection with this matter, but I cannot understand his manner of speaking. The local authority could not build the bridge, and could not build certain roads; and private enterprise was prepared to come in and help to develop the city and some of the outside districts; but, because it was opposed to the policy of the Labour Party, it must not be done. What should be done, according to the Labour Party, was that the whole of the business of this State and the municipal area should be carried out either by municipal or State socialism.

When they were on the Government benches, we know what happened. We know that £5,000,000 was thrown away on State enterprises; yet these gentlemen have the impudence now to tell the people that the proper course to adopt is to turn down encouragement to private enterprise and adopt the principle that has been one of the biggest curses that Queensland has ever experienced. One of the biggest curses Queensland has ever experienced was the attempt by the Labour Party to eliminate encouragement to private enterprise by putting such restrictions on enterprise that it was impossible to carry on. They encouraged a system which has been the ruination of the whole State. Hon. members on the other side have said that we have gone back to the dark ages, and that they do not know any country in the present day that has adopted a principle such as this. Are they dense? Do they read? Do they travel? I only need refer them to the Spit bridge in Sydney. What happened there? That was a toll bridge, which happened to be a great success. They religiously avoided mentioning a toll bridge that has been erected in Sydney and has been a success.

Mr. HANLON: By a private concession owner? Answer that!

Mr. MAXWELL: The hon. member can make his own speech. The principle is the same. If you give the encouragement that is so essential to bring into our community the money necessary for private enterprise, and so necessary for development, we are going to expand, we are going to give confidence and encouragement to those who have money; and, instead of investing in other countries, they will put their money into the development of the State and the Commonwealth. We have an example of the success of the toll system in the Spit bridge in Sydney; and, that being the case, the argument advanced by hon. members opposite does not hold any water. It is better that those who use these bridges and roads should pay for them than that the individual whose land is taxed should pay for them. Why should those who are using the bridges and road to Southport and the road to Tambourine Mountain not contribute something towards their cost? Why should those men who are striving hard to make

a living on the land be taxed for the benefit of those individuals who are travelling up and down the road? It is quite true that those who are living in those areas will undoubtedly contribute something towards the cost involved; and they will offer no objections to doing so. I say that these bridges are necessary for the opening up of our cities and districts.

Mr. DASH: More taxation!

Mr. MAXWELL: That is an inane interjection. I remember hon. members opposite talking the other day about the sales tax which the Federal Labour Government have imposed; but they said it was not a tax, but only a charge for services rendered. But because the Nationalist Government do this for the benefit of the community, and to encourage capital to come in and help to relieve unemployment, because we are courageous enough to act on these beneficial lines, hon. members opposite object just because it is contrary to their policy.

I can quite understand the advocacy of the hon. member for Leichhardt of the socialisation of industry. At one time he believed in State and municipal socialisation, but now he is advocating Russian methods and the socialisation of industry. Some hon. members opposite are not courageous enough to stand up for the objective of their platform. Instead of harassing the Government and putting up Aunt Sallies and knocking them down, they should have accepted the advice of the Premier and the Secretary for Labour and Industry—that this is not a time to find fault. This is not a time to say, "How are we going to get on the Treasury benches?" but "How best can we help Australia?"—not sticking to a policy that hon. members opposite have been instructed to give effect to. They have no freedom at all.

The Government are to be congratulated for introducing this measure, which will help to create that confidence which is so essential. It will let people who have money to spend know that they can place every confidence in the Government of Queensland, which will not do anything detrimental to the people of the State. I congratulate the Government on the introduction of the measure.

Mr. POLLOCK (*Gregory*) [8.34]: The introduction of the Bill has given one of the real reasons for the Government's land policy. When the Government were returned to power, they lost no time in creating the necessary legislation to give effect to the substitution of the freehold principle for the leasehold principle of tenure. It was not very long after that atmosphere was created before the Government took advantage of every opportunity to amend the Land Act and to provide people with excuses to secure freehold tenure in lieu of the Labour Party's policy of leasehold tenure. The object of this can easily be seen when you study this Bill. It is not, as the hon. member for Toowong would have us believe, merely a Bill to enable the Government to construct a bridge. There is sufficient in the measure to enable the Government in the future, if they wish, to construct every road and every bridge under the toll system.

