

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 1 NOVEMBER 1932**

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**TUESDAY, 1 NOVEMBER, 1932.**

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. G. Pollock, *Gregory*)  
took the chair at 10.30 a.m.

**DISALLOWANCE OF QUESTION.**

Mr. KENNY (*Cook*) gave notice of a question inquiring whether the Secretary for Public Lands proposed to visit America at the public expense at the end of the session.

Mr. SPEAKER: The question involves a pronouncement upon Government policy, and is, therefore, not in order.

**PAPERS.**

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

Report of the Forestry Board for the year ended 30th June, 1932.

Twentieth report of the Public Service Superannuation Board.

**SUPPLY.**

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—TENTH AND ELEVENTH ALLOTTED DAYS.

(*Mr. Hanson, Buranda, in the chair.*)

HOME SECRETARY'S DEPARTMENT.

HOSPITALS.

Question stated—

“That £199,596 be granted for ‘Home Secretary’s Department—Hospitals.’”

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, *Ithaca*) [10.34 a.m.]: The hon. member for Murilla has drawn attention to the fact that grants to base hospitals have

not been provided this year. The late Government had decided upon a change of policy in respect of this matter. The late Home Secretary had publicly stated that the Hospitals Act would be amended during this session and hospital boards would be given the power to make a charge in respect of patients admitted from areas outside of the area in which the hospital was situated, and the charge would be borne by the local authority from whose area the patient was admitted to the hospital. That system was to supersede the system of grants to base hospitals. Base grants have been made to certain large hospitals on account of their central situation, larger equipment, and greater facilities for dealing with serious cases. Those hospitals have been used continuously for the treatment of people residing outside their area. Governments in the past have always recognised that such hospitals were entitled to some consideration over and above the hospital subsidy.

As an illustration of the extent to which these base hospitals are used, I have only to point out that last year, £988 was paid by the Home Department for railway passes. The bulk of that amount was for the payment of passes issued to people who were being transferred from their district to base hospitals. The hon. gentleman who preceded me in office will be fully aware of the continual call on the Home Department for assistance to destitute people to be brought to the Brisbane, Rockhampton, or Townsville hospitals from outlying districts for the purpose of medical treatment. The sum of £1,255 has been placed on the Estimates for railway passes for the present year. We have people continually coming down from country districts for treatment in the Brisbane hospitals, and the same remarks apply to Rockhampton, Townsville, Cairns, and other big seaport hospitals. Seaport hospitals also deal with patients who reside outside of Australia. Men on ships calling at these seaports who are injured or fall sick are treated at the local hospitals; and the base grants were intended partly to compensate for their treatment. As I said, the previous Administration decided to change the system. They decided to permit hospitals which treated patients outside their areas to collect the cost of treatment from the local authority wherein the patient resided, and abolish the grant for base hospitals. After mature consideration, the present Government considered that an impracticable method of dealing with the question. One can imagine the members of the Brisbane and Rockhampton hospital boards endeavouring to identify a patient treated by them with the centre where he formerly resided.

Mr. DANIEL: You cannot do it.

The HOME SECRETARY: Such a system would lead to endless squabbling between hospital boards and local authorities. For that reason the Government have decided, instead, to continue the payment of the grants to base hospitals. That decision was not arrived at before the Estimates were printed, but these grants will be paid this year as usual.

The Leader of the Opposition, the hon. member for Toowong, and the previous Home Secretary, the hon. member for Fitzroy, referred at length to the change

which has been made in Government representation on hospital boards. These hon. members sought to find fault with the attitude of the present Government in removing some of the representatives from hospital boards and replacing them with others; but the ex-Premier and ex-Home Secretary initiated that policy themselves. It, therefore, comes with ill grace from them to criticise the continuation of a policy which they themselves initiated.

Mr. PETERSON: I did not criticise the policy; I pointed out the reason why it was done in certain cases.

The HOME SECRETARY: The reasons given by the hon. member did not, on analysis, ring true at all. I know that the hon. member did not relish the job of displacing men who had given good service on hospital boards. I did not enjoy removing men from hospital boards, for, although they did not subscribe to the policy of the Government, they gave unselfish service to the community. Any member of the community who engages in purely honorary work, such as the management of a hospital, ambulance, or other public institution which is managed by voluntary service, is entitled to the thanks of the community. Such people give good, valuable, and unselfish service. When the late Government came into power in 1929, they decided that a change in hospital board representation was necessary, and that change took place immediately. The reason given by the ex-Home Secretary for removing certain representatives from hospital boards was in order that economy in administration in hospital management could be secured; but that reason, when considered with the facts, was wide of the mark. In the first place, the Government have the control of the Estimates of hospitals districted under the Hospitals Acts, and no hospital board can finance itself unless it secures the approval of the Home Department. If any board declined to keep its expenditure within the bounds set by the officers of the Home Department, that board could not function at all. The financial control of these boards is vested entirely in the Home Department, which has power and authority to compel them to economise to any extent desired; but, with regard to voluntary hospitals, the Government's share of the expenditure only comes in by way of subsidy of the contributions to the hospital, so that, no matter who was on the hospital board, it would not make any difference to the amount the Government had to pay. The Government were in no way concerned directly with the expenditure of those boards, which had to live on the contributions received from the public subsidised by the State Government, so that no matter who the board might happen to be the subsidy would be exactly the same.

The important thing to remember when we view the changes made by the late Government is that the Government of 1929 had no opportunity of knowing whether boards were going to economise or not when the Government made the alterations. As a matter of fact, the alterations were made within a few weeks of the Government taking office. In some cases the Government had not even received the estimates of the boards. The boards were changed as early as June,

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1929. A change was made on the Rockhampton Hospitals Board on 20th June, 1929, whose estimates had not even been submitted.

Mr. DANIEL: It had been mismanaged for many years.

The HOME SECRETARY: That may be the opinion of the hon. member; but I am pointing out that the board had not had an opportunity of submitting its estimates to the Home Department, nor had the Home Department or the Government had an opportunity of knowing whether or not that board was going to administer the affairs of the board economically. The interjection of the hon. member shows exactly the reason why the change was made. It was made at the behest of the hon. member who has just interjected, and it was a case of pure politi-

cal victimisation of members of that hospital board with whom the hon. member did not see eye to eye.

Mr. DANIEL: That is a downright lie.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must withdraw the expression "downright lie."

Mr. DANIEL: I withdraw that, but it is untrue all the same.

The HOME SECRETARY: I regret that the hon. member saw fit to convict himself so early in the debate.

To show that these changes were not made in the interests of economy, I will quote the following instances of removals from hospital boards on the dates mentioned—

*List of Appointments and Removals of Government Representatives on Hospitals Boards and Hospital Committees from June, 1929, to May, 1930, the Date of the Local Authority Triennial Elections.*

Board or Committee.	Names of Appointees as Government Representatives.	Names of Persons Removed from Office as Government Representatives.	Date of Appointment.	Date of Gazette.
<b>Boards—</b>				
Atherton ..	James Roxburgh Dawson ..	Thomas Sharples .. ..	10-10-29	12-10-29
Brisbane and South Coast Hospitals Board	George Arthur Roper ..	William Field Lloyd ..	1-8-29	3-8-29
Bundaberg ..	Francis Rawdon Briggs .. Benjamin Field Chapman .. Andrew John Christensen .. Charles Michael English .. Arthur John Gibson ..	Albert William Baker .. Benjamin Courtice .. Stephen George Crooks .. John Laurison .. William Moses Meredith ..	22-8-29	24-8-29
Cairns .. ..	Norman Edgar Percy Draper Norman William McKeeman	Laurits Ingvard Jeppesen .. John Campbell .. ..	5-9-29	7-9-29
Central Burnett ..	Charles Henry Day .. William McLennan .. John Charles Robertson .. John Christopher Thompson	William Krueger .. .. John Moore .. .. William Charles Venning Turner William Alfred Wharton ..	12-7-29	20-7-29
Gladstone ..	Thomas de Lacy Kellett .. Alfred Stroud Fry .. William Henry Beale .. Duncan Hugh Neill Neill-Ballantine	Arthur Thomas Power .. William O'Reilly .. .. William Ross .. .. Edward Matthew Breslin ..	22-8-29	24-8-29
Gympie .. ..	Francis Plunkett Power .. Charles Stewart .. .. John Ellis .. .. Francis Edward Chippindall	John Francis Donovan .. Donald Price .. .. Walter Gordon Schmidt .. Cornelius Daniel O'Keefe ..	26-9-29	28-9-29
Maryborough ..	John Agnew Austin .. Cyril Frederick Corser .. Clement Gregor Gordon .. Tom Inglis Reaney .. Herbert Williams .. ..	Charles Henry Adam .. Phillip Brophy .. .. William Halliwell Demaine .. James Edgar McCleer .. Frederick William Obadiah Short	4-7-29	6-7-29
Rockhampton ..	William John Austin .. David Livingstone Gibson .. John Joseph Cullen ..	William Francis Clayton .. Thomas William Farnell .. Maurice Kelly .. ..	20-6-29 5-9-29	22-6-29 7-9-29
Townsville ..	Rose McKimarin .. .. Robert Thomson .. .. George Keyatta .. ..	Francis Patrick Joseph Byrne Andrew Milan Illich .. George Sims Edwards ..	1-8-29	3-8-29
<b>Committees—</b>				
Kilcoy .. ..	James Webster Brown .. Ernest John Freid .. .. James McMahon .. ..	John Grehan .. .. James Gillies .. .. John James Walsh .. .. Michael McAtee .. ..	18-7-29	20-7-32
Richmond ..	Frederick Stanley Will ..	Leslie Strath Alexander .. Paul Henrich .. ..	22-8-29	24-8-29
Thargomindah ..	Gerald Franch Gooch ..	Walter Williams .. ..	22-8-29	24-8-29

That disposes completely of the statement of hon. members opposite—that these changes were made in the interests of economy, or were rendered necessary by the fact that the Government of the day desired to compel these people to exercise economy in their administration. At the time of their removal, the Government had no idea of what the financial position of these hospitals was, and they were removed purely because they had the temerity to serve on hospital boards created by a Labour Government.

Another thing which goes to prove that the action was purely intended to suit political organisations was the fact that in some cases prominent people who were not in any way connected with the Labour movement and never had been associated with the Labour movement were removed and replaced by Nationalist workers simply because those people were not connected with a Nationalist organisation. In one or two cases some of the most competent men on hospital boards were removed by the Moore Government and replaced by prominent Nationalists. In one case a gentleman who was removed was promptly replaced on the hospital board as the local authority representative, because in his own area he was recognised as being an exceptionally keen and industrious worker in the interests of the hospital. The great crime of these people was that, in the administration of the hospitals, they became enamoured of the Hospitals Act, to which hon. members opposite were absolutely opposed. Hon. members opposite fought bitterly against that Act. They opposed it lock, stock, and barrel in this Chamber; and they carried their political prejudice to the extent of endeavouring to dispose of the Act even after it had had years of successful administration in Queensland. That was the whole trouble with the hospital boards' representatives. Hon. members opposite simply looked upon the board members created by the Labour Hospitals Act as people who should be injured at any price. In the years they sat in opposition they never studied the administration of the Act in order to make themselves conversant with its good points, and they never bothered to weigh the advantages conferred on the sick people by that Act as compared with the disadvantages of the old system, under which the hospitals in many parts of Queensland were a disgrace to the community. The whole trouble with regard to hospital matters was that hon. members opposite and the party they represent had no hospital policy whatever. Their policy was a purely negative one; they were opposed to the Labour Party's hospital policy, but they had no policy of their own to substitute for it. Time after time hon. members on the Opposition benches in the old days of Labour administration attacked the hospital boards and administration and the Hospitals Act generally; but, when given the opportunity by the people to govern the State, they could substitute nothing therefor. They changed the personnel of the hospital boards. After the appointment of the royal commission to go into hospital matters with a view to changing the system—a system which they did not understand—they found that their own appointees, once they had become acquainted with the work, had become enamoured of the Act and supported it in its entirety.

There was no personal animosity to the members of the board who have been

removed since I have become Home Secretary. I fully realise the good work done in connection with the Brisbane General Hospital, with which I am most conversant, being a representative of the Brisbane district. The operations of that hospital and others in the metropolitan area have come under my notice. I have watched very carefully the administration of the Brisbane board. The gentlemen who were appointed to that board by the late Government gave very good service to the community, and I personally thank them for the services they have rendered. This is a position which has been created. Once hon. members opposite changed the personnel of the hospital boards for political reasons when they took office and passed men out because they were supporters of the Labour Government's hospital policy and put men on the boards because they were opposed to that policy, they immediately created the impression from one end of Queensland to the other that the members they appointed were hostile to the Labour Party's hospital policy; and those men could hardly expect to have the confidence of the public in administering an Act to which they were opposed when appointed to the boards. The basis of their appointment was really the fact that they had been opposed to the Labour Government's hospital policy, and, as a result, they were naturally deprived of the confidence and loyalty which they should expect to receive from the public, local authorities, and members of Parliament.

It must be remembered that the Labour Party has a definite hospital policy. That is one direction in which the Opposition and the Labour Parties definitely disagree. The Labour Party has always had a definite health and hospital policy. Hon. members opposite have no hospital policy except a negative one. They were always opponents of anything which was proposed to be done to improve hospital administration. We had to get on with our policy; and, taking what happened in Brisbane as a line on what happened throughout the State, the three years of the Moore Government have been three years of what we might call cessation of hospital activities and development, because it took men who had been put on the hospital boards because they were opposed to the Hospitals Act a long time to find their feet. Although since then they have definitely favoured the Hospitals Act, that progress has not been made which we expected would be made.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: That was not the policy of the Labour Party all through.

The HOME SECRETARY: The policy of the Labour Party in regard to hospital matters is the conserving of the public interest, realising that hospitals are for the service of the sick people of the community.

Mr. MAXWELL: Nothing of the kind, they do not exist merely for that purpose.

The HOME SECRETARY: Then the hon. member and I disagree. The hon. member says that hospitals do not exist in the interests of the sick people.

Mr. MAXWELL: I never said that.

The HOME SECRETARY: I am prepared to stand on the ideal I have set up with hon. members opposite at any time.

Mr. MAXWELL: Mr. Hanson, I rise to a point of order. The Home Secretary attributed to me something I did not say, and

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I want it to be withdrawn; that is, that hospitals do not exist for sick people. I never said that.

The CHAIRMAN: The Home Secretary, I think, misinterpreted the interjection of the hon. member for Toowong. If the hon. member did not interject, he could not be misinterpreted.

The HOME SECRETARY: I can only stand on what I heard the hon. member say when I said that hospitals existed for the interests of the sick people of the community. He said they did not.

Mr. R. M. KING: He said they did not exist solely for that purpose.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member for Logan cannot go against that opinion that they only exist for the sick people of the State. While this Government is in office, they will exist solely for the sick people of the community. Hon. members opposite may take up what attitude they like—that is the policy of the Labour Party. It is purely a social service for the sick in the community, and exists for no other reason.

To understand the hospital policy of the Labour Party we must get things in their correct perspective. To the Labour Party hospitals are an essential public service. There are no shibboleths about them. They are essentials in the same way as water supply, health services, or sanitary services. We look upon hospitals in exactly the same way as education or any of the multitude of services which are rendered to the people, and they must be viewed in that light wholly and solely. For that reason, their control must remain entirely in the hands of the people they serve. We will not permit any form of control which takes away from the people who are served by the hospitals and the people in the community who pay for them the right to say how they shall be managed and what shall be the conditions of admission. The Hospitals Acts provide that the control shall be definitely in the hands of the people, and that is exactly where we seem to have disagreed with hon. members opposite. On Friday last the Leader of the Opposition made reference to what he termed the endless disputes on the Brisbane and South Coast Hospitals Board. The Leader of the Opposition was not stating the facts when he said that disputes had existed on the board. The board, as a board, had disputes with some other body; but they were not disputes on the board. The members of the board came into conflict with the medical men in certain directions. Prior to 1929 the board had got along very well, and the Government representatives and the local authorities had worked very harmoniously together. The fact that the board as a board had disputes with another institution in the city does not justify the Leader of the Opposition in saying that there were endless disputes on the board. The board differed on a matter of policy—as it was entitled to do—with another body—and, when men in responsible positions understand their subject, they generally have strong views and stick to them, and so disputes arise. Thus disputes arose between the board and medical men who were assisting the hospital. There was no harm in that. All through my life I have had disputes with other people; but that does

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not prevent us from doing our jobs as citizens. The board was unanimous in desiring to keep control of the hospitals. It wanted the paid medical officer of the board, the medical superintendent, to be the supreme medical authority of the board. It was entitled to take that attitude, and, to my mind, it took it quite rightly. It held the view that the general medical superintendent, who was the professional man employed by the board to administer the hospitals, should be the supreme medical authority in them. Medical men outside thought that he ought not to be the supreme medical authority. They wanted the supreme medical authority to be a body outside the control of the hospitals board. Very well—their opinions clashed. That is the dispute that existed between the board and the medical men. That is nothing for which we ought to blame the members of the board, if they were endeavouring to do their duty properly. When the representatives of the late Government were appointed, the board reverted to the policy that had been framed and drew up certain by-laws which were submitted to the Home Secretary's Department. Those by-laws have not been approved because they took from the Brisbane and South Coast Hospitals Board the right to control in the interests of the public an institution for which the people whom they represent pay. The by-laws have been referred back to the board, and new by-laws will be framed in accordance with the hospitals policy of the Government. The hospital must remain entirely under the control of the board.

I have said nothing derogatory of the medical profession. The members of the profession are entitled to their opinions, but the Government also have a definite opinion upon these matters. The members of the medical profession are, perhaps, inclined to over-estimate the part they play in hospital administration. The hospital, whilst being of service to the community in caring for the sick and injured, also serves the community by providing practical experience to medical students and medical men generally. The members of the medical profession give their services to the hospital in an honorary capacity. That is freely admitted, and just as freely appreciated; but the hospital also provides the medical profession with a wider experience of diseases and injuries to human beings, which enables the members of the profession to improve and perfect their knowledge on this very important subject; so there is a mutual obligation between the medical profession and public hospitals which both sides should acknowledge. The majority of the medical profession do recognise that principle. The leading medical men of the city—those who are in a position to command the highest fees—give their services to the hospital in an honorary capacity. They recognise their social responsibilities to the hospital, and their services are granted freely and cheerfully; but we definitely maintain that the control of the hospital as an institution must be reposed in an official who is subject to the absolute control of the board in respect of internal administration. That official must have the last word on any question of internal administration.

The Leader of the Opposition criticised the Government for their attitude towards infectious diseases, and he quoted from the

majority report of the royal commission appointed to inquire into public hospitals. This is the portion of the majority report which he quoted—

“Your commissioners are of the opinion that the practice of placing the whole burden of the upkeep of infectious diseases upon the local authority is not equitable.”

He inferred from that that the whole burden of dealing with infectious diseases was placed upon the local authorities. Such is not the case, and has not been the case for very many years. In some of the older countries of the world the whole burden of dealing with infectious diseases is borne by the local authorities. That position obtains to-day in England. The local authorities in Queensland are expected to assume the responsibility for treating what might be termed domestic diseases, but the cost of treating patients who are the victims of other diseases is borne by the Government or by the hospital board, and not by the local authorities. Local conditions have a very great bearing upon domestic diseases; and that fact is sufficient to justify the contention that the local authority should assume the responsibility of treating the victims of such diseases. The chairman of the Hospital Commission, who is a police magistrate, and one better qualified to sift and to weigh evidence, differed from his two fellow-commissioners in respect of this matter. In his report upon this subject he said—

“Your commissioner regrets he is unable to follow the reasoning of, or agree with the conclusions of, the majority.”