What is the general policy of the "getter" in regard to land? First, to pick out a likely locality, good for agricultural settlement purposes or residential purposes;

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next, to buy the land under the freehold tenure; and then to get a concession to build a road to that land. That serves a two-fold purpose. I believe that under this Bill a large "rake-off" on the building of a road is easily possible. In fact, I believe that no one will undertake expenditure necessary to construct a road such as that unless there is a big "rake-off"—in time a bigger one than the expenditure of the capital necessary to build the road justifies. After having got the "rake-off," the builder of the road and the owner of the land— and mostly they are the same person or group— will be able to have the value of the land so enhanced that they will get an additional "rake-off" there.

The TREASURER: What do you mean by "rake-off"?

Mr. POLLOCK: Perhaps I had better explain to the unsophisticated Treasurer, who has been so long dealing in Roma street that he naturally would not know its meaning. It means undue profit. Some people who are kindly disposed term it "unearned increment," but that is an old-fashioned term. The Treasurer, if he really admitted the truth, would agree that he understood less than he did the term "rake-off"; but the latter is a term that is understood in the civilised countries of the world where the toll system and the freehold system operate.

The TREASURER: You know something about it.

Mr. POLLOCK: I have certainly read about it, but I have never owned any land, so I suppose I could not be accused of participating. But I am not going to be drawn off the track. The point is that the Government policy of freehold tenure enables people who are shrewd and given to sharp practice, who have the capital and the capacity to make money, first, to get control of the land to which this road is to be built, then to build a road, and to get a "rake-off" from both. It is a perfectly fair argument. How does that compare with the effect of the Labour Party's policy of perpetual leasehold upon land settlement and production and the general expansion of industry? Under the Government's policy a man who settled in a favoured area would be able to get the land only at the price at which the owners were prepared to sell, whereas under the perpetual leasehold system the Government would own the land, and such a settler would get it at a fair rental on the basis of the unimproved value. If the land were improved the State would get the unearned increment. In that difference between the freehold and leasehold tenures is to be found the reason for the Government's belief in the principle of toll roads. The net result is that shrewd people will find out that roads can be built to certain places where land is valuable, and that the land will be so enhanced in value by the improvement that the people who occupy it will be down on their knees for the rest of their lives trying to pay off to the owners the debt or increased value which has been placed upon it by the construction of improvements and road facilities. That is the history of every civilised country in the world in regard to land matters, and that is the reason why we have objected all along to these enhanced land values

under the freehold tenure being passed on to the producer.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: Land is a big liability to-day.

Mr. POLLOCK: That is beside the point. There are not many holes in the argument that I am advancing in connection with the enhanced value of land. Where is the toll to end, and where is the ordinary legitimate control of public utilities by the State or a local authority to commence? That is a pertinent question, and one that should be answered in this Chamber. The policy of all Queensland Governments up to date has been to construct roads and bridges by Governments or by local authorities. It has really been a religion in Australia that all roads and bridges should be constructed and maintained for the people at the expense of all the people. That is the policy for which the Labour Party stands, rightly or wrongly, but we believe rightly. To-day it is proposed to depart from that principle. If it is merely proposed to construct tourist roads, bridges, or facilities, and to charge tolls upon them, there might be some vestige of excuse for the action of the Government. The Bill does not stipulate that, but it is possible for the Government to continue to build all roads and bridges under that policy; and, if it is to become a matter of public policy, then we are entitled to take exception to it.

When the legislation providing for unemployment relief, intermittent relief, and a wage of 10s. per day for a married man was introduced, we pointed out that it would be difficult to ascertain where the work under those systems began and where the work carried out under Industrial Court awards ceased. Experience has proved that we were right in that contention. The work carried out under Industrial Court awards or under reasonable rates of pay has ended as the result of the relief schemes fostered by the Government.

Mr. KERR: That is not true.

Mr. POLLOCK: In the case of two-fifths of the employees in this State, legitimate wages work has ended, and the relief schemes fostered by the Government have commenced; and, if the relief schemes are continued, who is to say that the relief rate paid by the Government will not constitute the basic wage in this State?

Mr. KERR: It is equal to the Federal award now.