He quoted the opinion of the principal witness for the British Medical Association on the subject, which is to this effect—

“In regard to infectious diseases, we think that each local authority should be responsible for the hospital maintenance of all patients in its area suffering from infectious diseases.”

He was supported in his view by the British Medical Association. There are many reasons why the cost of treatment of domestic diseases should be borne by local authorities, the chief of which is that the duty of their prevention devolves upon them. The Government, as a Government, have no means of preventing domestic infectious diseases unless they take over the functions of cleansing and sanitation. It is obvious that they cannot embark on such a policy throughout the length and breadth of Queensland. That is essentially the duty of local authorities; and, if the cost of those services was not borne by local authorities, they would not be so diligent in cleansing their areas and keeping them free from disease. As proof of that I have to quote only the fact that a few months ago the late Government decided to remove the cost of treatment of domestic infectious diseases from local authorities, and immediately many local authorities applied to the Commissioner of Public Health for permission to dispense with the services of their health inspectors. It was most stupid to relieve local authorities of the cost of treating infectious diseases by the hospitals, and to put the cost on the Government, who have no say in their prevention.

Reference was made by the ex-Home Secretary to the drawing of the “Golden Casket”

by the new machine which was recently purchased from the inventor, Mr. John Lunn. The ex-Home Secretary, who recommended to the committee that the machine be purchased, is aware that at the time he went out of office the machine was not advanced to such a stage of mechanical perfection that it could be used with absolute safety. Before such a machine could be used for drawing the “Golden Casket” it was necessary to have it as nearly mechanically perfect as possible; and the “Golden Casket” committee rightfully decided that the machine should be made as mechanically perfect and foolproof as it was possible to make it. After turning the barrel thousands of times and making a series of drawings, it was found that two discs had jammed in the entrance to the slot where one number should show. It would have been fatal to the prestige of the “Golden Casket” had such an incident occurred in one of its drawings. Naturally, if someone held the ticket with the four numbers as turned up in the machine he or she could rightfully claim the first prize, considering that it was legally his or hers. When that defect was discovered, the committee referred the machine back to the inventor, and he successfully rectified the matter. The machine was since submitted by the committee to Mr. Henderson, the Chief Inspector of Machinery, for report. He gave the machine a minute inspection and overhauling, finally giving a certificate that it was mechanically sound and that it was not possible for its mechanism to get out of order. However, to be sure that each number had an absolutely equal chance of being drawn, the machine was also submitted to Mr. E. F. Simmonds, Professor of Mathematics at the University of Queensland. After a number of trial drawings and a careful study, he submitted a certificate to the committee only a few weeks ago in which he said—

“The theory of the machine is mathematically sound. All numbers have an equal chance. It is possible, of course, for a number to turn up more than once in a drawing, but this should happen very seldom.

“I examined the results of two test drawings with the machine, and compared them with the figures from three actual drawings by the old method. The machine gave a slightly more even distribution than the barrel.”

These matters had to be attended to before the machine was taken over. Had the machine proved perfect at the time the late Home Secretary was in office, it would have been taken over in his time, because he approved of it, and the “Golden Casket” committee was only too pleased to devise a method of drawing the “Golden Casket” which would leave it free from any suspicion of interference, or, more important still, from any suspicion of accident. The suspicion of foul play rested with a few people, but the suspicion of accident was always there.

Under the present arrangement every number is in the machine. Mathematically it is possible for one number to draw every prize; but such a contingency is extremely improbable.

I want to assure hon. members that the other matters mentioned by them have been

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noted, and will receive careful consideration. Such matters as the early grant of a subsidy to the Ipswich hospital, a subsidy to small hospitals, ambulance matters at Cairns, etc., the extension of child welfare work, and the consideration of mothercraft work will all receive consideration. The Government are definitely extending the child welfare work, which is one of the most valuable works that could be undertaken. The policy of the Government in the extension of maternity hospitals will also be extended, so that every facility will be offered in the interests of mothers and babies.

If at any time any hon. member has any suggestion to make with regard to any matter affecting his own electorate or generally, and that matter comes within the purview of the Home Department, he may rest assured that any representations made to the department will be carefully considered. That has always been the practice of the department, and it will be continued.

Mr. TOZER (*Gympie*) [11.14 a.m.]: The sum of £199,596, which is being appropriated for hospitals this year, is £7,201 less than the amount appropriated last year. I understand that the cost of the hospitals last year was £666,878; so that it is reasonable to assume that at least an equal amount will be required this year. I presume that any additional funds required will come from the "Golden Casket" receipts or from contributions by local authorities. Last year £89,492 was received from the "Golden Casket," the balance being made up by contributions from local authorities, etc.

Great exception has been taken to the contributions provided under the Hospitals Act. That Act provides that the Government shall contribute 60 per cent. towards the upkeep of hospitals and the component local authorities 40 per cent. after deducting the estimated income from sources other than contributions from the Treasurer and the component local authorities. The local authorities find that the contribution that is being asked is really a tax on the ratepayers and the producers; and it is considered that the tax is not an equitable one because it is a tax on one section of the people, who contribute their share from the consolidated revenue as well. A Royal Commission was appointed to go into these matters, and the commissioners reported—

"The basis of the taxation levied by the local authorities to provide their share of the hospitals boards' precepts is the unimproved capital value of the land.

"Evidence with regard to this method of taxation was given at every centre visited, and the commissioners were impressed by the opposition shown thereto by all classes of witnesses. With very few exceptions it was condemned as 'inequitable.'

#### PRESENT SYSTEM INEQUITABLE.

"Your commissioners are satisfied that the present method of raising the component local authorities' quota towards the upkeep of hospitals is not the most equitable, for the following reasons:—

- (a) The unimproved capital value of land is not always a sure index to a ratepayer's ability to pay."

One can quite understand that. A person may have a station property which may be of considerable value, but it may have an exceptionally heavy mortgage on it. Yet that person is asked to pay on the unimproved value of the land, and no deduction is made in respect of the mortgage. The report continues—

"(b) A considerable number of people escape direct payment."

You can easily understand that, because a person may not have any land at all, although he may have a big income from investments in bonds, mortgages, and Government securities. Such a man will pay nothing at all to the hospital funds, so that it will be seen how inequitable the tax is. The report continues—

"(c) Ratepayers contribute indirectly as well as directly.

"In support of this contention the following instances are given. The cases quoted are persons employed in the one service:—

	Unimproved Value of Land on which Rates are Paid.
(1) Salary £1,500 per annum ...	Nil
(2) Salary £1,100 per annum ...	£400
(3) Salary £950 per annum ...	£290
(4) Salary £800 per annum ...	£600"

It works out that the landowner who has an income of £700 less has to pay the hospitals tax, whereas the other man who has an income of £1,500 and no land pays nothing; therefore, the hospitals tax is a direct tax on the ratepayers; and that is why the whole of the ratepayers object to that form of taxation and want a different method of financing the hospitals so that the tax will be more equitably distributed. The report continues—

"It will be noted that (1), who enjoys the largest income, contributes nothing direct to hospital maintenance through the local authority, whereas (4), who has the smallest salary, is called upon to pay the most.

"The present system also makes no provision for any contribution from a large section of the community which benefits to the greatest extent by the services provided by the institutions."

That is what the Commission found after going into the whole matter. That matter was gone into, and a recommendation was included in the report to the effect that hospitals should be financed by voluntary contribution, benevolent contributory schemes, and other forms of income as at present to the extent by which the sources of income fell short of the amount required. The commissioners recommended as the best and most equitable method of financing public hospitals that—

"1. A Hospital Fund be created by the collection of a special hospital tax on wages, salaries, and income, with an exemption to persons in receipt of not more than £52 per annum from such sources.

"2. The difference between the estimated expenditure and estimated income of the board shall be paid—

(a) By the Treasurer, who shall, out of moneys to be appropriated from time to time for the purpose, pay to

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the board, out of the Hospital Fund, an amount equal to 80 per cent. of such difference;

(b) By the component local authorities, which shall contribute an amount equal to 20 per cent. of such difference."

On working that out it was found that it would not be an equitable system. It was found that the most vital consideration was the lightening of the burden on the primary producer. It was also stated—

"The most vital consideration was the lightening of the burden upon the primary producer. The incidence of the hospital rate on the primary producer has been primarily responsible for the condemnation of the existing hospital system, and naturally any scheme to be substituted for the existing scheme would first of all have to remove that disability. Investigation into this aspect clearly revealed, however, that the substitution of a tax on salaries, wages, and income for the present means of finance would not relieve the primary producer, but on the contrary would impose a much heavier burden upon him than he bears at present. To enable this conclusion to be arrived at examples of income tax assessments on primary producers in various districts in Queensland were analysed and compared under the two systems. The comparison was rather startling, for, with the exception of one area, it showed that the hospital tax was much greater than the hospital rate and the amount which would be payable under the tax varied from: 50 per cent. to 500 per cent. more than the present tax."

It seems that, although another scheme was suggested, it was found that, in working it out, the primary producers would in some instances have to pay more than they pay under the present scheme, so that the scheme would not be satisfactory. The present Act provides that the local authority shall provide a certain amount. Although it is argued that it is nominally 40 per cent., when certain contributions are taken off, it is considerably reduced, and it is stated that in some cases the local authority would only have to find 20 per cent. or 30 per cent. Still the burden falls on the primary producer. If people who use hospitals are not graded under some scheme, they pay nothing at all unless they pay voluntarily—I use the word "voluntarily" because they are called upon to pay to the hospitals, although in many cases they are not in a position to pay. A number of landowners who are taxed under the present Act are not in a position to pay any taxation, but they are forced to pay a tax on the unimproved value of their land, and it comes very hard upon them. We want, if possible, to obtain some relief for these people, and the matter should be gone into, and a more equitable basis of taxation adopted and imposed on those who are best able to afford it. The primary producers should obtain relief from this taxation.

The Minister referred to certain infectious diseases as domestic diseases, in regard to which local authorities have to find a certain amount of money. I know of one shire council which contributed up to £400 in this connection. The amount varies; and some have to pay considerably more. The late

Government, by taking over the cost of infectious diseases, gave the local authorities £28,676 for the purpose of fighting infectious diseases, and by thus helping the local authorities they relieved the ratepayers to that extent. We know that it is taking ratepayers all their time to pay their ordinary rates. Anyone who has to collect rates for a local authority finds that many people are asking for time to pay, and they have actually not got money to meet their assessments. They have their properties mortgaged; and any relief that can be given to local authorities will be a welcome relief to ratepayers. The present Government, of course, have made local authorities again liable for this charge, so that the relief given by the Moore Government has been wiped out, and the present Government have again imposed taxation on the primary producers.

A benefit would be conferred upon the hospitals if an alteration were made in the law respecting bequests and legacies to hospitals. Under section 21 of the "The Hospitals Act of 1923," it is provided that a board shall establish a fund to be called the hospitals fund, into which, by subsection (2), there shall be paid, *inter alia*—

"All donations, bequests, legacies . . ."

The principal Act is amended by the amending Act of 1928 by the insertion of a new section 24, subsection (4) of which provides—

"The board shall keep a separate account of contributors' payments, and shall in such account credit the local authority with payments received from or raised in the area of such local authority . . . The amount so credited to the local authority . . . shall be deducted by the board from any precept or precepts issued to such local authority, and if payments are received by the board after the issue to and payment by the local authority . . . of the final precept, the board shall remit to such local authority . . . an amount equal to any contributors' payments so received and credited to such local authority."

Section 2 of the principal Act was amended by including the following new definition:—

"Contributors' payments'— . . ."

"The term also includes contributions by contributors or donations or grants from charitable or benevolent funds; also bequests, legacies, or devises of property; and income derived from investments."

In many cases people are inclined to make bequests to hospitals by will. I know of a case in which such a bequest was made. It has not yet fallen in, because it is subject to a life interest to the widow of the testator. The will was made many years ago, before the Act of 1923 came into force, and the testator was under the impression that, by leaving £1,000 to the Gympie hospital, he was making a gift of that amount to that institution. Under the law as I have quoted it, that contribution, if paid to the hospital, would be credited to the local authority, the Gympie City Council; so that really the gift would go to the city council and not to the hospital. The executors would cancel that bequest if they could do so; but, of course, they cannot.

On numerous occasions when people have consulted me about making their wills and have come to talk about distributions, they

Mr. Tozer.]

have said, "What is the good of leaving money to the hospital? It will go to the local authority." Only this week I had a lady of means in my office, who said, "Mr. Tozer, I intended to leave a bequest to one of the hospitals. Has that section of the Act been amended?" I told her that it had not, and she said, "I would like to leave something to the hospital, but I do not want the local authority to get the benefit; so I shall not make any bequest." The 1928 Act should be so amended that these donations can be made direct to the hospital, otherwise there will not be any future bequests to such institutions.

When the Moore Government assumed control in Queensland, the financial position of most of the hospitals was far from satisfactory, and it was imperative that the expenditure at many of them should be reduced.

The HOME SECRETARY: They were not consulted.

Mr. TOZER: For some reason or other the institutions concerned were disinclined to approve of this procedure, and that is why certain members of the controlling bodies had to be removed from office. I was a member of the Gympie hospital committee for a number of years and president for thirteen years; but, when it was decided that the hospital should come under the Hospitals Act, I considered it an opportune time to resign and allow someone else to take my position. The financial position of the hospital at that time was not in a bad way. There were some fixed deposits, but they were being gradually utilised year by year; and the time was not far distant when they would be entirely exhausted and the institution would not be able to carry on. Consequently, it was decided that it was in the best interests of the hospital and of the patients that the hospital should come under the Act. The Act provided that the contributors to the hospital fund should appoint three contributors' representatives, that the local authorities should appoint three representatives, and that the Government should appoint the same number. Immediately it was known that the hospital was to be brought under the Hospitals Act, and that any precepts to be levied would involve attacks upon the ratepayers in the local authority areas, all voluntary contributions ceased, and there were no contributors to appoint the three representatives as prescribed by the Act. The duty then devolved upon the Government to appoint these representatives. In making the appointments it was considered advisable that both the city and the country should be represented, and that the representatives should be men who had made a success of their own businesses. Eventually men of this type were appointed to the board. Later they were removed from office by the Labour Government, and four Government employees were appointed in their stead. One was a public servant, one a railway employee, and two were school teachers. Not one of these Government employees had taken any active interest in hospital matters prior to their appointment, whereas the deposed representatives had generally taken a keen interest in hospital affairs, and had been voluntary subscribers to the institution. When the Moore Government assumed control, the four Government employees were compelled to vacate their positions. It was considered

be in the best interests of the institution and of the district generally that both city and country should be represented on the board. Certain other persons were put on, including a solicitor, a retired merchant, an auctioneer and commission agent, and a well-to-do dairy farmer. They were selected because they had taken an active part in the affairs of the district. One of the other members on the committee was a cordial manufacturer. He is an exceptionally hard worker in the interests of the district. He was very active in Oddfellow circles, and took a prominent part in all public matters. The other representatives considered him to be the best possible choice for the position of chairman. When the Labour Government were returned to office, this man was gazetted off the board. That was a mistake. All the other representatives appointed by the Moore Government were also gazetted out of office. This Government went back to the old system of making appointments to the board, selecting a public servant, a school teacher, a railway employee, an organiser of the Australian Workers' Union, and a commission agent. I do not say that they will not take an active part in the work allotted them; but they had not taken an active interest in the hospital prior to their appointment. Now that they are there, I hope they will do their best in the interests of the institution and district. Personally, I do not believe that the Government should alter the constitution of the board, no matter what politics its members may subscribe to. In such matters the Government should endeavour to secure the best men available in the district, more especially those who are suited for social service work, at the same time taking into consideration the fact that each part of the district and its interests should be represented. By this method the active interest of the whole district is stimulated. Appointments which are not made on these lines do not meet with the approval of the district, and interest in the institution is not sustained.

There has been a falling off in the number of "Golden Casket" drawings during the last three years, and a consequent diminution in the revenue from that source. An improvement in the number of drawings has now taken place, and, as its working is more satisfactory, an improvement in the revenue should result, and hospitals will benefit accordingly.

Mr. LARCOMBE (*Rockhampton*) [11.38 a.m.]: The remarks of the hon. member for Gympie concerning hospital finance are of interest. They recall to my mind the fact that the Moore Government levelled criticism at the previous Labour Government because they imposed a policy whereby, if a hospital were districted, the local authorities contributed to the support of the hospitals in the area, and promised that, if they were returned to power they would immediately repeal that method of hospital finance. They were returned to power in 1929, but they did not give effect to their promise. That is rather a compliment to the policy of their predecessors. Certainly that system of finance is not perfect, but it is the best that ever has been devised for financing hospitals. If it was fundamentally weak, why did not the Moore Government carry out their promise and substitute a more equitable policy?

[*Mr. Tozer.*]

I desire to refer briefly to the question of Government representatives on hospital boards and the dismissal of certain of those representatives by the Moore Administration. The hon. member for Gympie said that the soundest policy for any Government to adopt was to appoint the best representatives possible irrespective of politics. That is a very excellent dictum. It is rather a pity that the Moore Government did not follow that line of policy when in power.

Mr. KENNY: They did.

Mr. LARCOMBE: They did not. I listened on Friday to the Leader of the Opposition, who was complaining about certain members of the Brisbane and South Coast Hospitals Board being removed by the Labour Government. The hon. gentleman said that it was an ungracious act and savoured of a policy of "spoils to the victors." The Leader of the Opposition should be the last hon. member of this Committee to complain in that way, because he was responsible for the most ungracious and unceremonious acts, and was responsible for a policy of "spoils to the victors" in a way that no other party has ever resorted to in this State. (Opposition dissent.) He out-Heroded Herod in the matter of political appointments and spoils to the victors; yet he considers he has now the right to criticise Labour policy whilst entirely ignoring his own shortcomings and sins with respect to the particular complaint that he laid against the Home Secretary.

Mr. KENNY: Name some!

Mr. LARCOMBE: I will. He reminds me of the rebuke of Robert Burns to the "unco guid"—

"O ye wha are sae guid yoursel',  
Sae pious and sae holy,  
You've nought to do but mark and tell  
Your neebours' fauts and folly."

The pious and holy members of the Opposition have nothing to do but discover the faults and the follies of the Labour Administration, overlooking the fact that they are charging the Government of the day with the very sins they committed themselves when in power. If hon. members opposite have such a holy horror of "spoils to the victors," why did they resort to that policy when they were in power?

Mr. KENNY: Name some!

Mr. LARCOMBE: If the hon. member for Cook will restrain his impetuosity, I will give him the information he desires. This mask of political probity which the Leader of the Opposition and his party are wont to wear is very ill-fitting. It has no substance in reality. The hon. member for Cook wants some concrete examples in proof of my statement. I recall the case of Councillor Clayton of the Rockhampton Hospitals Board, who was removed a few weeks after the Moore Government were returned to power. There was no reasonable justification for that action. Councillor Clayton was elected chairman of the shire council by ratepayers the majority of whom were anti-Labour, thus indicating the respect and esteem that were held for his capacity and experience. Yet, to use the inelegant phrase of the Leader of the Opposition, he was pitched off the hospitals board to which he was appointed only one month after the Moore Government were returned to power.

KENNY: Was he a council represen-

Mr. LARCOMBE: No; he was a Government representative, and his only crime was that he was a Labour man.