At 8.43 p.m.,

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

Mr. POLLOCK: If the hon. member for Enoggera desires to make a speech, then he can get up when I am finished; but he should not endeavour to make a speech by interrupting me. We foresaw the difficulty in connection with the relief schemes. We realised that it would mean that on one job there would be men in receipt of award rates, whilst others would be in receipt of £2 10s. per week under the Government relief scheme. We realised that sooner or later the relief rate would become the basic wage, because men were prepared, or were forced, to accept work on the basis of relief rates.

Let me put it in another way. Out West to-day, where the station hands' award has

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been abolished, the basic wage is the wage that any man who is carrying his swag and is on the verge of starvation is forced to accept. It is not long before that wage—that is the wage any man is forced to work for—becomes the basic wage. So it is in regard to the question of relief rates. Whatever men are forced to work for in order to obtain relief, that rate must necessarily become the basic wage. Naturally, the wages and conditions laid down by the Industrial Court must go by the board.

To continue the analogy, similarly in the case of toll bridges and roads, if it is intended to construct three or four roads under the toll system, is it not obvious that, when the Government use the lean times, when money is short, as an excuse to construct bridges and roads by private enterprise in order that private enterprise may secure its profit by charging the people using these facilities a toll, everybody who desires to have a road built will use the argument that the toll principle should operate?

That leads me to the point that it is obvious that sooner or later the Government will be forced to draw some line of demarcation between roads constructed by the State and local authorities and roads constructed under the toll system. It is obvious that, if we continue to encourage people—as the Government say they intend to do—to build these bridges and roads by private enterprise, and force the people to pay through the nose for the use of them, any one who desires to make a few pounds will become a concession hunter for these concessions from the Government. Right through the whole gamut of the Government's legislation runs the desire not to provide employment for the people but to give to a few people the right to a "rake off" at the expense of the public. That is what we object to.

Mr. NIMMO: That does not apply to the Indooroopilly bridge.

Mr. POLLOCK: It applies to all works constructed under the toll system. Does the hon. member mean to tell me that any company will go to the expense of spending nearly £1,000,000 if that were the amount to construct the bridge over the river at Kangaroo Point, if it was not satisfied that for the risk it took it would be able to get 12 per cent. to 15 per cent. on its money? Who pays that 15 per cent.? The history of all toll bridges and roads throughout the world is that the people who have built them have never been satisfied to build them unless they secured the redemption of the whole of their capital in fifteen or twenty years, together with interest on their money. The franchise usually gave the builders a few extra years of time for the "rake-off."

Then we have the miserable argument on top of that that this Bill is to provide employment. Well, it will provide employment. I will tell the Government another way of providing employment. They have cases of beautiful gold specimens in the Mines Department. Give them to the unemployed, and those specimens will provide work because the unemployed must necessarily crush them to get the gold out. That is as sensible as this suggestion. This is the principle I objected to in this House yesterday. There is apparently an urgent demand—not on the part of the public, but on the part of some people who want to make something out of the public—to con-

struct a bridge across the river. The hon. member for Warrego ably pointed out that it would be difficult for the public to bear the cost of the bridge.

The PREMIER: If they don't use it, they won't pay for it.

Mr. POLLOCK: Everybody who uses the bridge must pay, and pay dearly, for doing so. Throughout Australia one of the greatest difficulties we have been faced with has been caused by the reckless expenditure of public money on what are alleged to be public utilities. I am not going over the old town hall question. Goodness knows, a £1,000,000 town hall for a city like Brisbane—whoever was to blame for it—is a white elephant, and one that the public can ill afford to carry in these times.

One may find an analogy in the expensive bridge being built across Sydney Harbour. That is the most expensive project that has been launched in Australia in our time. It might be argued that that bridge provided employment. It has, but it has also landed the country with a bill of over £5,000,000 at a very high rate of interest, whilst the men who were employed on it were only employed during the period that the bridge was under construction; and once the bridge was completed those men were thrown out of work. That is not reproductive or permanent employment. Any labour that is utilised on the building of bridges which merely save time for the public, and certainly are something of a convenience, is not of a permanent character. If the Government intend to solve the unemployment question, it is time they endeavoured to spend money in such a way that it will be reproductive, or that the work created by the expenditure of that money will in turn create other employment. We cannot say that of tourist roads, nor can we say that of bridges which are merely a matter of saving time. I am not arguing that bridges and roads are not necessary; only a fool would do that. But I argue that there are many of these projects that are before our time. The population is not here yet to warrant the huge expenditure that this country has undertaken for its alleged public utilities and public necessities. No one will believe that a £1,000,000 town hall is a necessary thing for Brisbane to-day. We could have waited fifty, sixty, or 100 years for it, just as we could have waited a good many years for the Sydney Harbour bridge; and we would probably have been in a better position to build when that time arrived.

One of the arguments used by hon. members opposite which completely astounded me was that the building of these bridges in cities saves valuable time to the public. Unfortunately, that is true of almost every labour-saving device that has been invented during the past twenty or thirty years. They save time; they throw people out of work; they provide more profit for the people who own them, making the rich richer and the poor poorer; it is difficult to stop them. But there is no reason on earth why to-day in Queensland we should argue that the building of a bridge will save people's valuable time, because we have thousands of people out of work with time to burn.

I was particularly interested to hear the remarks of the hon. member for Toowong in reference to the statement made by the hon. member for Brisbane. He spoke as

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though it was a crime. The hon. member for Brisbane said that he was not against the construction of the Kangaroo Point bridge. I am not aware that it is a crime to be opposed to the expenditure of public money at a time when that expenditure is not warranted. Surely a man is entitled to hold views of that kind without being regarded as a traitor either to his electorate or to his country.

Mr. EDWARDS interjected.

Mr. POLLOCK: I am not taking much notice of the hon. member for Nanango. I suggest that, when he next goes to his electorate, he should visit one of the pig pens there in order to get rid of that inferiority complex.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Order! I would point out to the hon. member that the expression is distinctly unparliamentary, and I must ask him to withdraw.

Mr. POLLOCK: I merely suggested that the hon. member should endeavour to get rid of his inferiority complex.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. NIMMO: You said more than that.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I would remind the hon. member that what he said is unparliamentary, and I ask for an immediate withdrawal.

Mr. POLLOCK: Just what do you want me to withdraw, Mr. Maxwell?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Your remarks about visiting a pig pen and so on.

Mr. POLLOCK: It is an excellent place for the purpose, but I withdraw the expression, if you suggest it.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. POLLOCK: If people will interrupt an hon. member when he is making a speech, that hon. member must protect himself.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Order! The question is "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. POLLOCK: With all due respect to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I intend to protect myself.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: You can do it without losing your temper.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. POLLOCK: It is a pity you yourself do not bear that in mind.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. POLLOCK: If encouragement of private enterprise in the form that the Government propose in this Bill is a logical way to relieve unemployment, how is it that in America, which is the home of private enterprise—the place where private enterprise is given its fullest scope, where we are told bridges and roads have been constructed and maintained on that principle—they have the highest unemployment rate in the world? The reason is that private enterprise cannot solve the unemployment question in this way. Private enterprise has shown over and over again that the very principle of private enterprise means that a few people are allowed to "rake-off" huge profits while the majority of the

people are compelled to work for the very lowest possible wages. That is the meaning of private enterprise. No one is under any illusion about it; nor are members of the present Government under any illusion regarding it. They know that private enterprise means extra profits for the people who returned them to power, and fuller scope for the men who want to exploit their fellow-men. That is private enterprise at its very peak.

Mr. NIMMO: What about Mount Isa?

Mr. POLLOCK: No one will argue that the same results could not be obtained by co-operation as are obtained by private enterprise at Mount Isa.

At 9 p.m.,

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. POLLOCK: I protest, at any rate, against the introduction of a Bill such as this, against the miserable arguments that have been put up—if you can call them arguments—by the Minister who introduced the Bill, and against the obvious desire behind the Bill that somebody shall get something for nothing.

The TREASURER (Hon. W. H. Barnes, *Wynnum*) [9.1]: The hon. member who has just resumed his seat has evidently failed to realise the responsibility attaching to a seat on the front bench on the opposite side, because it has been very evident to-night that somehow or other or in some way he has slipped most painfully, and evidently has been thinking of some of the happenings of the past associated with his own life, and has been bringing them in here to tell us something about a "rake off."