The Leader of the Opposition said the reason for the removal of the members of the Brisbane and South Coast Hospitals Board who were Government representatives before 1929 was that they would not carry out the policy of the then Government—that they would not agree to economise. By interjection, the hon. member for Keppel said that members of hospital boards were removed under the Moore Administration because of incompetent management. I want to point out that those reasons are contradictory and misleading. I wish to point out Councillor Clayton's outstanding ability. He was one of the pioneers of the Yeppoon hospital, and he had rendered yeoman service to that hospital before he was appointed to the Rockhampton Hospitals Board. He was capable, experienced, and enthusiastic in hospital work. He was appointed to the Rockhampton hospital board by the Labour Government, and did excellent service. If mismanagement was the cause of the removal of certain members by the Moore Government, why were only Labour appointees removed? Councillor Clayton was just as capable as any member on that board, and more capable than most; yet, because he was appointed by the Labour Government, he and certain other members were removed from that board. All the Nationalist supporters were, unfortunately—if I may use that term—local authority representatives, who could not be removed; and Nationalist representatives would not have been removed by the Labour Government if the line of policy laid down by the hon. member for Gympie had been adopted by the Moore Government. The Labour Party stood for a reasonable attitude and tolerance in political opinion, and did not victimise a man because of his political views; and, so long as he carried out his work conscientiously and faithfully, he was not interfered with and was not removed by the Labour Government. When the Moore Government came into power, they resorted to Tammanyism of the worst kind—"spoils to the victors"—and removed representatives from hospital boards in a disgraceful manner. They removed the most capable men on those boards, and I will mention two instances in particular.

To show what the ratepayers of the district thought of the action of the Moore Government, I wish to point out that, after the Moore Government had removed Councillor Clayton, there was a local authority election, and Councillor Clayton was re-elected to the local authority and re-elected chairman of the shire, and sent back to the hospital board as the local authority representative, showing the contempt of the local authority for the action of the Moore Government, and showing that an anti-Labour local authority thought Councillor Clayton had the ability, experience, and general fitness to be a representative on the Rockhampton Hospital Board.

Mr. KENNY: There was a State election after that. How did he get on then?

Mr. LARCOMBE: There was a redistribution, and that is the reason why Councillor Clayton is not in this Assembly—not because of want of confidence on the part

*Mr. Larcombe.]*

of the electors of Keppel, but because of the manipulation of the electoral boundaries.

I want further to point out that the Rockhampton Hospital Board was well conducted in 1929. The board had only been in operation for a few years. If there was any incompetency, it might be ante-dated to the period when the Labour representatives were appointed on that board; but I do not say that there was any incompetency or mismanagement. During the period prior to the formation of the hospitals board, the Rockhampton hospitals were well conducted under the difficult conditions the committees had to work under before the district system was inaugurated; therefore, we say that Councillor Clayton was disgracefully removed from that board. He was sent back to the Rockhampton Hospital Board as the local authority representative, and he is there to-day despite the action of the Moore Government. He is acting, not as a Government nominee, but as a representative of the shire council.

I will give one other example—that of Mr. Duncan McInnes, who was chairman of the Toowoomba Hospitals Board. He was a fine personality—there was no finer personality in hospital administration throughout Queensland. He was a man of capacity, tolerant spirit, who never intruded his politics in hospital management, and with long experience and great enthusiasm in the work; yet he was removed from the hospital board by the Moore Government. I say that was a disgraceful act. It was so disgraceful that all sections of the community in Toowoomba combined and requested the Moore Government to continue the services of Mr. McInnes; yet hon. members opposite complain about "spoils to the victors," and ungracious acts! I am reminded of these other lines of Burns—

"Oh, Pope, had I thy satire's darts,  
I'd rip their rotten, hollow hearts."

That is an appropriate phrase that occurs to my mind when I hear this hypocritical criticism, this pharisaical denunciation of the Labour Government by hon. members opposite. Their policy when they were in power might be described by reversing the well-known lines of Lord Macaulay and making them read—

"All were for the party,  
And none were for the State."

Their policy was—

"Our party, our whole party, and  
nothing but our party."

If hon. members opposite expect their criticism to carry any weight and to be listened to respectfully, they should observe the line of conduct politically that they preach to hon. members opposite. They are not entitled from their own record to criticise the Home Secretary and the Labour Government. The Labour Government, as the Home Secretary stated, have followed the line of policy which was inaugurated by hon. members opposite, and those hon. members should be the last to talk about "spoils to the victors."

Mr. DANIEL (*Keppel*) [11.53 a.m.]: I am pleased that the Minister has reviewed the matter of the base hospital allowance. I am in touch with hospital work, and I realise that it would not be possible to carry on on the amount set down in the vote. There are a great many people who

come to the base hospitals from the country and they give their address as Rockhampton, for instance; therefore, we can charge them only a limited amount. If they cannot pay, we cannot get the money from them, nor can we charge the shire council area from which they come.

With regard to the matter mentioned by the hon. member for Rockhampton, I did not intend to bring it forward myself, and I am sorry he has mentioned it. It is absolutely hypocritical so far as the hon. member is concerned, because, if we have done the wrong thing—which I do not admit—surely he should not support a Government which is carrying on the same procedure. In 1929 the estimate for expenditure of the Rockhampton hospital was £29,000. For the year ended 30th June, 1932, it was £27,566 7s., but the late Home Secretary, after a review found that there was no alternative but to adopt stringent measures to reduce the Government's commitments, and accordingly advised that the amount of expenditure had to be cut down to £24,384. I am quoting now from the report of the chairman of the board for the year 1931-32:—

"As the board had framed its estimates on the expenditure of the previous year, it was confronted with a difficult task in having to maintain an unimpaired service at the hospitals with reduced funds. Fortunately the board had already taken steps to reduce expenditure by carrying on with one matron at the Rockhampton hospital in place of two, dispensing with two male members of the domestic staff, and reducing salaries by 10 per cent. of the administrative and office staffs.

"The Home Secretary's office advised on 15th September the exempting of employees under awards, employed in or in connection with any hospital in Queensland, established under 'The Hospitals Acts, 1847 to 1891,' and for 'The Hospitals Acts, 1923 to 1923.' The board, in order to economise, on 20th November resolved to further reduce the salaries and wages by 5 per cent. of all persons in the employ of the board, with the exception of the medical superintendent and matron of the Rockhampton hospital, the salaries of the latter having been reduced when applications were called for the positions."

We thought we would try to carry on with a reduction of 5 per cent., which we did. The salary of the medical superintendent had been reduced from £1,000 to £800, and that of the matron from £300 to £250, and we did not think it fair to reduce them any further. The report proceeds—

"The actual maintenance expenditure for the past year amounted to £25,837 6s. 10d., and the cash maintenance receipts to £6,221 7s. 9d.—the year's operations resulting in a deficit of £457 7s. 10d.

"Subsequently the Government, on my representation, approved of £800 11s. 5d. expenditure for minor additions and repairs (which item was deleted from the estimates sent down) but provision was not made by the Government to provide the funds for the item mentioned. Had this been done, the board have closed the year with a balance of £343 3s. 7d."

[*Mr. Larcombe.*]

In addition to that, we had stocks in the dispensary up to a value of £500, which do not appear in that balance-sheet. Had both amounts been shown in the balance-sheet, we would have shown a credit balance of about £800. The report further says—

“Activity has marked the operations for the year at the Rockhampton hospital. The indoor patients treated numbered 2,587, and a daily average of 130.2 as against the year 1931 of 2,054, and a daily average of 127.7.

“The out-patients treated numbered 5,647 as against 6,156 for 1931.

“The private wards at the general hospital have been well patronised, and the Lady Goodwin Maternity Hospital has justified itself, the patients showing a marked increase.

“The Yeppoon hospital shows a slight falling off in the number of indoor patients, the figure being 298 for the year, as against 319 for the previous year.

“The convalescent home at Emu Park is fulfilling its function, in not only supplying accommodation for convalescents, but providing the residents and visitors with outdoor treatment and rendering first aid to the community.

“The cash receipts from the five institutions for patients' fees and contributory benefit schemes amounted to £6,301 15s. 10d., as against £4,392 1s. 2d. for 1931, which is a record.”

In fact, in this year we collected nearly £2,000 more than we ever did before.

At 12 noon,

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

Mr. DANIEL: The report continues—

“A feature of the year's working has been the marked beautification and improvements to the grounds of the Rockhampton hospital. The Board received valuable help from the Mayor and aldermen of the city council in many ways, and was also fortunate in having the gratuitous help of the Curator of the Botanic Gardens, Mr. H. G. Simmons, in planning and supervising the work. The thanks of the board are tendered to the city council and Mr. Simmons for the valuable services rendered. The work was carried out with intermittent labour supplied by the Government.”

For two years prior to 1930 the Rockhampton Hospital was absolutely seething with discontent. Why did the hon. member for Rockhampton leave this Chamber? Why did he not mention Mr. Kelly as well as Councillor Clayton? I admit that I had a good deal to do with the removal of some of the members from the Rockhampton Hospital Board, but not on political grounds. I did it in the interests of the people of Rockhampton and district. I do not care a rap because I am off the board. To me the work was a labour of love. If the Government considered that I was not worthy of the position, and that someone more worthy could be appointed, then they were at liberty to make the new appointment. We were able to reduce our estimate of expenditure from £29,000 to £24,000. We should endeavour to reduce expenditure in

every Government department, provided its efficiency is not impaired. The efficiency of the Rockhampton Hospital was even better when I was a member than it had been when the annual expenditure amounted to £29,000. If I were to tell the Committee some of the things that occurred at the Rockhampton Hospital over a period of two or three years, Mr. Gledson, your hair would stand on end.

Mr. O'KEEFE: Dunlop told us.

Mr. DANIEL: He did not. We absolutely cleaned the place up. For years the Rockhampton Hospital paid £2 12s. 6d. for a certain article that it required, and for two years I fought the Labour members on the board in respect of this matter, but they would not listen to me. To-day that same article is being purchased for 7s. 8d. landed in Rockhampton. The Assistant Under Secretary of the Home Department can bear out my statement.

Mr. MAHER: Who got the difference?

Mr. DANIEL: I am sorry that the hon. member for Rockhampton saw fit to mention Mr. Clayton. It was he and Mr. Kelly who were doing all this. He was assisting Mr. Kelly and two or three other Labour members to pay £2 12s. 6d. for this item. Would the hon. member for Rockhampton trust Mr. Clayton with anything? I trust that the new Rockhampton District Hospitals Board will not alter the administration pursued by its predecessor, because if it pursues the policy laid down for the last two years, every person who enters the institution will get a fair deal and be treated properly. I am not saying that without a full knowledge of previous happenings. Both Mr. Clayton and Mr. Kelly assisted the doctor to allow little children to be kept in a certain place which was entirely unsuitable. I fought for two years for the rights of those little children, but I was not listened to. The board at that time had a place which cost £2,000 which nine night nurses were occupying, while little children were kept in the building to which I have referred. Immediately I was elected chairman of the hospitals board I informed the committee that, if they did not assist me to remove these little children from this building, I would tell the world about it. They assisted me to move these children to more suitable premises. (Government laughter.) Hon. members opposite may laugh and sneer; but some of them have not done anything in their lives to ameliorate the sufferings of the sick. I did not give my services to the Rockhampton District Hospitals Board from any political viewpoint at all, but simply in the interests of the people of Rockhampton and district, and as long as I live I will continue to serve the people along those lines.

Mr. KENNY (*Cook*) [12.8 p.m.]: The justification offered by the Home Secretary for removing representatives from certain hospital boards was very disappointing indeed. The hon. member for Keppel has shown very definitely the effective nature of the policy of the late Government in hospital administration at Rockhampton. Despite the fact that the hon. member, who was chairman of the Rockhampton District Hospitals Board, effected considerable economy that was of great benefit to the town and district, immediately the present Government came into

power, they gazetted him off the board. That was done regardless of the fact that he was chosen as chairman by the representatives of the local authorities and other representatives on the board, and enjoyed the confidence of those representatives.

With their assistance, he not only effected economies, but increased the efficiency of the hospitals under his charge; but, because he happened to be a member of this side of the Committee, he was gazetted out of office without any consideration to the administration of the hospitals.

I was very interested indeed to hear the hon. member for Rockhampton say that hon. members on this side had complimented the Labour Government by carrying on legislation enacted by the previous Labour Administration for the financing of hospitals. He also stated that we promised to relieve local authorities of the burden of hospital taxation. I agree that we did say that we would relieve them. We went fully into the question; but we could not overlook the fact that the previous Labour Government had left the Treasury in a deplorable state. The work that had to be undertaken by the Moore Government to clean up the mess was no sinecure. It was realised that hardship would be imposed. Recognising that every additional tax on the wage-earner was reducing his standard of living, we called a halt. Moreover, we recognised the futility of imposing more direct taxation on the people of Queensland. We were honest enough to say that certain things could not be done in the then financial state of the country. On the other hand, the Labour Government have no hesitation in doing a certain thing, and then, prior to an election, doing something else for the purpose of securing votes.

One policy only should actuate a Government—a policy of honesty. The duty devolves upon the Government to do what is right in the interests of the people, irrespective of votes. The Moore Government, recognising that policy, were of the opinion that the cost of infectious diseases should not be a charge only on the landholders of the State. They gave effect to their policy in that direction; but, when the Labour Government were returned to office, they reimposed a charge in this connection on the landholders of the State. That is most unjust. The Labour Government recognise the injustice of the tax, but at the same time they realise that somebody must be taxed, and do not hesitate to impose additional taxation on wealth from the land. We have reached the stage in government when taxation is an extremely onerous burden, when it is crippling industry throughout the State, and generally is having results that are not in the best interests of the State. The Labour Government are imposing additional taxation on the landholders of the State.

We have had the hon. member for Rockhampton referring to "spoils to the victors," and he most incorrectly stated that that policy had been adopted by the Moore Government. Surely the hon. member cannot seriously argue that the appointment of a man to a hospital committee, where no remuneration is paid, savours of "spoils to the victors!" Hon. members on the Government side should be the last people in the world to speak of "spoils to the victors" when we know that no fewer than four ex-Labour members have been appointed to

various positions in the employ of the State. We know, too, that union organisers are being appointed daily to Government positions. A suggestion is also current that the Deputy Leader of the Government proposes to visit New Zealand and America at the expense of the State. In the face of these statements, Government members should hold their heads in shame when any reference is made to "spoils to the victors." It is unfortunately true that many of the plums are given to political supporters by the Labour Government at the expense of unfortunate people who are taxed out of any standard of living they ever had.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS interjected.

Mr. KENNY: The hon. gentleman has admitted that he is going to get one of the plums. He is going to have a motor car and a chauffeur to drive him about. Is this a policy that is going to save Queensland? I say it is not. This policy cannot go on. The reason why the Moore Government removed some members from the hospitals boards was that there were instances in which the Government representatives appointed by the previous Labour Government tried to get political kudos for their own political party, and would not carry out economies in accordance with the money made available by Parliament.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: That is wrong.

Mr. KENNY: We know that it is right. When they would not carry out that policy, the Moore Government removed certain members from the hospitals boards. There were no Government representatives removed in my electorate for political reasons; but what do we find to-day? My whole ambition whilst member for that district has been to get the best men possible for the control of the hospitals; ability was the first consideration. Owing to that policy our hospitals have been run very efficiently. What is the position to-day? In one hospital the wardman had a difference with the committee with the result that he was dismissed; to-day that wardman is a Government representative on the hospital board. Are we going to get efficient management when that kind of thing is done?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He would be efficient in hospital management.

Mr. KENNY: He would not be efficient in regard to finance; and finance is the difficulty in Queensland to-day. That policy is not going to get us anywhere. In another instance a representative was selling a few loads of wood to the local hotelkeeper; and, when it came to the question of whom he should vote for, he said, "I must vote for the hotelkeeper or else I shall lose my customer." That is not going to assist in securing voluntary contributions for hospitals; and many hospitals in Queensland to-day are supported by voluntary subscriptions.

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

Mr. O'KEEFE (*Cairns*) [12.18 p.m.]: I wish to endorse the remarks of the Home Secretary in regard to the action of the Moore Government in removing many Labour representatives from the hospitals boards throughout Queensland. The last person in this Chamber to complain of what

[*Mr. Kenny.*]

the present Government are doing in regard to changing the Government representatives on hospital boards should be the Leader of the Opposition. The hon. gentleman complained very bitterly the other day of the action of the Labour Government in that connection; but why did he not object when he was controlling the destinies of this State, when he knew definitely that the Home Secretary was removing certain Labour representatives from the various hospitals boards? Mr. Jeppesen, who is the owner of the Labour newspaper in Cairns, and who was on the hospital committee in Cairns for twenty years, and who had given every satisfaction to the hospital and to the general public, was taken off the board without reason. As soon as that gentleman was removed from the hospital board, some very bitter letters were sent from Nationalist supporters to the Home Secretary complaining of his action. I am very pleased that Mr. Jeppesen was re-appointed to the hospital board in recognition of his valuable services. The Home Secretary had taken his instructions from a Mr. Atherton, a member of the Government who then represented Chillagoe. In September, 1929, Mr. Atherton wrote a letter to the hon. member for Fitzroy, the then Home Secretary, asking him to remove certain members from the Cairns hospital board, and to replace them with Nationalist supporters. Mr. Atherton was "sticky beaking" in regard to an electorate which was then represented by Mr. McCormack. The late Home Secretary made no bones about his attitude in this respect, as is shown by the speech of the hon. gentleman on the Estimates of that year. The hon. member had this to say in reply to my complaint in that direction, as reported on page 2135 of "Hansard" for 1930—

"The next statement brought forward concerns hospital board representation, in connection with which the hon. member for Cairns complained that the Government were guilty of appointing their own supporters to the boards. We plead guilty to that, and can quote the precedent created by the Labour Government. There is not one single instance where any Nationalist or Country Party supporter was placed on a hospital board when the Labour Government were in power. I do not blame them for that, because, being the Government of the day, they were responsible to a certain extent for the financing of the hospitals, and it was essential to have representatives on the boards who were in accord with the policy of the Government.

"Mr O'Keefe: Against the wishes of the subscribers?"

The plea of the Opposition, especially of the hon. member for Cook and the Leader of the Opposition, was that the change was made on the ground of economy. Let me state that during the twenty years Mr. Jeppesen was on the committee of the hospital board the hospital was managed very efficiently. As a matter of fact, the Royal Commission appointed a year or two ago to investigate the hospital conditions in the State reported definitely that the Cairns Hospital Board was the most economical board in Queensland. The last report which I received from the board only last week shows how economy has been carried out there. It has brought the cost per patient down to 7s. 7d. per week. During the inquiry

by the Royal Commission it was proved to be somewhere between 8s. and 9s. per patient, proving that the statements of hon. members opposite were wrong, and that they wanted to appoint their political friends in place of Messrs. Jeppesen and Campbell.

Mr. KENNY: They are capable men.

Mr. O'KEEFE: They may have been capable men, and I have nothing to say against them; but the two previous members were also capable men, and one had represented the Government on the board for twenty years.

I believe that our hospital management should be non-political. We have to gather money for hospitals from all sections of the community. Why did the hon. member for Toowoong not condemn his own Government for taking people off the hospitals boards because they had Labour politics?

Mr. MAXWELL: I am condemning your Government for doing it.

Mr. O'KEEFE: Of course. I say we are only getting a little back which we are entitled to get back. When hon. members opposite stooped low enough to do those things, the only thing was to get those people back again and let the hospitals be managed as they should be. The members of the hospitals boards who were put off by the present Government are not complaining. They realise that they got there by political influence, and they were prepared to get out as soon as the change of Government took place. Again I say we should not introduce politics into this question; but, if politics were introduced when good men were on the board, Labour representation would not be worth its salt if we did not get our own back again. I certainly made representations with regard to the gentlemen who were put off the board by the Nationalist Government to have them replaced, and I have nothing to be ashamed of in that regard. When such a practice is started, there is no saying where it will end. Again I say that the hon. member for Cook should be the last to complain. He allowed the late Secretary for Mines, who represented the adjoining electorate, to do similar things in the Cairns electorate; yet now he complains because the present Government are doing the very same thing. The very moment the Moore Government got into office they commenced the practice of taking Labour representatives off hospitals boards, and I am very pleased to know that the Labour Government are making good what the late Government made bad.

Mr. PLUNKETT (*Albert*) [12.26 p.m.]: The Minister spoke at great length in explaining Government policy in regard to hospitals. I agree with what the Premier said on a previous occasion, that the health of the community is the responsibility of all the people. If anything could convince the Home Secretary that the Government's policy is wrong, it is to be found in the speeches which have been made from both sides of the Committee this morning. Where it is essential that the institution should be 100 per cent. efficient, the very fact that the Government appoint five representatives to a board and the argument that we heard as to what has happened and how one side has condemned the other side for putting representatives off and others on ought to convince anybody that the policy is wrong.

*Mr. Plunkett.]*

Why the Government should want five representatives on any board passes my comprehension. In every centre throughout the State are to be found capable persons who are prepared to give their time, and very often their money, to the care of the sick people of the community. Hospitals should be the last thing into which we should allow politics to enter; yet what is our present hospital policy doing? When one Government gets into power it takes representatives off a board; and we have the spectacle of an hon. member quite unashamedly saying, "Well, we are getting a bit of our own back."

Mr. O'KEEFE: Why did you not stand up three years ago and say this?

Mr. PLUNKETT: I am not saying anything about the Government. I am saying that the policy that allows speeches and remarks of that kind is wrong.

The HOME SECRETARY: Initiated solely by your party.

Mr. PLUNKETT: If our party did something wrong, why not correct it? What is the good of saying that two wrongs make a right? Hospitals are a thing in respect of which we ought all to be working together in order to get the best out of them; yet we have one side criticising the other for putting men on and off boards. We know very well that, when these things occur, a great deal of ill-feeling must be created and the hospitals cannot work 100 per cent. efficiently. The policy should be put on a different basis. We ought to cut out political feeling and remove the possibility of political action. Let us keep hospitals above all things outside the arena of politics. Let us not choose men because of their political opinions. Let us choose men for their sense of responsibility and their ability; and such men are to be found in every centre. How can we do good work in hospitals when we who are at the fountain head of government chide one another for putting this or that good man off a hospital committee, after he has been there for twenty years? How can one keep political feeling out of hospitals and hospital boards when the whole morning is occupied in Parliament with a debate about what the other party did and what is the Government's policy in this respect? The Minister would be well advised to devise a hospital policy to provide for Government representation so as to remove political feeling from hospital administration for all time.

I rose principally to condemn the injustice of the Government in deciding that the landowners of the country shall once again assume the responsibility for the treatment of infectious diseases. Their action is entirely unfair. I agree in toto with the opinion of an ex-Labour Premier, who said that this burden should not be the responsibility of a local authority, that it should be the responsibility of the whole of the community. In many cases the local authorities have to impose a special rate to meet the cost involved in the treatment of infectious diseases. In some cases the landowners have to find hundreds of pounds to meet the cost of treating patients who become the victims of an epidemic in a certain locality. I strongly protest against the action of the Government in compelling the landowners to carry the whole financial burden involved in providing for the health of the people

[Mr. Plunkett.

in connection with matters over which they have no control.

The HOME SECRETARY: Who should bear the burden?

Mr. PLUNKETT: The whole community.

The HOME SECRETARY: The general taxpayer?

Mr. PLUNKETT: Yes. The cost should be a charge upon the consolidated revenue.

The HOME SECRETARY: It is contended that the taxpayer is unable to pay his taxes.

Mr. PLUNKETT: The landowner is unable to meet his taxation burden, too. He is unable to shift his land, and is, therefore, unable to evade his liability in respect of land taxation. It is unfair, unjust, and inequitable to expect him to assume this further burden. The Beaudesert hospital has been maintained for many years by voluntary subscriptions and by other means adopted to obtain the necessary funds. The landowners in the district appreciate the existence of the hospital, and they appreciate the splendid services of the excellent doctors and the good nurses in the institution. Their appreciation prompts them to make adequate subscriptions for the upkeep of the institution; and they are prepared at all times to enter enthusiastically into functions arranged in the various centres to provide funds for this institution. They are anxious that the very best shall be provided for the patients; but the Government will certainly kill that splendid voluntary spirit by again insisting that the landowners shall be responsible for the cost involved in the treatment of infectious diseases.

The HOME SECRETARY: The local authority has always been responsible for this expenditure.

Mr. PLUNKETT: Not in the same way as is now proposed.

The HOME SECRETARY: In addition, the taxpayers have subscribed £1 10s. for every £1 subscribed by voluntary contribution.

Mr. PLUNKETT: Not for the treatment of infectious diseases. The action of the Government in calling upon landowners to bear the cost of treating infectious diseases will have the effect of all country hospitals being brought under the Hospitals Act. What will that mean? The same rows that have occurred all over Queensland because the Government are determined to appoint four or five representatives with set political opinions. What a tragedy the whole thing is! I recognise the humane benefits provided by a hospital, and I take a very keen interest in the maintenance of hospitals; but the reimposition of a further tax at the hands of the Government will lead to all landowners losing interest in the maintenance of these institutions, and then the Government will have to decide that some other method of carrying on the work must be adopted. That could all be averted by the exercise of a little common sense. Those hospitals which have not been districted are maintained on a voluntary basis through the energy and enthusiasm of the country people, who not only subscribe directly, but organise many functions for their benefit. If the policy of the Government is in a direction which will affect this spirit of the people, then their energy and enthusiasm will wane, and their only contribution outside direct taxation will be the necessary fee for their upkeep, which they will have to

pay if ever they become inmates of the hospitals.

I desire to show how unfair on the landowner is the incidence of the taxation for the cost of treating infectious diseases. The Beaudesert Hospital adjoins the border of New South Wales, and many patients—I do not say patients suffering from infectious diseases—are treated at the Beaudesert Hospital who come from over the border. The principle is altogether wrong.

Mr. SPARKES (*Dalby*) [12.36 p.m.]: It is not my intention to recapitulate the complaints concerning the appointments made by the Government to hospital boards. I do not agree with the principle, which I consider is wrong. If the previous Government started it, then I do not agree with their action.

Mr. MAXWELL: The previous Government did not start it. The Labour Government did.

Mr. SPARKES: So far as the Dalby Hospital is concerned, I want to ask that the Government should not interfere with the appointment of Mr. Wilkes, a prominent Labour man, and Mr. Mossom, another appointment which a previous Government made. Recently a Government appointee on the Dalby Fire Brigade Board was removed, and the man who contested the recent election with me was appointed in his stead. That individual stated in a public speech that the Government required someone on such boards to support their policy. I do not know whether those views are held by the Home Secretary. I do not consider that any person holding office in an institution should allow his politics to enter into his duties. I once had the secretary of the local branch of the Australian Workers' Union working for me; but he kept his politics to himself, and so long as any man keeps his politics to himself and does his duty, whether in the interests of his employer or of the institution which he represents, he should not be shifted. I hope the Government will not perpetuate the mistake previously made in changing the representatives on hospital boards. I do not say that, because one Government made a mistake, succeeding Governments should continue that policy. My remarks also apply to the imposition of taxation, because if a mistaken policy is continued it will ultimately lead to trouble.

I am not so much interested in the various appointments made by the Government to hospital boards as I am in the taxation of a certain section of the community—namely, the landholders—in order to pay for the cost of treatment of infectious diseases. I agree with the sentiment that public hospitals are for the care and treatment of our sick. That being so, all sections, and not one particular section, should be interested in their upkeep. The Dalby Hospital is at present carried on on a voluntary basis. If it were under the Act, it would mean that Dalby, with a population of about 2,000, would be called upon to find £300, and the district £1,800 for its maintenance and upkeep. No one will admit that that is fair. The people of Dalby are more likely to get sick than the people in the outlying districts; but the latter do not mind paying so long as the tax is imposed on an equitable basis. I pay the tax as a ratepayer; yet, if I go to the hospital, I have to pay again. On the other hand,

another man who cannot pay for the hospital treatment may go into the hospital; nevertheless, he is entitled to the same care and attention as the person who can pay. The main question is: Should one class pay all the time?

The hon. member for Rockhampton stated that the Moore Government did not change this form of taxation. That makes it all the worse. I am not at all pleased that the Moore Government did not change that form of taxation, and I sincerely hope that the present Government will change it. All this talk about changing members of hospital boards is not what the people are really interested in. They require some relief from the unjust taxation. A more equitable way of imposing the tax would be to make it an insurance against sickness, to which all would contribute proportionately. Perhaps the tax could be collected by means of stamps having a fixed money value. I do not for a moment suggest that the person in receipt of say, £2 per week, should pay the same as I do. I do urge, however, that a proportionate contribution—even a penny in the case of the lower-paid employee—would be more equitable. At least the man who is on a small wage and who is making a small contribution would feel that he was under no obligation if he had to avail himself of hospital attention. He could take up the attitude, "Well, I have as much right to be here as the wealthy landowner who probably pays £100."

The Home Secretary had the matter put before him very succinctly at the Local Authorities' Conference, the members of which regarded this as distinctly class taxation. It is taxation imposed on a certain class of people who are contributing the greatest measure of taxation in Australia to-day. It is a question as to how long they will be able to pay that taxation. I earnestly trust that the Home Secretary will evolve some means of imposing a fairer method of taxation for hospitals than is the case to-day.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. A. Bruce, *The Tableland*) [12.43 p.m.]: I do not suppose that any class of taxation, Federal or State, is regarded as entirely equitable by all sections of the community. So far as this particular taxation is concerned, there would be no necessity for it if the people would voluntarily subscribe for the upkeep of the hospitals. Let me give an instance of how the voluntary system worked satisfactorily in the Mount Elliott district, where the principal contributors were working men in the mines and in the smelters. A few business people also contributed, but most of the subscriptions for the upkeep of the hospital were obtained voluntarily from the workers. In that way a hospital was provided, a first-class medical officer was appointed at a good salary, and provided with a house and other requirements; and, when the mining field eventually closed, there was a credit of £4,000 in the hospitals fund. The average wage for the men there was £3 15s. for a 56-hour working week. The men realised that some provision had to be made against sickness; and, if a man was not sick, he regarded himself as being lucky and was only too willing to subscribe.

Later on when I was member for the Kennedy constituency I had another experience. Every year prior to the sugar season

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starting the workers in the Burdekin area voluntarily subscribed to the Ayr Hospital, the small farmers contributing on the same basis. The Ayr Hospital is one of the most up to date in the State. Its maternity section cannot be surpassed, while for X-Ray equipment and other essentials it is probably as efficient as any other hospital in Australia. All that was done under the voluntary system of hospital contribution.

Then you get areas where the workers do not receive the same amount of wages and are unable to subscribe to the same extent, and the burden of this tax falls more heavily on the landowners in the district. Despite the criticisms of hon. members opposite, no hon. member has yet suggested a better method, although the hon. member who has just resumed his seat has suggested taxation per medium of a stamp. Everybody realises that provision must be made to look after those who become sick and are unable to pay for the medical attention required. Everybody admits that every citizen in Queensland is entitled to the best medical attention; and, while the present system may not be perfect, no one has yet suggested a better.

The Government gave every consideration to the question of providing hospital facilities during the time they were in power before, and during the time they were in opposition; and, since we have become a Government again, we have again given the question consideration. This form of tax is the best that has been suggested up to date; and, if any improved method is suggested by the Opposition, I am sure the Home Secretary will give it every consideration, because the objective of the Labour Party is to provide hospital and medical facilities of the best for the whole of the citizens of the State.

MR. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*) [12.48 p.m.]: I join in the very spirited speeches made by the hon. member for Albert and the hon. member for Dalby regarding the invidious charge which is being made on landowners to provide funds for the hospitals. They have been selected as against every other individual in the community to carry this special burden. If there is one thing in the world that we should encourage, it is the private ownership of land. We know the effect that such a policy has had in various countries of the world. Take France, for instance. What has helped France in the past? The cutting up of the land into small estates really saved that country. Are the people who take up land in Queensland and become producers—the very people we want to be specially selected to pay the hospital tax? If I were asked to give an opinion as to who above all others should pay this tax, I should say the man who gets his income from fixed deposits. Why should he escape? Why restrict this tax to the man who happens to be the owner of a piece of land? That is distinctly unfair, and I join wholeheartedly in the spirited attack made by hon. members on this side.

One regrets that a spirit of revenge seems to be exhibited in this matter—that, because the Moore Government did certain things, this Government should do likewise. It would be regrettable if that spirit was to be adopted, not only with regard to the hospitals but from beginning to end in our community; as, once it is admitted in one direction, it may be wholeheartedly admitted

[*Hon. H. A. Bruce.*]

in others. It is as justifiable in connection with every other sphere of Government service as it is in regard to hospital boards. We should put our foot down and say that that is wrong.

I regret that in connection with my own hospital district, the Government have, apparently from a spirit of revenge, deposed two ladies, who throughout their lives have spent themselves in their work on the hospitals committee and board. Whom are the hospital boards out to serve? Do they not exist for the benefit of the needy, and to help the most helpless? Where does that come in in regard to the conduct of the Government in removing members of hospital boards and making new appointments in their place? Surely the first consideration of the Government should be for the patients of the hospitals; but the Government are showing no consideration to the people who need sympathy and support. I speak in this way because I know the peculiar fitness for this work of the individuals who have been deposed from the Warwick hospital board. This action is very wrong, not merely to the individuals deposed, but to the institution; and the interests of the institution are surely the interests of the patients. I appeal for a broad view to be taken in this matter. We should get away from politics in regard to matters which have to do with the humane side of life. Are we only to consider the political aspect and be blind to those things which have to do with the well-being of the individuals, who, unfortunately, have to obtain hospital treatment. I appeal for a truer, higher, and more humane view on matters of this kind.

I make a point of going occasionally to the Warwick hospital, and I find that things are working well there. On Sunday last I went to the institution, which is a credit to the Government and to the management and the town of Warwick generally. When you make inquiries as to whether the patients are satisfied or not, you never hear a solitary complaint, and all readily acknowledge their obligations to the institution, which is rendering such fine service there. I was particularly pleased to find on making inquiries that so many patients were able to pay fees. In the general section the amount of patients' fees was £706 11s. 2d., whilst in the private ward, which was so generously given by the late Mr. Jacob Horwitz, who remembered Warwick years after he had left our shores, the fees amounted to £1,967 19s. 11d. I was glad to find also that economies were being effected, and that the daily cost per patient was 8s. 11d., which seems to be a fairly low average. I am not sure how it compares with the cost in other hospitals.

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: Very low.

MR. G. P. BARNES: The whole of the members of the board work in a way which gives true consideration to the interests of the patients, and it is apparent that its financial obligations are not neglected.

I have throughout opposed the general principle contained in the Hospitals Acts for the upkeep of these institutions. I do not know that I like the method altogether now; but I have to own that it has some virtue in it when I find in the report of the Warwick hospital for the year ended 30th June, 1931, the following remarks:—

“After two years' experience under the Hospitals Acts it can be said that

very few people within the district would prefer to go back to the voluntary system of maintaining the institution. Whilst not wishing to assert that the present system of supporting the hospital is the ideal one, it must be admitted that its results are a decided improvement on the former one, and the decision of the old committee to have the hospital districted has been fully justified."

I again ask the Home Secretary to give full consideration to the points I have raised, and to relieve the landholders of some of the burden which they are carrying, and that, in making appointments to the hospitals boards, political considerations shall have no weight, and that, if men are capable of filling positions on hospitals boards, they shall be reappointed.

At 2 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, *Ithaca*) [2 p.m.]: The reiterated statements about political appointments to hospital boards sound frightfully hollow when one goes back to the session of 1929. To hear the hon. member for Warwick and the hon. member for Albert this morning, one would imagine that they were sincere in their statement that the idea of political appointments was abhorrent to them. Both those hon. gentlemen sat on this side of the Chamber in 1929 when this vote was being considered; and, if they were sincere in what they have said this morning, then it is remarkable that we can find no trace of any protest having been raised by them in this Chamber in 1929 against the system which they endeavoured to condemn this morning. Speaking on this subject in this Chamber in 1929, the then Home Secretary said—

"All I can say is that the Government wish to see the hospital policy succeed. We are going to formulate a new policy; and we claim the right to appoint as our representatives men who will uphold our policy. We make no apology for doing that."

Later he said—

"So far as we are concerned, it is going to lead to this—that we shall have men who support our policy on the boards, because we are responsible."

The then Leader of the Opposition challenged the then Home Secretary to show that representatives were not being gazetted off the hospitals boards to make room for representatives of the Nationalist Party. The then Home Secretary said—

"The hon. member knows as well as I do that the Hospitals Act provides for representatives of the Government—not of his party."

He was referring to the Labour Party. The then Leader of the Opposition asked if anybody had been gazetted out to create a vacancy, and the then Home Secretary replied in the negative. He stated that no one was being gazetted out of office, notwithstanding the fact that that was actually being done by the Nationalist Government. Dealing with the Brisbane and South Coast Hospitals Board, the then Home Secretary said—

"When there was a vacancy on the Brisbane and South Coast Hospitals Board, did the hon. member pick a busi-

ness man? Did he look round to get somebody who did not agree with him in politics? No, he selected a member of his own side—Mr. Lloyd, the late member for Kelvin Grove."

The then Home Secretary admitted that these people were being removed from the hospitals boards with the deliberate intention of replacing them with representatives of the Nationalist Party. Both the hon. member for Warwick and the hon. member for Albert were in this Chamber when that was being done, and not one word of protest was voiced by either of them. In view of that fact, I can only conclude that the hon. members were posing this morning in the attitude they were taking up in this Chamber.

Mr. PLUNKETT: Do you believe in hitting back?

The HOME SECRETARY: It is not a question of hitting back. If the hon. member for Warwick and the hon. member for Albert think they can do this to men in public positions without creating a sense of injury to the community, they are wrong.

Mr. KENNY: The hon. member for Cairns said that you are only getting your own back.

The HOME SECRETARY: Surely the hon. members for Albert and Warwick know sufficient of public life to know that anything unfair that is done creates a sense of injury to a section of the community. That being so, no such injury should be done. When this policy of hospital taxation was being initiated, hon. members opposite, if sincere in their present condemnation, should have voiced their protest against the policy of their own Government.

We know that, when the Moore Government went to the country in 1929, they promised the people faithfully that, if returned to power, they would do something to abolish land taxation to meet local authority precepts for hospital maintenance. When they became the Government, they set about attempting to give effect to that promise. They appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into and report upon certain matters relating to public hospitals. That was in order to devise some excuse for shifting the cost of the hospital maintenance from taxation of the land to a tax on wages. That commission did not give the Government of the day much encouragement. It went into the matter very fully, and among other things said—

"It is admitted that experience discloses some anomalies in most systems of taxation. This is unavoidable. No system of taxation which could satisfy every section of the community has yet been devised. Those who earnestly propose remedies should be certain that such remedies do not contain elements of greater inequity and hardship than the system they propose to amend."

There was wisdom in that statement. It is all very fine for people who have not taken the trouble to go into this matter deeply to dismiss the policy of taxing land for hospital maintenance with a wave of the hand. All they are concerned about is to transfer the tax from the landholders to somebody else; but the mere removal of the tax from the landholder to the taxpayer does not solve the difficulty.

Mr. PLUNKETT: It makes it more equitable.