He has also spoken about private enterprise. Surely there is a great deal to be said on this Bill in connection with private enterprise. Just by the way, lest the hon. member's memory has failed him, I want to remind him that he himself has been an indulger in private enterprise. Sometimes it is quite true that some of the things one hears are not quite correct. It may be that in connection with his private enterprises it is not quite correct, but it is stated that on one occasion—

Mr. POLLOCK: Mr. Speaker, I rise to a point of order. It is obvious to me that the Treasurer has risen with the object of making a personal attack on me. He is leading up to it in his usual way. My point of order is that you should ask the hon. gentleman to stick strictly to the material contained in this Bill and debate the principles of the Bill.

The PREMIER: You talked about freehold land and all sorts of things.

The TREASURER: The construction of bridges is associated with private enterprise, and I take it that that is one of the charges made by hon. members opposite against this proposal. It is not a question of the public or a local authority asking permission to erect certain bridges—the Bill asks for permission to be given to men who are prepared to come along and do certain things in connection with the development of the bridges of this State. The hon. member has been associated with private enterprise. It is stated that private enterprise went so far in his own case that he won on the "tote." (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. POLLOCK: What about your private enterprise in connection with coupons? You

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were nearly sued for it; you just dodged it by a narrow squeak.

The TREASURER: That is not correct. The hon. member spoke about a "rake off"—I ask him what was meant by a "rake off." I could not help thinking that, in dealing with this particular Bill, one of the disappointments of the hon. member was that somehow or other there was no opportunity for him to have a "rake off."

Mr. POLLOCK: What particularly dirty thing were you going to say?

The TREASURER: I stated the truth. However, another thing that impressed me was this—that somehow or other in connection with this Bill the hon. member, and some other hon. members opposite, were taking strong exception to the Government trying to help the unemployed. To me it is a revelation that hon. members sitting on the other side should go out and talk from soap boxes at every corner, and say, "We are the only people who want to help the worker," that they should forget that passionate love for him when we bring in a Bill to help the unemployed, and that they should then turn round and say, "You should not pass it."

Hon. members opposite claim that they are the champions of the worker; but, when an opportunity comes of helping them, they throw it to one side. I have no doubt the hon. member who is so opposed to tolls on bridges imagines that people who want to get across from one side of Sydney Harbour to the other would swim rather than pay a toll. The hon. member is fairly consistent as a rule, but to-night he was anything but consistent. He started off by talking about the land, and he said, "I have made a wonderful discovery. I can see what the Government are after. They want by this Bill to pursue their policy of freehold, and so they have hit upon bridges and applied it to that." I do not know whether the Minister who has introduced the Bill has any freehold bridges in view; but apparently the hon. member for Gregory had.

I am sorry for the illustration that the hon. member gave. He talked about the man who had an allotment of land in a locality to which a toll road might be built. I do not know whether the hon. member has an allotment himself; but, in any case, is it a crime for a man to have an allotment of his own? The hon. member says, "Perish the thought that a man should have an allotment, and, above all, do not let us permit this Government to do anything that would help the worker."

I ask the House to deal seriously with this question. Is it a crime for any Government at a critical time like this to set out to help Australia and our own people? How is Queensland to be helped at this juncture if not by such means as this? The hon. member for Warrego says very definitely that we should borrow no more money from the old country. Assuming that we cannot borrow, knowing the position of Australia, should we not encourage people to come here and spend their money in providing employment? I want to say most definitely that the way out for Australia lies in the encouragement of proposals such as that introduced by the Secretary for

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Railways, for such proposals will induce people to come here and spend money.

Mr. POLLOCK: You are encouraging people to spend their money on toll bridges.

The TREASURER: I am sure the hon. member would not spend any money unless he felt sure he was going to get some return for it. Does he argue that people with capital are prepared to become benefactors by building the Indoeroopilly bridge, the Lota bridge, and perhaps the Kangaroo Point bridge? Does he think that people will be prepared to spend their money without obtaining a return? That is altogether inconsistent with the policy of hon. members opposite. What has been their attitude in the past? The hon. member referred to reckless expenditure; but there will be no reckless expenditure in connection with these proposals. The hon. member knows something about reckless expenditure, because he sat behind a Government which was proverbial for reckless expenditure.