*Hon. E. M. Hanlon.]*

The HOME SECRETARY: We shall see whether it does. The hon. member should have consulted the report of the commission which his Government appointed more carefully than he has done. In dealing with the best method of financing public hospitals, the commission further said—

“At the same time it appears to your commissioners that the advantages of civilisation, including the availability of efficient hospital service, enhances the value of property in the neighbourhood. In the absence of such advantages the value of the property would be prejudicially affected. It is therefore only right and proper that a fair proportion of the burden of maintaining public hospitals should be borne by local authorities, and that they should have a fair proportion of representation on the management as would enable them to exercise vigilance in efficient and economic administration.”

The commission admitted the justice of a fair proportion of the burden being borne by local authorities, and passed on to landholders in the form of rates.

Then we get to the question: What is a fair proportion? It is a different matter altogether as to whether land taxation should play a part in hospital maintenance at all. The commission raised the question of what is a proper and fair land tax as a contribution towards hospital maintenance. It entirely admitted the justice of some taxation. Then we look for further witnesses, and we take no other than the ex-Home Secretary, the hon. member for Fitzroy. Just prior to the last election the hon. member, who, with his Government, had at the previous election promised the people to remit land taxation as a means for raising revenue for the maintenance of hospitals, but had left the promise unfulfilled, published a statement in justification of the failure of his party to fulfil that promise. That statement is thus referred to in the press—

“The Home Secretary, Hon. J. C. Peterson, to-day issued the following statement dealing with the decisions of the Government with regard to the maintenance and management of hospitals and ambulance:—

“Prior to the last election the Government pledged itself to appoint a Royal Commission to investigate the present hospital system, more particularly with regard to the means of finance. This promise the Government kept, and the commission was duly appointed and brought in certain recommendations. The commission's recommendations may be summarised as follows:—

(1) Central control of hospitals by a central hospital commission of three commissioners, or alternatively by an inspector-general of hospitals.

(2) Local control by hospital boards comprised of Government and local authority representatives functioning in the various hospital districts.

(3) Hospitals to be financed by means of patients' payments, voluntary contributions, benefit contributory schemes, and sundry other income as at present, and to the extent by which these sources of income fall short of the

amount required to meet the cost of upkeep—

(a) By the imposition of a tax on salaries, wages, and income, without exemption, to the extent of 80 per cent. of the estimated deficiency; and

(b) By contributions by the component local authorities to the extent of 20 per cent. of the estimated deficiency.”

The recommendation is that the rates on local authorities should be reduced from 40 per cent. to 20 per cent. of the estimated deficiency. The Hospitals Commission did not object to land value taxation for this purpose; it merely sought to reduce the amount payable by local authorities from 40 per cent. to 20 per cent. Then the statement went on to deal with the report from the Government point of view—

“The commission contemplated that no benefit should accrue from the payment of the hospital tax, and contemplated further that the ordinary sources of income from voluntary contributions, patients' payments, contributory benefit schemes, etc., would continue to the same extent as at present.”

Common sense tells us that a flat rate tax would have to include people in voluntary hospital areas. As a result the voluntary hospitals would disappear, and the local authority areas which so far have escaped this tax would be brought under the Hospitals Act and its system of finance and control.

Again, with the disappearance of contributions and fees, the incomes of hospitals as such would disappear, consequently the 20 per cent. of the deficiency which hospital boards would have to carry would be heavier than the 40 per cent. which they now have to carry when contributions and patients' fees are being received. The very paragraph which makes an attempt to lighten the burden upon the local authorities through land value taxation does exactly the reverse.

Mr. MOORE: The man who pays the tax pays also when he goes to hospital. It does not eliminate his fees.

The HOME SECRETARY: But it would eliminate his voluntary contributions. Surely the hon. gentleman can understand that, if all hospitals in Queensland were automatically brought under a hospital tax, all voluntary hospitals would cease to exist. Furthermore, if a flat rate tax were placed upon the community, working people who to-day seek private medical attention—and there are thousands of people with small incomes who do so, either through their own efforts or the efforts of lodges—would find that a flat rate tax of 2d. or 3d. in the £1 throughout the year would probably be greater than the amounts they were paying otherwise, and they would be compelled to seek medical attention at the public hospitals; and the charge of 20 per cent. under that system would be greater than the 40 per cent. under the present system.

Mr. ROBERTS: You are doing that now, with the 30s. a year.

The HOME SECRETARY: Still, if it were made universal, all voluntary contributions would disappear, and patients' fees would also disappear.

Mr. R. M. KING: What is your objection to a special local authority rate?

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The HOME SECRETARY: That objection had disappeared now, but the objection at the time was that hon. members opposite, for political purposes, attempted to kill the hospitals scheme by letting the people realise that they were paying a rate for hospital purposes. The object behind the whole thing was to kill the Hospitals Act, which they have not been able to do, although they controlled Queensland for three years, because they could not find a better way of financing the hospitals.

Let us read a little further the statement issued on behalf of the Moore Government by the then Home Secretary—

“At the same time the relief afforded the local authority by the reduction of its quota from 40 per cent. to 20 per cent. would be negligible for the reason that the amount to be provided by taxation would be so much greater that the 20 per cent. contribution under the Commission's proposals would almost reach the amount they now have to pay on the 40 per cent. basis. The imposition of such a tax would have involved also the abolition of the voluntary system”——

The propaganda of the Opposition bears out what I said—

“and the substitution of the hospitals board system in those centres where voluntary hospitals now operate. This would involve the local authorities in those districts in a contribution to the hospital service, whereas they are not now liable to any such payment. In the Government's view the most vital consideration was the lightening of the burden upon the primary producer.”

That is the gentleman we have heard a good deal about this morning—

“The incidence of the hospital rate on the primary producer has been primarily responsible for the condemnation of the existing hospital system, and naturally any scheme to be substituted for the existing scheme would first of all have to remove that disability. Investigation into this aspect clearly revealed, however, that the substitution of a tax on salaries, wages, and income for the present means of finance would not relieve the primary producer, but on the contrary would impose a much heavier burden upon him than he bears at present. To enable this conclusion to be arrived at examples of income tax assessments on primary producers in various districts in Queensland were analysed and compared under the two systems. The comparison was rather startling, for, with the exception of one area, it showed that the hospital tax was much greater than the hospital rate, and the amount which would be payable under the tax varied from 50 per cent. to 500 per cent. more than the present tax.”

I do not think I need say much more on the question, except to emphasise for the information of the public that hon. members opposite only set out with the desire to relieve the ratepayers of Queensland in the hospital districts of any rate for hospital purposes. The Commission was appointed with that prime object in view; and hon. members opposite endeavoured in every way they could to get that relief; but, after going into their own proposal for a tax on wages and salaries, they found that, if they did attempt to finance the hospitals under that

scheme, the tax on the primary producers, with the exception of in one area, would be from 50 per cent. to 500 per cent. greater than what they are now paying on the basis of land values. If hon. members opposite can formulate a scheme which is fair, we shall be very glad to accept it. In the meantime this is the best scheme that has been devised, and, until something better is proposed, we shall have to make it do. Every hon. member would like to find a scheme which would be better than the present one; but so far we have not been able to devise a method of raising hospital funds which bears more equitably than the one we have at the present time with all its faults.

Item (Hospitals) agreed to.

#### INSANITY.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, *Ithaca*) [2.19 p.m.]: I move—

“That £180,579 be granted for ‘Insanity.’”

The vote is £1,478 less than the amount voted last year. The saving has been made practically as the result of the reduced prices on commodities.

It will be noticed that there is a reduction at Townsville. The vote is exactly double the vote of last year, because on last year's Estimates provision was made for six months only while this year provision is made for twelve months. The other savings are practically all in regard to the supply of commodities which are used in the various mental offices and institutions.

Mr. WIENHOLT (*Fassifern*) [2.21 p.m.]: I notice towards the end of the vote the sum of £275 for a bushman. I wonder what that may be.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, *Ithaca*) [2.22 p.m.]: He is one of the employees at the Goodna asylum. There is a pretty large farm there, which I suppose the hon. member for Fassifern has seen, which provides the whole of the supplies for the dairy herds. I understand they have never had to purchase feed for fifteen years. They have also a large vegetable garden, which keeps the institution in vegetables all the year round, and they obtain all their wood fuel from the reserve. I suppose the bushman has something to do with the work of the herd. He is one of the ordinary employees, but I do not know his exact duties.

Mr. WATERS (*Kelvin Grove*) [2.23 p.m.]: I would like to impress on the Home Secretary the necessity for the institution of an intermediate hospital for the treatment of mental diseases. At the present time anyone affected with a mental malady has to be sent to a mental asylum, and has to mingle with persons who are definitely insane. This is not conducive to the person concerned regaining normality; and people hesitate to send their relatives who are affected mentally to these institutions, as they have to mingle with the other inmates. In a number of instances a person is too far gone because his relatives do not like sending him to a mental institution on account of the stigma incurred by doing so.

It should be possible to establish from the “Golden Casket” funds an institution of the kind that I suggest. There are plenty of places in and around Brisbane where an intermediate mental hospital could be provided at a nominal cost, at which mental

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patients could be given the opportunity of regaining their health. After all, there is a difference between the ordinary insane patient and a person who has suffered a nervous breakdown; but there is no discrimination at the present time in their treatment, owing to the lack of facility for getting into the right type of hospital. Poor people cannot get to a private hospital to be looked after, as those with ample means can. It should be the duty of the State—and, after all, the health and mentality of our citizens are worth looking after—to set up an institution of this kind, which could be established at a comparatively low cost. The Government have indicated their intention of building a large women's hospital in Brisbane; and they should follow that by establishing an institution of the kind I have suggested. I hope that the Home Secretary will give some attention to my suggestion. It has been discussed by the medical profession, particularly those members of it who deal with the treatment of mental diseases. It is painful to see the ill-effects brought about by the reluctance of parents and others to put relatives into an ordinary mental hospital; and these ill-effects could be obviated by the establishment of an intermediate hospital to which the stigma would not be attached—foolish, after all, as it is—which is regarded as resting upon people who are inmates of Goodna and similar institutions. Cases then could be sent to an institution which the public did not look upon as an insane asylum, and there perhaps they might regain normality; and their relatives would be saved a good deal of that mental pain and suffering which is occasioned by having to send a patient to Goodna or a similar hospital. I trust that the Home Secretary and the Government will give earnest attention to the question, and see whether it is not possible to set up some such hospital during this financial year.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, *Ithaca*) [2.26 p.m.]: The matter mentioned by the hon. member for Kelvin Grove has engaged the attention of the department. We all realise the unsuitableness of the conditions imposed upon our people who are unable to take care of themselves, but who have not yet reached the stage at which they can be certified to be insane. I assure the hon. member that the matter will receive careful consideration. Although it is not possible to do all that we would like, it is possible that something may be done.

Mr. LLEWELYN (*Toowoomba*) [2.27 p.m.]: During discussions on the Estimates hon. members have frequently expressed their appreciation of the courtesy they have received from the officials of various departments. It is incumbent on an hon. member representing a constituency where there is a mental hospital, if he has any personal knowledge on which he can speak, to pay a tribute to the extraordinary care that is displayed by the staff of such an institution. I find myself in that position, and wish to say something in praise of the devotion to duty of the attendants at Willowburn. The hon. member for East Toowoomba and I had the pleasure of attending the annual ball at that institution recently; and, in all my experience in handling sick people, I think nothing has appealed to me with greater satisfaction than the care and devotion which were displayed there. The

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inmates at Willowburn look forward with great pleasure to this annual event. The attendants go to a tremendous amount of trouble. The recreation hall is decorated, and the work reflects the highest credit on everybody concerned. The success which attends the function must be gratifying to them. It is pleasing to see how the pleasure of the patients is catered for, and how everything is done to avoid anything in the nature of embarrassment. It is only right that members should pay a tribute to such efforts, and I take this opportunity of doing so with pleasure.

Item (Insanity) agreed to.

#### LAZARET.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, *Ithaca*) [2.29 p.m.]: I move—  
“That £6,570 be granted for ‘Lazaret.’”

There is a slight reduction in this vote. The numbers in the institution are four more this year, being sixty-one as compared with fifty-seven last year. The reduction in the vote occurs in the amount required for maintenance, incidentals, and supplies, but it is very small.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*) [2.30 p.m.]: I should like to know if the Home Department has any information on the question of whether lepers should be isolated or segregated. Leading medical authorities throughout the world question the need of segregation, and in many places this system has been abolished. The patients are now treated in the same way as ordinary sick people. I believe that it has been fairly well established that, if segregation is necessary with any patients, then patients suffering from tuberculosis are infinitely a greater menace to society than patients suffering from leprosy. A few months ago I read reports by medical institutions in Great Britain and in America, in which it was pointed out that the system of segregation has fallen into disuse without disadvantage to the community, but with considerable advantage to the patients who were formerly segregated.

It might be necessary to segregate patients suffering from a certain type of leprosy. I do not suppose that anything can be more depressing than life in isolation. I know that everything that can be done is being done; but, if segregation is unnecessary, then the expense is unnecessary, and the torture to the patients is also unnecessary. I am merely anxious to know if the Home Department or the Department of Public Health has obtained any information upon this very important subject, whether it is necessary to continue the present treatment, involving segregation, and whether some of the patients could not be treated in an ordinary way. The efficacy of cures has not been definitely established, nor has it been definitely proved that all forms of leprosy are infectious to a high degree. We should endeavour to obtain information from other countries of the world. The principle of segregation has been adopted practically from time immemorial. In the old Biblical days lepers were segregated, but science has made tremendous strides in the past twenty years. A different medical complexion has been placed upon diseases that hitherto have been regarded as incurable, and require segregation for the public good. It would be of

advantage to the Government, to the patient, and to the community if it could be definitely established that isolation or segregation of lepers was no longer necessary. I have no desire to criticise this expenditure, because I realise that, under the present system, it is necessary.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, *Ithaca*) [2.35 p.m.]: The Leader of the Opposition has raised a very important question. Leprosy was previously regarded as a highly dangerous and a highly contagious disease; but, in the light of modern scientific and medical knowledge, it is not now considered to be so contagious. However, medical authorities are divided in opinion on the subject. It would be very wrong on the part of the Government to abolish the lazaret and turn the inmates out into the world unless they had a very strong backing of medical opinion in favour of their release. Dr. Leonard Rogers, who is recognised as the greatest expert on leprosy in the world, still adheres to the belief that leprosy is contagious, and that lepers should be segregated. In view of that opinion, the Government could not abolish the lazaret at the present. Leprosy is certainly not the highly contagious disease which at one time experts thought. No one wants to keep people in captivity if such a policy can be avoided; and no one can gainsay the fact that the patients at the lazaret are being kept captive. No Government would continue that policy if it were no longer necessary, because it costs over £100 per annum to keep a patient at Peel Island. In view of the divided opinion of experts on this matter, it would be dangerous to liberate the patients there.

Mr. R. M. KING (*Logan*) [2.37 p.m.]: In the absence of the annual report of the Commissioner of Public Health, the Committee would welcome any opinion as to the efficacy of the treatment of the inmates of the lazaret at Peel Island, especially as to the cures which have been effected. Had the annual report been in our possession, this information would have been readily obtainable.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, *Ithaca*) [2.38 p.m.]: The treatment of patients at Peel Island by the use of chaulmoogra oil is proving successful in some cases. Recently we discharged two patients as cured. Patients are not discharged until they have shown negative results for two years, and then they are liberated only on parole, and must report periodically for examination. One person who was liberated on those conditions was readmitted to Peel Island because of a recurrence of the malady. Cures are slow and difficult; nevertheless, they are increasing as time proceeds.

Mr. R. M. KING: What is the proportion of whites and blacks at Peel Island?

The HOME SECRETARY: At the present time there are twenty-four whites and twenty-three coloured males, and seven white and seven coloured females.

Item (Lazaret) agreed to.

#### MEDICAL.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, *Ithaca*): I move—

“That £2,031 be granted for ‘Medical.’”

Item agreed to.

#### POLICE.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, *Ithaca*) [2.39 p.m.]: I move—

“That £458,538 be granted for ‘Police.’”

This vote shows a slight reduction on last year's appropriation. Every endeavour will be made to economise in expenditure which can be curtailed. There is no reduction in salaries or wages in this vote; but there has been no attempt made to restore any of the conditions which the police formerly enjoyed, as the financial position at the present time will not permit of that being done. The strength of the force is maintained at the same figure. It may be noticed that there is a difference in the appropriation for salaries this year as compared with last year. That is explained by the fact that last year was a leap year, so that an additional day's salary had to be paid to members of the force. In other sections the savings are small; but their cumulative effect is a saving of £9,000 on the whole vote.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*) [2.40 p.m.]: I would be wanting in my duty if I did not express my admiration for the Commissioner of Police and his officers and men on the excellent manner in which their work has been carried out. Although labouring under very great difficulties—they, too, have felt the economic pinch—they have carried out, not only their ordinary work, but superimposed work in relation to the activities of the Social Service League. I pay a tribute to the men in my own district—to Constable Brown of Auchenflower, to Sergeant Henry and his staff at Toowong, and to the officer in charge at Indooroopilly—all of whom have acted in a most humane manner in the performance of their difficult duties. Cases have been brought under my notice which show conclusively that these officers are painstaking in the discharge of their duties.

I regret that the finances of the State do not permit an increase in numbers and in the rate of pay of members of the police force; but, irrespective of that, the police force to a man have done their work efficiently and humanely. I pay a tribute to the Commissioner of Police for his courtesy to me. On numerous occasions I have brought cases to his notice, some of which I must confess were entirely different from what I imagined them to be before I had the Commissioner's explanation. His aim is to do his best for all concerned. I congratulate the Home Department on the excellent work of the police force. As Parliamentarians, we should do all we can to assist the force. We know that the police go out in the morning with their lives in their hands, and they should receive every consideration.

I want to enter a protest in regard to what, in my opinion, was a very bad slip on the part of the Home Secretary on his taking over control of the department. I want to draw his attention to statements that have appeared in the papers in reference to the Communist procession that took place in Brisbane on 1st August last. From what I could learn in the press, a permit was refused by the police for this procession; but it was granted by the Home Secretary. I am sorry that the Home Secretary did that, because many people think that a huge blunder was

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made in giving a permit to a body of individuals to march through the streets of Brisbane at a busy hour of the day carrying the red flag and the communistic badge of the sickle and the hammer. Had it not been for the very fine way in which the police handled the situation it would not have taken very much for a few individuals to have got together and cleaned them up. The Home Secretary may shrug his shoulders. His intentions may have been perfectly honourable; but the road to the lower regions is paved with good intentions. I do hope that we in this Parliament will never again see such an exhibition as we saw on that occasion. It is all very well to talk about the freedom of the individual; but, in my opinion, there is too much license altogether given in matters of that kind. In every city of the Commonwealth to-day action is being taken to prevent anything of that kind happening. It was concerted action by those individuals to hold this great day, and they no doubt bluffed the Home Secretary into believing that it was going to be an anti-war demonstration. I saw it, and I say it was a pitiable sight to see women with babies in their arms and little children walking in procession and singing revolutionary songs. It was a disgrace to anybody to give a permit for such a demonstration to be held in our streets. I want to submit as evidence of my contention a statement that was made in the "Daily Standard" of 8th August, 1932—

"Melbourne, 2nd August, 1932.

"An effort by the Communist agitators to hold a demonstration against 'forced labour and Imperialist war' in the city yesterday failed. As a safeguard eighty additional uniformed police had been stationed in the city streets, and fifty men and six motor cycle patrols were held in reserve at headquarters.

"About 300 men made an attempt to form a procession. A force of police broke up the procession after a sharp tussle with the leaders, during which two banners were seized and six men were arrested for offensive behaviour."

These people here, however, were given a free hand to march through the streets with their red banner with the sickle and hammer on it, and boasted about it. The Home Secretary was undoubtedly responsible for that demonstration. (Government laughter.)

Let me give a few more extracts from the "Daily Standard" of 2nd August last—

"PROLETARIAN PROTEST.

"ORDERLY PROCESSION TO THE DOMAIN.

"*Anti-war Speeches.*

"The stranger to Brisbane or the citizen unaware of current events might well have pondered the meaning of a curiously mixed procession that came striding down Edward street yesterday afternoon just after 2 p.m. It was led and flanked by mounted constables, while others on foot kept pace with the rest of the procession. What were those banners and slogans, and what the lilt of that marching song? Was this a portent of stirring times—could it be the inception of a new movement?

"These questions no doubt troubled the minds of the thoughtful observers who watched it go by. 'Terrible as an army with banners,' wrote Carlyle, though this

was the merest handful of men, women, yes, and children. The men were of serious demeanour, a few with a touch of defiance, but mostly dogged, as they plugged the refrain—'The Internationale Unites the Human Race.'

"There was plenty of courage here, it needed this to march, chin up, past the scoffers, for the sake of a great idea, the brotherhood of man. For this was the underlying idea behind all the banners, which were variously inscribed—

'Soviet Russia Wants Total Disarmament. Do We?' 'Help World Peace. Join the Friends of the Soviet Union.' 'Against the Premiers' Slave-Plan. Join the Minority Movement.' 'Crystal Palace Unemployed Hostel. We Refuse to Fight Capitalism's Wars.' 'Help the Class War Prisoners. Remember Cairns!' 'Capitalism Plans War. The Soviet Union Plans for Peace.'"

Then it goes on and talks about the various songs which were sung—the "Red Flag" and various others. I have lived here all my life; and I never thought that I would live to see the day when such a procession would be permitted to march through our streets. It only wanted one man at the corner of Edward street to step out and say, "Come on and clean them up!" That is why I am bringing the matter before the Home Secretary to-day. He slipped, and I do not want him to slip again. I know the arguments which may be adduced in connection with this matter. It may be said that nobody believes in war. I believe in liberty and freedom, but I do not believe in the abuse of them. The position is a serious one when the Federal and other State Governments throughout Australia are putting these things down and will not allow them. The Home Secretary is the only head of a department who has given a permit to these individuals to march in procession. There were women among them—not many, it is true—poor, misguided women. It is calamitous when individuals who call themselves men bring in women and unfortunate children—some of them babies in arms. The members of that procession indulged in the usual talk in the Domain, and dealt with various matters relating to war. They said they were not going to fight imperial wars any longer. They have not been asked to fight. I am an imperialist, thank God, and we could not be Australians unless we were imperialists.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Where is your little flag?

Mr. MAXWELL: I do not need a flag. People know by my actions where I stand. The newspaper report continues—

"The speeches delivered were brief and to the point. Comrade R. Besant presided, and Comrade C. Drew, the secretary of one of the contributory organisations, said that many of the workers who saw them start off or watched them on the route were diffident remembering previous struggles with authority. Others had the inferiority complex, which made them see themselves as foolish when marching.

"On that day, 1st August, demonstrations were being held, and it was safe to say that their morning newspapers would reprint clashes with the police and

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armed force in places where free meetings were forbidden. He said that the workers invited co-operation from other workers in unions and returned soldiers' leagues to aid in combating the attacks on the workers by means of the Crimes Act and the preparations for interventionist wars.

'Comrade J. McMahon, in a striking simile, declared that if the procession they had just helped to make did not succeed in rousing the workers, it would be followed by other processions—one in khaki, with ribbons round rifles, bands, and buntings, accompanied by the cheers of women and girls and the hoots of steam sirens. This would be followed by processions of wounded not so cheerful, and the grim procession of names in casualty lists.'

**THE HOME SECRETARY:** Is this propaganda intended for the public?

**MR. MAXWELL:** The hon. gentleman may not be a supporter of them, but he allowed this sort of thing to go on. I am exposing his weakness in permitting it, because he wanted the little bit of popularity which he would get from acceding to their request—

"Comrade G. Gamble, representing the Young Communist League, put the point of view of the youth of the workers. All the speakers were manifestly sincere, and this encouraged the conviction that the Home Secretary (Mr. E. M. Hanlon) had done a sensible thing in giving a permit for these people to air their opinions. It is something to have faith in a time of almost universal cynicism, and what is there ignoble in the great idea of the unity of mankind?"

I suppose there were not more than 100 persons there; yet these were the people who were going to unite mankind!

**MR. R. M. KING:** By putting the boot into those who were against them.

**MR. MAXWELL:** The hon. member has taken the words out of my mouth. We have not yet arrived at that condition of things where we can employ Russian or Mexican methods. I bring this matter up in the interests of the people. I and other members of this party hold that we ought to thank God that we had the police force on that day to protect the public. I am reminded of a story that is sometimes told of a man who wanted to impress somebody as to the strength—not as to the strength of the police, but of an entirely different body. He said: "Do you know that we have 200,000 men with rifles ready to strike a blow for the liberty of Ireland?" The Englishman to whom that Irishman was speaking said: "That is a very fine sentiment. You have 200,000 men fully armed and plenty of ammunition; why don't you do it?" and the Irishman said: "Well, to tell you the truth, it is because the police won't let us." We ought to thank God we have a police force in Queensland. I enter my protest against the action of the Home Secretary, and I am not alone in that protest.

**MR. G. C. TAYLOR (Enoggera)** [2.59 p.m.]: It was amusing to hear the hon. member for Toowong following the old-time practice of himself and other hon. members on that side of making a mountain out of a molehill, in respect of certain demonstra-

tions that have taken place in the city of Brisbane. It is always recognised that the necessity exists for a police force in a society such as that in which we live, and the police force of Queensland is to be complimented on being one of the best in the Commonwealth of Australia. Apart from that, however, there is no necessity for hon. members opposite such as the hon. member for Toowong to follow their practice of making a mountain out of a molehill. To listen to the hon. member for Toowong and his description of the demonstration referred to, one would believe that the demonstration was the forerunner of a serious social upheaval leading to revolution and the complete overthrow of the existing order of society in Queensland. There was more in his speech than hon. members opposite appeared to realise. If it were not for the Communist party, the hon. member would have considerable difficulty in discussing the police Estimates in this Chamber. It is an old British tradition that we should be tolerant of the views of others. The Defence of the Realm Act—a wartime measure—was passed in England for the repression of any disturbances likely to be against the efficient conduct of the war. Australia passed legislation for a similar purpose; but, unfortunately, the psychology and the calibre of the party opposite induced their protagonists to proceed a step further. The legislation passed by the Federal authorities did not give the same freedom to the citizens of the Commonwealth as the wartime legislation passed in England extended to the English people. In this country we were not permitted to take part in any demonstrations where banners or flags of a red colour were used; but in England meetings were permitted in the Albert Hall in London, and the demonstrators were allowed to demonstrate as they liked, and to fly red flags as often as they liked without any attempt being made to prevent the freedom of speech. Hon. members opposite did not want that sort of thing. They are very windy whenever this kind of thing comes up. It is well known, and I know from experience, that, if people are allowed to express their opinions freely and are able to blow off the hot air—as hon. members opposite term it—and to get certain things off their chests, there is less cause for serious trouble. The greater the repression the greater the upheaval. Consider India as an example; and many other countries could be mentioned. Suppression is practised, but the propaganda work goes on. It is better to bring these sections out into the open than to create the state of affairs which the hon. member for Toowong and his party desire. It is better to have freedom of speech for every section of the community. Believe me, the time is coming when it will have to be recognised that freedom of speech must be extended to the people generally, and not to one section of the people.

**MR. KENNY:** Your party should recognise that.

**MR. R. M. KING (Logan)** [3.5 p.m.]: I should like to endorse the statement by the hon. member for Toowong and to support his eulogy of the police force. The Commissioner, Mr. Ryan, together with his officers and men, have done their duty well. They recognise that they have a duty to perform to the people as a whole, no matter what Government may be in power.

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I do not altogether agree with the holding of processions, because they lead nowhere, and are always liable to create riots. I have not the slightest objection to any body of men holding opinions on certain questions congregating at places specified by the authorities and letting off all the hot air they like. They should be allowed an opportunity of ventilating their ideas and thoughts. That does a lot of good and saves a lot of trouble. No good is done to the community if men are allowed to bottle up their feelings and stir up everlasting strife.

The hon. member for Toowong also made some reference to the fact that the police were feeling the pinch of depression. That is quite true. They undoubtedly felt it when the Moore Government were in power, especially when that Government pinched their extra pair of trousers. That was one pinch they did feel. I notice in connection with this appropriation that £9,100 is provided for uniforms, which is £650 less than last year's appropriation.

The HOME SECRETARY: We are not taking the other pair of trousers off them.

Mr. R. M. KING: I was rather concerned about that. The members of the Government Party promised the police at the recent election that they would return them the extra pair of trousers.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: You would take the other pair of trousers off them.

Mr. R. M. KING: I do not care whether the hon. member goes without them altogether so long as he does not come into this Chamber in that state. I am rather surprised to hear that the Home Secretary has so far not returned to the police the pair of trousers which the previous Government were supposed to have pinched from them.

The HOME SECRETARY: We have not caught up to you yet.

Mr. R. M. KING: There is a reduction in this vote, and it appears to me that the Government are not making provision for this pair of trousers which we heard so much about at the election. It would seem from the reduced vote that the police are to have a pair of short trousers issued to them instead of the one long pair. It would be very nice to see the police patrolling the city in short "strides." During the election our Labour opponents made a great song of the fact that we had "pinched the bobby's trousers." Do the Government intend to restore the "bobby's trousers"?

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, *Ithaca*) [3.8 p.m.]: The hon. member for Toowong expressed regret that permission was given to the Communists to hold a procession on 1st August. It is only natural that he should be sorry that such a permit was granted. Anybody knowing the blood-thirsty old patriarch who represents Toowong will appreciate his disappointment at not reading in the "Courier" the following morning that the police had cracked the heads of those participating in the procession. Permission to hold the procession was applied for in the ordinary way. I am not concerned as to whether a permit is for the holding of a procession by the Communists or by the Nationalists. On 1st August the Communists hold meetings throughout the world to protest against war and to advocate peace. If I disagree in any other way with the Communists, I cordially agree with them

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in that direction. I am quite in agreement with anything the Communists do in the interests of peace, and, if they set aside the 1st August as the day on which they demonstrate against war and in favour of peace, I do not think there is anything seriously wrong in allowing them to hold that demonstration. During the administration of the previous Government permission was asked to hold a similar procession on the same date last year and the permission was refused. The result was a scene which was a disgrace to the city of Brisbane. A few hundred of these men gathered in Edward street, determined to exert their rights, and contending that they had as much right as the Hibernians or the University students to hold a procession.

Mr. R. M. KING: Do you put these bodies on the same footing?

The HOME SECRETARY: No; but I put all citizens and their rights on the same footing. So long as they obey the law, they are entitled to the same rights as either the hon. member or myself. These people desired to demonstrate in favour of peace, and I gave them permission to hold their procession without doing injury to anybody. They carried banners, with some of which I do not agree; but that had nothing to do with the main principle, which was the question of a permit to a certain body to march through the city as a demonstration in favour of peace. Anybody who has seen the other side of society—the war side—would be very glad to see people demonstrate in favour of peace, especially when at the present day we would appear to be on the brink of another hell. I would not be justified in refusing permission to hold a demonstration in the interests of peace.

I quite understand the feelings of the hon. member for Toowong. He is a very fine gentleman indeed when it comes to getting somebody else's head smashed. He was equally vigorous in days gone by in "sooling on" people to be killed in defence of himself and his friends; and he is equally keen in egging me on to order the police to baton the heads of other people. The police force functions to maintain the law—not to assist in breaking it. Any action that the Police Department took that would lead to a breach of the peace in Queensland would be my responsibility.

In connection with the permit which I gave for the holding of this procession I made stringent provisions that they must not interfere with other people. That is the difference between liberty and license. I would not tolerate one section of the community interfering with the rights of another section. For that reason it was stipulated that the procession must interfere as little as possible with the rest of the community. Certainly the procession had to cross Queen street; but in doing so it did not interfere with the traffic to any greater extent than a person slipping on a banana skin would interfere with other people. Had permission been refused and a brawl taken place in Queen street, as the result of which a dozen people were taken to hospital, including some members of the police force, then no doubt hon. members opposite would have been delighted. (Opposition dissent.) Certainly the hon. member for Toowong would have been delighted, because his complaint is that I did not refuse permission. The hon. member

referred to a report of certain happenings in Melbourne. He characteristically rolled his tongue round that part of the report which referred to a "sharp tussle," and visualised an unseemly riot in which dozens of people were injured. That is the sort of patriotic display that the hon. member features.

I will give permission to any law-abiding section of the community to hold a procession, provided they do not interfere with the business of other people. I go so far as to say that, if hon. members opposite wish to hold a procession on their national day—1st April—I will favourably consider the granting of a permit to them. (Government laughter.)

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*) [3.15 p.m.]: It is all very well for the Home Secretary to talk about giving permits to law-abiding sections of the community; but how can he tell that they are law-abiding? Most of the trouble in the past has come about because a permit has been given to people who were considered to be law-abiding and then caused trouble because they were not law-abiding. Then the police had to take action, and the public suffered.

The HOME SECRETARY: My judgment was right.

Mr. MOORE: The hon. gentleman's judgment was right on this occasion because the procession was not strong enough to cause trouble. In the South and in New Zealand these processions got out of hand and smashed windows and that sort of thing. The best thing is not to try to stop a procession after it takes place, but to prevent it taking place at all. Prevention is better than cure. There is any amount of opportunity in the Domain for these people to make their speeches and get the people they want to come there and listen to them without giving them permits to parade the streets. The best thing is to prevent that sort of procession, because it does no good, and often leads to trouble which it is difficult to stop.

There is one matter in the police report that I want to refer to, particularly as the Secretary for Public Instruction recently referred to the prevalence of gambling throughout the State, and made some sort of suggestion for licensing totalisators. The Commissioner of Police recommends the licensing of bookmakers. Whether that is going to be an effective means of stopping gambling is a very moot point, but a suggestion was made by the Secretary for Public Instruction in which I was particularly interested, and that was that the Government may license totalisators in different parts of the State. That is very different from the suggestion made by the Commissioner of Police. It may be an effective method of getting in revenue for the Government, but it would be in the very worst interests of the community. The idea of imposing a very substantial fee for the licensing of bookmakers was that the bookmakers would do their own policing, and, if a man was not paying his license fee and conducting his betting shop in a legal manner, the bookmakers would inform on him and see that he was closed up. The Government should give a great deal of consideration to the question of legalising totalisators before carrying it out, as it would be one of the most harmful things that could happen. As the Commissioner

says in his report, there is no doubt that the broadcasting of racing news has resulted in betting taking place in hotels; and that is a growing evil. It is illegal, but the difficulty is in catching offenders. People have no right to be in an ordinary betting shop, and, if they are found in such a place, they can be arrested, but they cannot be arrested for being on licensed premises, and they have to be caught in the act of betting. One can tell from the numbers that go into the various hotels that the evil is very prevalent. We would like a little further information as to whether the licensing of bookmakers and betting shops is going to bring about the cure that is anticipated or the amelioration of the evil. I think that in Great Britain they license betting shops, but, from reports that I have seen, that does not seem to have lessened the gambling evil but rather to have increased it. It would not be so very difficult to cure illegal gambling if the Government really set out to do it, instead of giving people the option of a fine as an alternative to going to gaol. People would then go to places where betting is legal—the race-courses. The Treasurer is not getting anything from the bets that are made outside.

The HOME SECRETARY: You might have 20,000 prosecutions then.

Mr. MOORE: I do not think there would be 20,000. If the Government put half a dozen into gaol, I think the others would be very careful. The object in view may be attained by the course suggested, but it is a question of what is the best method to take. Whether it is best to recognise the evil and legalise it is a matter for consideration. The suggestion made by the Secretary for Public Instruction is extraordinary, and to my mind so wrong that I think it is well to mention it before any definite steps are taken, so that everyone may know that grave consideration will be given to the suggestion before the Government put it into effect.

There is another matter in the Commissioner's report to which it may be well to call attention—that is the matter of police horses. I do not think anyone has anything but praise for the quality of some of the horses that are turned out at the police breeding establishments in the State. I am not able to speak as to the quality of the whole lot, but there is no doubt as to the good general average quality of the horses the police had at the Brisbane Exhibition, which met with the unstinted applause of everyone who saw them. One thing which is rather extraordinary is that last year it was stated in the report that there were five stallions and 211 mares, from which twenty-two foals were got. It is not stated in this year's report whether any foals were got at all. The report states—

"Rewan—There were five stallions, 211 mares, and 412 other horses, these being valued at £4,729."

They evidently have had a bad season, or else there are people who think the State is fair game for adding to their herds, because it is stated that last year 1,046 cattle were lost through weather conditions. It may be owing to weather conditions, or it may be like the State cattle stations, where certain of the cattle were lost, but the dead bodies were not found, and the herds of the people round about increased in number. That is a fairly substantial loss.

Mr. Moore.]

This year it is not stated what number of foals were got. I suppose the stallions now on Rewan are the same stallions as were there last year. There is one sentence reading—

“One old stallion died and was replaced by another which was purchased in the Central district.”

I would like a little information as to the cost involved, and as to whether the mares had a greater percentage of foals this year than last year. It must be a fairly expensive place to keep up, if only the small number of foals mentioned was obtained from 211 mares. There is no reason why there should be such a small number unless the foals died. As a rule, of course, it is not so much a question of the foals being born as of their being fed afterwards; but in this case one naturally assumes that, if they were born, they would be fed, because they are valuable animals, and are required for the police service.

Mr. SPARKES (*Dalby*) [3.25 p.m.]: I would like to see the patrol work of the police force extended a little. Twelve or fifteen years ago one often found a constable patrolling 20 or 30 miles from his station, but to-day he is usually to be found in the town. If one asks why, one is told that he is not allowed to patrol. Patrol work in the bush has been curtailed considerably. At one time it was common to meet a constable at any hour of the day or night, either riding along or camped, and that is what I would like to see again. It would help to keep down stock stealing, which is prevalent especially in regard to cattle. Of course, it is no use putting a man on patrol duty who is used to Queen street work. We must have bushmen for the purpose. I do not wish to advocate too much extra expense, but I would like to see this patrol work extended a little.

Mr. WIENHOLT (*Fassifern*) [3.27 p.m.]: I would like to take the opportunity of asking a question in regard to the traffic vote. The amount here is very small, and cannot give a proper idea of the actual cost of the motor traffic work which the police undertake. The question really arises in regard to the discussion which took place on the Financial Statement in reference to the transfer of £250,000 from the Main Roads Fund to Consolidated Revenue. It seems to me that the expense imposed upon the police by motor traffic, especially in the cities, is very heavy indeed, and I would like to know whether the Minister can give us any rough idea as to what the cost really is. It seems to me that the cost of controlling traffic in Brisbane and the other big cities is a fair charge on motor traffic, and I think the cost should be shown more clearly than it is.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*) [3.29]: I was rather interested in an earlier debate as to what action the Government had taken with respect to instructions to the police in the matter of arresting persons guilty of “jumping the rattler.” I am reminded of the matter by a paragraph which appears in to-day’s “Standard”—

“NINE RATTLER-JUMPERS CAUGHT.

“EARLY MORNING EPISODE AT MOOROOKA.