Mr. POLLOCK: We never caught your deficit; you hold the record.

The TREASURER: I am perfectly prepared to admit that I do hold the record; but not in reckless expenditure. If this Government had indulged in reckless expenditure, we would be in extremis at the present time. The hon. member and those associated with him say, "We want to help the poor unemployed"; but, when there are men who are prepared to spend money to help them, they say, "But our principles will not allow us to do what we want to do. Our consciences strike us so deeply that we dare not do it. We would like to do it; but save us from having to do that!" The hon. member and those associated with him get up in this House and say, "We have read the Bill, and although it will certainly provide work, if you please, spare us! Although we have become reconciled with the past, we cannot be associated with anything that is going to help the poor unfortunate unemployed." The hon. member is evidently preparing for an election.

Dr. KERWIN (*Merthyr*) [9.13]: I am keenly interested in the construction of the Kangaroo Point bridge, which I hope will eventuate at an early date. The Minister in charge of the Bill deserves great credit for introducing it. It is absurd for anyone to say that the toll system is a relic of days long since past. The system is in existence in all parts of the world. I think hon. members opposite mentioned that it is going out of date in the United States of America, but such is not the case. In Pittsburg, toll bridges are to be found all over the place. It is admitted that there are some very capable business men in America, and men who are very sound financiers; and in that country, instead of local authorities and Governments borrowing money to construct public utilities, private enterprise is given the opportunity with the right to levy tolls.

I do not see that there is any argument against the principle that the people who use a bridge should pay for it. Look at the absurdity in connection with the Sydney Harbour bridge! A benefited area has been declared, and the people living away out at Darlinghurst, who will never cross the bridge except out of curiosity, will have to contribute a special toll so that those who desire

to use the bridge can cross over it. That is absolutely absurd.

It is absurd to think in connection with a project like the Kangaroo Point bridge that, if a company comes along and offers to build it, it should be turned down. Then there is the unemployment aspect of the question. If that bridge is proceeded with, it will mean the employment of 700 men in its construction. Apart from employing those men actually on the bridge, it will also employ 400 or 500 other men in other industries. In the present economic conditions it must be apparent to everybody that neither the local authority nor the Government will be in a position to build that bridge for the next twenty years.

I feel sure that hon. members opposite are really not sincere in what they say about the toll system. They are merely objecting to it because the principle is at variance with a plank in their platform. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley agrees with me that, if we could get one of those big companies to build the Kangaroo Point bridge, it would be one of the best things that could ever happen to Brisbane.

Mr. WILSON: That bridge is not under discussion now.

Dr. KERWIN: If the Kangaroo Point bridge is not constructed under the toll system, then we cannot get it. I sincerely hope that there will be very little opposition to this Bill. Some hon. members opposite are bound to oppose the principle, although in their hearts they favour it. What is the objection to paying a toll to cross a bridge to go across a river when it will really effect a saving of twenty minutes, and time means money? Take the point of view of the business people and motorists. Look at the saving in time if people desirous of travelling from Fortitude Valley to Ipswich road can cross the river at Kangaroo Point? Look at the saving in running expenses and petrol! That saving alone will pay the cost of the toll. Tolls are paid in connection with most of our public utilities. You pay a toll on the tram, and you also pay a toll to cross the river in an antiquated ferry boat.

In New South Wales we have the example of the Spit toll bridge, upon which a toll was levied. By that means the bridge was cleared of debt in less than three years. Now another bridge has been built over the George's River, which ensures an uninterrupted journey to travellers over the Prince's highway. What hope was there of building those bridges unless under the toll system? Some hon. members opposite may have visited Southport from time to time, and they will have formed some idea of the delay which occurred, particularly at Christmas and Easter time, at the Loganholme ferry. It was quite a frequent occurrence to be delayed there for three hours at night; and there was the unfortunate case of a man who tried to make up the time when he got to the other side only to be fined for speeding. It is only right that the people who use these facilities should pay for them, and I am pleased indeed that a Bill of this description has been introduced.

Mr. TEDMAN (*Maree*): I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and passed.

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

The House adjourned at 9.22 p.m.