“Nine young men who were seen jumping from a New South Wales goods train at 5.30 a.m. to-day were apprehended by the police. They admitted having ‘jumped the rattler’ from Casino.”

[Mr. Moore.

I would like to know the policy of the department in this connection. We understood that the Government were going to provide a proper means of transit for people who could not afford to pay their fares. I am very concerned when I find to-day that the Labour paper says that nine of these men were arrested by the police.

The HOME SECRETARY: Do you want me to provide policemen to carry them about the country?

HON. W. H. BARNES: No; but the Government should carry out their programme.

The HOME SECRETARY: The police department cannot carry the unemployed round the country.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I do not suggest that, nor do I suggest that the police should not do their duty. I am very anxious that the Government should carry out their policy.

The HOME SECRETARY: How can the Police Department assist in that matter?

HON. W. H. BARNES: There would be no need for the police to take action if the Government carried out their promise. I am not advocating it, but apparently that loan of £2,500,000 is still coming.

The late Home Secretary suggested that speed limits should be abolished. That suggestion was not carried into effect. Only yesterday a business man—a butcher—told me that, when he was going to church on Sunday—

The HOME SECRETARY: Do business people still go to church?

HON. W. H. BARNES: They do not follow the very bad example of the hon. gentleman, who never goes. He said that he had admitted to the police that he was running a little late. The policeman told him that the speed limit in the city was 12 miles per hour. I know that the police at street corners and at street crossings request motorists to hurry and not to waste any time. Have the Government decided, in the interests of revenue, that the people shall not hurry? A limit of 12 miles per hour is altogether too little for motor traffic. It is not in the interests of the community.

Last year an amount of £15,200 was appropriated for “Railway fares, freights, and conveyance charges.” This year only £12,000 is being appropriated. Was the total amount of £15,200 expended last year, and, if so, what are the reasons for believing that £3,000 less will be sufficient this year?

Mr. KENNY (*Cook*) [3.34 p.m.]: The item “Forage expenses” has been reduced from £4,100 to £3,500. Perhaps the Minister will explain the reduction by saying that supplies are being obtained at a lesser cost, or that he does not anticipate “knocking a hole in the boat” a second time. Forage expenses can be averaged over a number of years. Whilst the people at Dunwich and elsewhere might be able to speak for themselves, the poor old horse on half-rations cannot speak for himself. I do not think that it is anticipated that savings can be made in the expenditure on forage. It appears to me that savings will be made on the rations allowed to horses. I represent a scattered electorate, and on the police stations throughout the peninsula horses can be seen which are not fit to do a 50-mile ride. If the forage expenses are to be cut down still further, then police officers in

charge of such isolated police stations will not be in a position to do their work. In a number of instances to-day the police borrow a horse which is well fed. I make that statement definitely. The police horse is not fed to enable it to travel a long distance.

The HOME SECRETARY: You left your electorate before we took power.

Mr. KENNY: The hon. gentleman cannot get out of it in that way. On three different occasions before I entered Parliament I lent my own horse to the police to enable them to go and do their work. The forage allowance to men doing patrol work at isolated stations must be increased. When there is no grass the horses must starve, and, if the police are called upon to do a 50-mile ride, it is not a fair thing that they should be treated in this way.

The Minister has met our arguments in the past by saying that these economies have been effected by a reduction in the cost of food, and that he does not anticipate the same expense again. That brings me to another point. This vote provides for "Compensation to Widow of late Special Agent V. T. Graham, £315." We do not know what unforeseen expenditure must be provided for in this direction; but we know that other maintenance costs must be cut down. If a few more unforeseen items of expenditure of this nature recur, then other votes must necessarily be reduced in order that the department may live within the appropriation. In connection with this compensation, I take it that some police agent was killed in the execution of his duty. While I am one of those who do not believe in police pimps, I am told that they must be engaged by the police, and that being so, we should have some definite provision for compensation for their relatives if they meet their deaths while performing their duty. I do not know whether it is possible for these special agents to be insured with the State Government Insurance Office; but I would like the Home Secretary to inform the Committee what is the responsibility of the Crown in connection with police pimps, and if the Government are liable for compensation in the event of accident? If they are liable, is it not possible to bring them under a workers' compensation insurance scheme, the same as any other employees?

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, *Ithaca*) [3.59 p.m.]: In reply to the Leader of the Opposition, the trouble at Rewan breeding station last year was caused through the country suffering acutely from drought. Most of the mares in foal died, as also did a great many of the bulls. The bulls were not able to travel to water the same as the cows, and suffered heavy mortality. Of forty-four bulls which were on the property only six survived. A few weeks ago I gave authority to purchase ten bulls. A big percentage of the cows were also lost, but the heaviest mortality was among the mares in foal and the bulls. The station was in a very bad way during the last twelve months, but now the drought has broken the prospects are very much brighter. The question of gambling mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition has not yet come before the Government. The police are endeavouring, to the best of their ability, to cope with this ever-increasing evil. The practice of people treating the law with contempt in this matter is particularly prevalent. It is rather

alarming. If the public will not obey the law, it is not much good having the law.

With reference to the matter of patrolling mentioned by the hon. member for Dalby, I am informed that the same instructions have been in force for five years. Two years ago special instructions were sent out by the Commissioner urging the patrolling of cattle country.

The vote for traffic mentioned by the hon. member for Fassifern is a small one; but that merely covers the wages of the clerical staff, etc., the salaries of the police used in that work being paid from the main vote. Eight or ten policemen are attached to the traffic branch in Brisbane; but the whole of the Roma Street staff is used for traffic work at the busy hours of the morning and evening. No attempt has been made to ascertain the cost of traffic control in Brisbane. When the City of Brisbane Act was passed, it contemplated the handing over of traffic control in Brisbane to the Brisbane City Council; but the council has been wise enough, in the present financial circumstances, not to undertake that work.

Mr. SPARKES: Do the police get extra pay for patrol work?

The HOME SECRETARY: Extra pay is still continued.

Mr. SPARKES: The patrolling does not go on.

The HOME SECRETARY: The Commissioner has advised me that patrol work is still carried on, and that, if any policeman has told the hon. member for Dalby to the contrary, he is not telling the truth.

Mr. SPARKES: What the police told me was that the department did not like making the extra payment.

The HOME SECRETARY: The Commissioner says that is not true, and that, if any policeman makes such a statement, he is not telling the truth.

With regard to the speed limit, no alteration of the law has been made for many years. The ex-Home Secretary announced that he proposed to abolish the speed limits, but he did not do so. Nevertheless, in view of his announcement, magistrates refused to record convictions for breaches of the regulation, and the police ceased to institute prosecutions. I do not see eye to eye with the ex-Home Secretary in the matter. There is no reason for the abolition of the speed limits in this country; and I speak as one who has driven a motor car since I returned from the war. I have driven the car extensively in all sorts of traffic, and my experience is that a speed limit is necessary. It may be claimed that it is exceedingly low, especially in the city area; but we must remember that the speed regulations were based to a great extent on the old horse traffic.

Mr. C. TAYLOR: What is the speed limit?

The HOME SECRETARY: It varies, but a prosecution is not usually made unless a speed of over 30 miles per hour is attained. There are roads on which it is necessary that the speed should be reduced, as some roads will allow a greater speed than others.

Mr. C. TAYLOR: What is the limit in the city?

The HOME SECRETARY: Twelve miles an hour is the maximum in the city. Any

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prosecution for exceeding the speed limit in the city is because the offenders are going at a very fast rate indeed. There has been no alteration so far in regard to the speed limit, and I have no intention of abolishing it.

Mr. WIENHOLT: There are too many fatal accidents.

The HOME SECRETARY: I am satisfied that a great number of accidents are caused through speeding—through taking corners at too fast a speed and travelling at too great a speed on narrow roads. The majority of our roads are not wide enough to enable motor cars to travel in safety at a great speed. If a motor car is travelling at a great speed on a narrow road and meets an unexpected obstacle and is forced to swerve on to a bad road, it is liable to meet with an accident. Consideration may be given to an alteration of the speed allowed if a good case can be made out, but certainly I have no intention of abolishing the speed limit.

With regard to the payment of compensation to police agents, provision is made on the Estimates this year for a payment of £315 because we know we shall have to meet that payment. No provision was made last year because the previous Government did not know that they would have to meet it. Three hundred pounds was paid to a police agent's widow last year, although there was no provision on the Estimates, and £315 is being paid to the children this year.

Mr. KENNY: Are the Government liable for all accidents to police agents?

The HOME SECRETARY: Everyone is liable for death or injury to an employee while performing his duties, and the Government are liable for death or injury to any public servant while on duty. There is no insurance, as the State accepts the liability itself.

Mr. C. TAYLOR (*Windsor*) [3.48 p.m.]: With regard to the speed limit in the city, I would like to point out that the Commissioner in his report says—

“In the metropolitan area during the period under review the revenue for licenses, permits, etc., issued (not including fines) was £13,956 18s. 10d. The number of convictions for breaches of the Acts and regulations, on summons, was 1,501. The number of arrests for breaches of the Acts and regulations was 312. There were 2,379 accidents reported during the term, of which thirty-seven were fatal.”

I take it that he was referring to the metropolitan area. I am pleased that the Home Secretary has stated that he is opposed to any removal or alteration of the speed limit in the metropolitan area; but, when you get down to the Hamilton, the Bowen Bridge road, or the Sandgate road you find motor cars travelling from 30 to 40 miles an hour. When travelling at 25 miles an hour, the driver should have full control of the car in case of emergencies. That speed is as fast as our railway trains travel. We find motor cars speeding on our roads up to 30 or 40 miles an hour, and especially motor cycles, which I do not suppose travel at less than that speed.

The man who drives a locomotive on our railways has to rise to that position in three or four stages. He first of all becomes

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a cleaner, then a fireman, and, if he shows ability, he is made a driver. He has also to be examined in regard to his health and eyesight, and has to undergo quite a severe examination.

It is quite different with regard to motor cars. Anyone can get a license to drive a motor car. People may know how to drive the car and turn corners, but have no actual knowledge of the mechanism of the car. We have also to remember that a locomotive driver travels along a fixed roadway, and there are signals to guide him all along the track, so that he knows if there is anything on the track which should not be there. It is a different matter driving a motor car through the crowded streets of the city; yet the qualifications required for anyone to drive a motor car do not equal in any shape or form those required of a locomotive driver.

The conditions with regard to driving motor cars should be made more stringent, as accidents would be avoided if drivers were more careful, and knew more about the mechanism of the car. The Commissioner of Police states in his report—

“Special attention was devoted by the police in traffic districts during the year to the offence of being under the influence of liquor whilst in charge of vehicles (motor and otherwise). In the metropolitan area seventy-seven persons were arrested on this charge during the twelve months, and of these seventy-six were convicted and one was discharged.”

After a person is convicted for being under the influence of liquor whilst in charge of a motor vehicle, it should be provided that the license should be taken away for twelve months, as that would have a wholesome effect. It is not only a driver's own life which is endangered, but also the lives of other people on the road. I hope that individuals who are convicted for driving motor cars while under the influence of liquor will be deprived of their licenses for a substantial period.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, *Ithaca*) [3.53 p.m.]: The questions raised by hon. members opposite will receive due consideration. The number of people who are prosecuted for driving cars under the influence of liquor is not very great, but something more will have to be done to prevent such breaches of the law. I am a believer in the cancellation of licenses for breaches such as that. Such a provision was formerly in the law, but was taken away, and it may be advisable to restore it.

It is (Police) agreed to.

#### POLICE INVESTMENT BOARD.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, *Ithaca*) [3.54 p.m.]: I move—

“That £42,900 be granted for ‘Police Investment Board.’”

The vote shows an increase of £2,000 on that of last year.

Mr. WIENHOLT (*Fassifern*) [3.55 p.m.]: I wish to raise the question of police pensions on this vote; but I would like to point out to the Minister at once that I am not doing so in any controversial spirit or because I wish to attack anybody or to gain any kudos for myself. I take my full share of responsibility for what we may have done or

may have left undone so far as police pensions may be concerned. It is only right to bring up the whole of the facts so that we may, at any rate, try to get a clear grip on the exact position. I have read very carefully the various Acts concerned in this matter of superannuation and gone through a number of debates which have at various times taken place on those measures. It is evidently a somewhat complicated subject. The whole question involved in this vote needs to be very carefully overhauled. It calls for a careful examination by a practical accountant, such as the hon. member for Kennedy, who, for unfortunate reasons, happens now to be absent, and so cannot be consulted.

I do not know exactly how the position stands, or to what extent it has been affected by anything which Parliament may have done by the passage of the Financial Emergency Act. No one can be more vitally concerned with the solvency of the State than police pensioners, and, to my mind, this factor must at all times be borne in mind, especially when any question of currency inflation in regard to pensions or any other matter arises. I would like it to be made quite clear how the pensioners' position has been affected in this respect. It is first very necessary to find out whether at any time any sum has been taken from the police superannuation fund and transferred from it to consolidated revenue. Whether that has been done or not I do not know. The Treasurer can probably inform us on that particular aspect of the question. Then we need to find out what percentage has been taken off the police pensions as a result of the Financial Emergency Act, and whether the percentage reduction has been made only from the grant made to the fund by the State. I was interested to read in "Hansard" that the late Premier, the hon. member for Aubigny, in reply to an interjection when that measure was before the Chamber, told the then hon. member for Brisbane that the 20 per cent. would only be taken off the grant. Undoubtedly the ex-Premier was under a misapprehension when he said that the total reduction in pensions would be only about 4 per cent.

Mr. MOORE: I did not say that definitely.

Mr. WIENHOLT: The hon. member said that it would be nothing like 20 per cent., and that most likely it would be about 4 per cent. That remark was made in good faith, of course, and was of vital interest to the whole of the police pensioners when it was made. Apparently, the percentage works out at something very much higher now. I have not been able to see in the various Acts where any power is given to Parliament to vote certain sums from Consolidated Revenue by way of subsidy to the fund. It may not be necessary, or it may have been overlooked. I do not think the police investment board ever had an accumulated fund. The pensions absorb all the contributions, and it was necessary to make grants from other funds. The New South Wales and Victorian Governments have not made these deductions from police pensions. Their schemes may be on a different basis, but we should ascertain whether the schemes are different from our own before we can justify our action in applying the percentage reductions.

The police are not entitled to receive the benefits of ordinary workers' compensation

payments; their compensation benefits come out of their own superannuation fund. Perhaps that also entitles them to claim that a lesser reduction should be applied to them. We should be assured that, in respect of the deductions made from the pensions, the police are not being called upon to carry a double burden. Reductions have been made in their salaries, and I am anxious to know whether the burden has been in any way duplicated in respect of the police pensioners. Has this happened through the passage of the Financial Emergency Act? The matter rather presses on one's conscience. It was first brought under my notice during the elections. I must carry my full share of the blame, if any is attachable. The position should be carefully examined so that we can be sure that no injustice exists. If the police pensioners are suffering an injustice, then the injustice should be removed, and, at any rate, the police generally should be informed clearly of the position.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, *Ithaca*) [4.4 p.m.]: The matter raised by the hon. member for Fassifern is a very important one. I think it is agreed by all that the reduction imposed upon police pensioners under the Financial Emergency Act was wrong, and that it amounted to harsh repudiation, particularly in the case of widows and children in receipt of small pensions. The Government, unfortunately, are unable to do all that they would like to do. My department is already committed to very heavy expenditure in the restoration of social services, with regard to hospitals, and increased payments to State children. A large amount is involved in the restoration of scholarships by the Department of Public Instruction. These items will absorb a lot of extra money this year, but we are hopeful to be able to deal with this matter next year.

Hon. members will understand that the compensation paid to the police is not on the same basis as compensation to other wage-earning employees. If a policeman is injured in the course of his duty and is compelled to retire from the force, he is paid compensation ranging from £125 to £625 per annum according to his rank and service. The maximum amount of compensation payable to a worker under the Workers' Compensation Act in respect of injury is £750. Under the Police Superannuation Act Regulations the minimum amount of compensation payable to a constable with a minimum number of years of service is £125 for life. That is an enormously greater compensation than an employee would be paid if he came under the Workers' Compensation Act.

Mr. WIENHOLT: Of course, they contribute to it.

The HOME SECRETARY: That is so, but there is a big margin between the amount of contributions and the total payments. The amount of contributions by the police to the Police Superannuation Fund this year is £17,000, and £3,000 will be drawn from the police reward fund, making a total of £20,000. The amount required for police superannuation this year is £73,000. That leaves a balance of £53,913 which the Government are required to make up; but the reduction under the Financial Emergency Act reduces the amount to £42,685 13s. That amount must be found from consolidated revenue. The State is paying a reasonably fair amount to the Police Superannuation Fund, and rightly so. I believe that the

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members of the police force should be provided for fully upon their retirement from the force. I am one of those, too, who expect from the members of the police force a very high standard of conduct. The State should pay them very fairly for the services they render. In turn we should expect a very high standard of conduct from the police, and a particularly close application to duty. I am pleased to say that the great majority of the force in Queensland attain that standard. They give us good service for the money we pay them. We should put them beyond fear of want in their old age by adequately providing for them on retirement. All Governments make a liberal contribution to the Police Superannuation Fund. It would take a contribution of between 7 per cent. and 8 per cent. from the police salaries to put the fund on anything like a sound financial footing. We do not expect that. The present rate of contribution by the police is 5½ per cent. We should not grudge making provision for a retiring allowance for the police.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*) [4.10 p.m.]: The hon. member for Fassifern asked whether any deduction was made from the contributions of members of the police force. The deduction was made from the amount contributed by the Government. The Government made that deduction in every contribution made by them to any fund. Whether the same course was followed in New South Wales and Victoria I do not know; but I do know that the late Premier of Victoria, Mr. Hogan, told me that the Victorian Government had reduced their contributions to pensions by 20 per cent. Whether an exemption was made afterwards I do not know. I do not imagine for one instant that the police or any other section of the community desire to escape their just obligations in a time of stress. They are not in a position that they should expect to be treated differently from everybody else. When the Government are contributing to the fund £42,685 and the members of the police force are paying £17,000, I do not think it would be reasonable to expect that the police pensioners should escape the deduction that is made in respect of other contributions from the Crown. After all, the same conditions affect the police as everybody else. The old-age pensioner, who gets his contribution from the public, has had his pension reduced, because the country was not in the position to make the contribution which it made previously. Similarly with all the controllable expenditure of the various Governments. I admit that I was wrong if I made the statement about a reduction of 4 per cent.; but what I wanted to convey was that there would be no deduction from the contribution so far as the police themselves were concerned, and that the only deduction would be in the contribution made by the Government.

Mr. WIENHOLT: What percentage does that mean off the whole pension?

Mr. MOORE: It is all a matter of proportion. The Government contribute more than twice as much as the police. As far as possible, we endeavoured to see that superannuation funds should not suffer to the same extent, and, although we were perfectly entitled to reduce the interest rate to 4 per cent., we still continued to pay 5 per cent. on the amount which the superannuation fund had invested in Government securi-

ties. The late Government endeavoured to be fair, but they could not exempt one section of the community when everybody else was contributing. The police must recognise that, as citizens of the State, they must bear their share of the sacrifice. I have never heard any argument against it. I did hear that the New South Wales Government exempted the police from all deductions. That may be the policy of that State, and it may be the policy of the present Government in Queensland, but it certainly would not be the policy of any Government of which I was the head. War pensioners and old-age pensioners had to suffer a deduction, and I think it only fair that the police should suffer likewise.

Mr. WIENHOLT (*Fassifern*) [4.18 p.m.]: I must thank the Minister for his reply and also the hon. member for Aubigny, but I do not know that some of the arguments used are altogether sound. I should like to draw the attention of the hon. member for Aubigny to the fact that he said that he did not think the deduction was more than about 4 per cent. I realise that that was an error. We all make them, but he must also realise that, when speaking as Premier, what he says goes forth to those vitally interested, and it is very natural for them to take it as a statement of what they can expect and draw their own expectations from it. At any rate, it does help to put the police pensioners in a misleading position. The hon. member for Aubigny said that the position was the same as with the old age pensions—that the old age pensioners subscribed to their pensions by taxation. So do the police pay taxation; but they also pay a contribution to the fund, and their contributions started in the early days when money was comparatively dear. Their contributions were made in good faith.

Mr. MOORE: There is no fund.

Mr. WIENHOLT: As I said already, probably the fund has never been solvent, and it has to be subsidised every year; but I think the police can be excused for believing that their pensions were definitely fixed, and, if that is not the case, it is only fair that Parliament should let them know where they stand now. I did not vote for the compulsory reduction in the interest on Government securities, thinking it was foolish to do so with all the future ahead of us. I would like to suggest to the Minister, who seems to think it is a direct repudiation, that hoping to alter it next year cannot quite meet the situation. If the Minister believes it is a direct act of repudiation, then that looks worse for his side than for this.

Mr. MOORE: The whole of it is repudiation. The reduction of interest is repudiation.

Mr. WIENHOLT: That seems to make it a serious matter. Again, it cannot be looked upon merely as a reduction similar to that which was made in old age pensions. I would ask the Minister to have the actual percentage carefully checked, to make sure that the deduction is only made from the Government grant, for even as to that there seems to be some doubt.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, *Ithaca*) [4.22 p.m.]: I cannot give the hon. member for Fassifern the information now, but I will find out for him.

Item (Police Investment Board) agreed to.

[Hon. E. M. Hanlon.]

## PRISONS.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, *Ithaca*) [4.22 p.m.]: I move—  
“That £28,282 be granted for ‘Prisons.’”

This is a decrease of £1,608 on last year's vote. It will be noticed that no provision is made for the St. Helena penal establishment, as we hope to have that off our hands, and that will do away with what has been a fairly heavy drain upon the prisons department. There are some minor savings in regard to the contract prices for goods and supplies to the institutions.

Item agreed to.

## STATE CHILDREN.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, *Ithaca*) [4.23 p.m.]: I move—  
“That £200,711 be granted for ‘State Children.’”

The vote is considerably heavier this year than last year owing to the fact that the Government are restoring the 1s. a week in the State children's allowance, which was taken away under the Financial Emergency Act. The Government have decided, after consideration, that the amount shall be restored to these children, many of whom are boarded out with people to whom they are not related, while others are living with widowed mothers, who have practically no income, and who cannot possibly find anything from their own pockets to help their children, and, therefore, this little assistance is necessary.

It will be remembered that, when we were in opposition, we strongly opposed this reduction, because we thought it was unfair. I can appreciate the point taken by the ex-Premier that every fund should be cut equally, but we were very sorry as a party to see that cut made, and we have taken the opportunity to restore the amount.

There are prospective savings to be made in regard to some of the orphanages, but, by and large, the vote is practically the same as last year except for the increase in the State children's allowance.

At 4.25 p.m.,

Mr. O'KEEFE (*Cairns*), one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, relieved the Chairman in the chair.

Mr. KENNY (*Cook*) [4.25 p.m.]: In my opinion, the vote is very misleading. During the election campaign the Government had much to say about the action of the Moore Government in reducing the allowances in respect of State children, and they made a promise that the allowances would be restored to the previous level. From a perusal of the Estimate we are considering one would naturally conclude that the Government were restoring this allowance, but again we find that reductions have been made in maintenance at certain of the institutions covered by the vote. For instance, although we know quite well that the allowance in respect of children boarded out has been restored, we find that the amount required for maintenance and incidentals at the Diamantina receiving depot has been reduced by £155, at the Townsville orphanage by £60, at the Holy Cross Retreat, Wooloowin, by £40, and at the Meteor Park orphanage by £335. It seems to me that, unfortunately, the children in these homes are penalised

in order that the Government may win a few votes outside. I make that statement quite definitely, for the simple reason that savings are being made there as well as in the maintenance of all institutions under the control of the Home Department. I mentioned this in regard to the forage allowance for the police force. The Minister could not see his way to reply for the simple reason that there was no reply to give. Although the Government are allegedly giving effect to their promise, they are making a further saving by a cut in the maintenance of these institutions. It seems to me that that can only be done at the expense of the children. It is absolutely ridiculous for the Minister to say that he anticipates that there will be fewer children in the homes. He can go over the figures for a period of years and it seems ridiculous to say there will be a reduction. Yet we have a decrease of £300 in one little home, which is an argument in favour of the contention that the cost of living has been reduced and that the late Government were right. If the Minister is able to make reductions in these costs, it is an evidence that he believes that the cost of living has fallen and that there was something to be said for the late Government.

Still, I am in accord with and appreciate the action he has taken in restoring the allowance in respect of boarded-out children; but I think it is being done at the expense of the children who are under the control of the State and the people in institutions such as Dunwich and Goodna, and that they are penalised so that the Government can give effect to their promise.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, *Ithaca*) [4.28 p.m.]: The hon. member says that he has been thinking certain things. He has been thinking nothing of the kind. He knows perfectly well that we could not make increased payments amounting to £10,000 by a saving of £300 in the cost of maintaining one institution.

Mr. KENNY: Not altogether.

The HOME SECRETARY: If the hon. member thinks we could, he should be in a kindergarten and not discussing Estimates in this Chamber.

Mr. KENNY: It is done at the expense of the inmates at Dunwich, Goodna, and everywhere else.

The HOME SECRETARY: If the hon. member thinks that £10,000 can be paid out to children by saving a few hundred pounds in respect of children in the orphanages, he has not the intelligence to be discussing votes in this Chamber. The least one can expect from hon. members is that they will think intelligently. The reduction in the vote in respect of these institutions is based on the expenditure for last year. I did not make these Estimates. The departmental officers, who have spent their lives at this work, have estimated the number of children who will have to be maintained, and their estimates are generally pretty correct. The saving forecast here is based upon last year's expenditure, and upon nothing else; and for the hon. member to carry on in the way he has and say that a saving of £10,000 can be made by this and by taking a handful of chaff from the police horses is rubbish. It is absurd for hon. members to talk nonsense like that and expect me to reply to them.

Item (State Children) agreed to.

*Hon. E. M. Hanlon.*]

## STEAMER "OTTER."

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, *Ithaca*) [4.30 p.m.]: I move—

"That £4,135 be granted for 'Steamer "Otter."'"

The appropriation is exactly the same as the appropriation last year.

Mr. R. M. KING (*Logan*) [4.30 p.m.]: It is fitting that I should refer to the sterling qualities of Captain Junner, ex-master of the steamer "Otter." Some of us will remember when he was associated with Messrs. Howard Smith as first mate of the s.s. "Keilawarra." He joined the Government service many years ago, and he has proved himself to be a loyal and faithful servant to the Crown. He is still active and in possession of all his faculties, and I am sure we all regret that he has reached the age of retirement.

Item agreed to.

## MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, *Ithaca*) [4.31 p.m.]: I move—

"That £28,200 be granted for 'Miscellaneous Services.'"

The appropriation has been increased by £2,830 this year, chiefly on account of fire brigades. Last year the Government endowment was not paid to certain fire brigades because they had funds in hand. This year practically every fire brigade in the country has exhausted its finances, and will require the assistance of the Government endowment. The item "Fire Brigades" accounts for an increase of £2,500. The remaining two items are responsible for the balance of the increased appropriation.

Item agreed to.

## DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE.

## CHIEF OFFICE.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Carpentaria*) [4.34 p.m.]: I move—

"That £19,391 be granted for 'Department of Justice—Chief Office.'"

The appropriation this year shows a reduction of £80.

Item agreed to.

## COURTS OF PETTY SESSIONS.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Carpentaria*) [4.35 p.m.]: I move—

"That £75,664 be granted for 'Courts of Petty Sessions.'"

This vote is an increase of £124 on last year's appropriation.

Item agreed to.

## ELECTORAL REGISTRATION.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Carpentaria*) [4.36 p.m.]: I move—

"That £10,654 be granted for 'Electoral Registration.'"

This item shows a decrease of £18,219 as compared with the appropriation last financial year, during which an election was held. This appropriation will cover the normal expenditure of the department.

Item agreed to.

[*Hon. E. M. Hanlon.*]

## FRIENDLY SOCIETIES.

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

"That £1,979 be granted for 'Friendly Societies.'"

Item agreed to.

## PARLIAMENTARY DRAFTSMAN.

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

"That £820 be granted for 'Parliamentary Draftsman.'"

Mr. R. M. KING (*Logan*) [4.38 p.m.]: We know that Mr. Broadbent, who is, comparatively speaking, quite a young man, is giving excellent service; but it would be wise if the Government took into consideration the possibilities which might arise in the future by appointing somebody as a sort of understudy to Mr. Broadbent in order that he may get an idea of the preparation of Bills in case anything might happen to Mr. Broadbent. Bill-drafting is a specialised class of work, and, although Mr. Broadbent is likely to be in the position he is in for many years to come, still we never know what may happen. It is a difficult job to undertake on a moment's notice—many things have to be considered; but the Government might provide for any untoward happening by seconding a barrister from the Department of Justice or some other department for the purpose I have stated.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Carpentaria*) [4.40 p.m.]: There is a great deal to be said in favour of the suggestion made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. Although Mr. Broadbent is a young, vigorous, and capable man, and we would all be sorry to lose him, still no one knows what the future holds for any of us. It is wise to take precautions so that the Government will not be left in difficulties, which might easily arise if, for example, the parliamentary draftsman was promoted to another sphere. The suggestion of the hon. member for Logan is not a new one. When the late Mr. Justice Woolcock was parliamentary draftsman before his elevation to the judicial bench, I approached him on the advisability of appointing an understudy. I realised the delicacy of my representations to that gentleman, who was not in good health at the time; but I pointed out to him that the Government did not wish to be placed in difficulties, although I hoped that he had still many years of useful service before him. The late Mr. Justice Woolcock cordially agreed with my proposal that Mr. Broadbent should become the assistant parliamentary draftsman, and the wisdom of the change was proved when the late Mr. Justice Woolcock became a member of the judiciary and Mr. Broadbent took over his duties as parliamentary draftsman.

Probably additional reasons are also in the mind of the hon. member for Logan in making his suggestion. I think, for example, that every responsible public servant should have an understudy who could automatically fulfil his duties if the necessity arose in order to obviate inconvenience in the public service. I shall certainly carefully consider the suggestion now made at a suitable opportunity.

Item (Parliamentary Draftsman) agreed to.

## REGISTRAR-GENERAL.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Carpentaria*) [4.44 p.m.]: I move—  
“That £9,847 be granted for ‘Registrar-General.’”

This is an office which has recently been retransferred to the Department of Justice, to which it originally belonged.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*) [4.45 p.m.]: This department is principally engaged in collecting statistics, and I presume that the present Government have had representations made to them such as were made to me early in the year that, if possible, the returns required should be simplified and in some cases eliminated. If possible, the whole of the information required by the different departments should be supplied in one or two returns made at the one period. At the present time the people in the country have to make a return to the Department of Agriculture under the Diseases in Stock Act, another under the Brands Act; then there is the return that goes to the Registrar-General and the factory return in regard to power and fuel, the return as to the value of the raw product, and another as to the value of the finished product. Since the Bureau of Economics was established we have to make still further returns. I do not think there is very much objection on the part of the people in the country to making the returns provided they could all be made at the one time. It is the number of returns coming at different times in the year that they object to, and which causes difficulty. People often get into trouble with the various departments for not sending in the returns. When Mr. Brigden was appointed to the Bureau of Economics he was asked to go into the question of simplifying the returns to the Government and eliminating some of them. At the present time it is necessary to make out a return for the State Insurance Department as to the number of employees, and it is necessary to make similar returns to the Registrar-General and Commissioner of Taxes. It does seem that with a little co-ordination it should only be necessary to send in the information to one department, from which the other departments could get the information. I recognise that the information given in many cases is quite useful, but I do not know that it is any use sending to the Registrar-General a return of the number of eggs your fowls lay in the year. It is pure guesswork in most cases. At least it is on my part. I think the policeman usually makes a guess of 500 or so. I certainly never counted the eggs.

Of course, information as to the number of acres planted and the yield is of advantage, because it helps to ascertain the position of Australia and the increase in production. We all recognise that the Registrar-General has fulfilled a very useful work. The “A.B.C. of Queensland and Australian Statistics,” which he publishes every year, is quite a useful work, and contains a lot of very useful information, not only to Queensland but also to people outside Queensland. It is looked upon as an excellent work of reference. It appears that there is some reorganisation going on, because the Registrar-General’s Department has been retransferred to the Department of Justice, and in the reorganisation I suggest that, as far as possible, the returns be simplified and made as few as possible consistent with the information that the Government require. Particular objection has been raised in the sugar districts to the number of returns that

have to be made out. The secretary of one of the sugar associations wrote to me, and sent a list of about seven returns that he had to make. They could easily be condensed and the requisite information supplied in a much simpler form. The number of returns asked for to-day could be whittled down considerably, while at the same time giving all the information required for compiling the “A.B.C. of Queensland and Australian Statistics.”

The suggestion has been made that one department checks up on other departments to see whether persons are making correct income tax returns or not. There is certainly no occasion for that sort of thing. It is perfectly simple for the departments concerned to secure checks from each other under the present system. I do not think it is necessary to have any additional facilities in this direction, because we find that under present conditions people make a true return of the information required.

Mr. MAHER (*Rosewood*) [4.50 p.m.]: I would like some information from the Minister. I understand from a recent case in the law courts that we are operating in Queensland with regard to registration of deaths, births, and marriages, through the Registrar-General’s Department, under an Act passed in 1855, four or five years before Separation. I understand also that in the case to which I refer a man secured a separation from his wife in 1928. About eleven months afterwards his wife gave birth to a child. Eighteen months after that the husband discovered the fact, and protested to the Registrar-General that his wife had registered the birth of the child and stated that the husband was the father. He protested that he was not the father. It seems that, although the Registrar-General interviewed the wife and secured a statutory declaration from her, in which she admitted that her husband was not the father of the child, and in which she named the actual father, and, despite the fact that the actual father waited upon the Attorney-General, the Registrar-General was quite helpless in the matter, and could do nothing under the Act as it stood to afford any measure of justice to the injured husband. Those facts were brought before the court recently, when the matter was ventilated. If the facts are as stated, it is time we had an amending measure dealing with the question of births, marriages, and deaths. I would like to have a statement from the Minister as to whether he contemplates taking any action in this respect.

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*) [4.53 p.m.]: During my experience for a number of years of the present Registrar-General I have found him to be a most kindly man, more especially in connection with cases one has to take to him in regard to illegitimate children. He has been able to deal with quite a number of these cases, and to legitimatise these children under the Act passed some little time ago. I have to commend him for his tact, and for the assistance he has given to a great many people in connection with these matters.

The matter raised by the Leader of the Opposition has nothing to do with the Registrar-General. The Registrar-General’s office compiles a great many statistics and hands over the figures to the other departments. That was the case in connection with the department of which I was formerly

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in charge. The Registrar-General's Department handed over statistics which saved us a great deal of trouble, and relieved us from the necessity of putting on another staff. That practice could be adopted in connection with many other returns, and would, as the Leader of the Opposition, says, save quite a lot of work to people who have to compile returns at different times of the year. When one makes returns at the end of June and gets them away, one has a certain feeling of satisfaction; but others have to be made at the end of December, and very often they are forgotten, and one gets into trouble with the Registrar-General.

I come into contact with quite a number of representatives of friendly societies, some of whom are sometimes of different opinion from the Registrar-General, who is also Registrar of Friendly Societies—because he will not allow them to spend money in certain directions and safeguards their funds. Sometimes he gets into hot water; yet everybody admits that his kindly manner and his method of presenting problems to them have been a wonderful help to friendly societies throughout the State. Just at present some members of friendly societies are very much concerned about rumours which are going about in connection with the Registrar-General, and about the possibility of a change. Recently I attended a conference of representatives of thousands of men and women from all over Queensland, at which this question was brought up. I told them that I had not heard anything about it, and I did not think they ought to take any notice of rumours. I would like the Minister, however, to disabuse their minds in this respect, because I am sure that everyone wishes to express the thanks which are due to the Registrar-General for the help he has been able to give to friendly societies during the past few years, and would like to know that there is to be no interference with the present condition of things.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Carpentaria*) [4.58 p.m.]: In reply to the Leader of the Opposition, I would like to say that we desire as far as practicable to have co-ordination in returns. An enormous number of returns are required for various purposes, and an effort has been made from time to time to minimise the number and the details required as much as possible. I think that, by the direction of the late Government, the Registrar-General took the matter in hand with some of the principal bodies interested with a view to getting some kind of co-ordinated form of return, and that negotiations are still proceeding with a view to bringing about a more desirable state of affairs. Everyone is agreed as to the trouble and annoyance caused by having to make a multitude of returns, and, where possible, we should avoid that as much as we can, not only from the point of view of saving trouble to the people who have to make them, but also from the point of view of expense.

The hon. member for West Moreton was anxious to know if the Act relating to the registration of births, marriages, and deaths was obsolete, and he referred to a certain Supreme Court action. The difficulty did not arise so much on account of the age of the Act. It is true that a lady in Queensland left her husband and that twelve months or so later she had a child, which was registered at the request of the mother

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in her married name, and later her husband disclaimed the paternity. The mother agreed with her husband that he was not the father of the child. They approached the registrar of births, marriages, and deaths with a view to having what they considered to be the right name placed in the register. The Registrar-General objected to that being done, but he did not object before he had obtained legal opinion from the Crown Law Office. He was advised by the Crown Law Office to refuse registration, and he did so on fairly sound grounds. There is a legal decision in England to the effect that parents cannot bastardise their own child. In view of the legal opinion given to him, the Registrar-General took the view that he would not be justified on his own responsibility in changing the name of the child. He pointed out that the parties had their legal remedy. They took advantage of those remedies, and the court, in its wisdom, decided that the proper name should be entered in the register, and that was done. It would have been a grave responsibility for the Registrar-General to decide merely on the say-so of the parents that the name should be changed. I think that Mr. Porter did the right thing, but I also agree with the direction given by the court. The parents did what they considered to be right. That was their business. It would be a serious matter if anyone could approach the Registrar-General and say, "This is not our child," or that something else should be done. The trouble did not arise because of any defect in the law.

Mr. TOZER (*Gympie*) [5.3 p.m.]: I have to congratulate the Registrar-General upon the excellent manner in which the statistics are prepared. They are of considerable use and benefit to politicians and to the legal profession, but I feel confident that we could dispense with many of these returns. What is the value of some of these returns? How can a dairy farmer say how many fowls are bred, how many eggs are laid, or what crops are produced? The returns are absolutely incorrect. It is not possible to make a correct return in respect of every item. Mine managers are asked to state the weight of stone broken, the weight of quartz crushed, the amount of "fracteur," the number of caps, and the length of fuse used. What is the use of that information to anyone? Yet it puts a person to no end of trouble to furnish all the particulars. I doubt if, in a great many instances, those responsible can make the returns out correctly. What is the use of asking for a return as to how many trucks of mullock have been taken from a certain level in a mine? I have no objection to the making of returns in regard to subjects which will be beneficial to the people.

I quite agree with the Attorney-General that the attitude of the Registrar-General in the case he referred to was correct in the first instance, because he must be in a position of being absolutely correct. If he were to take the word of any person vouchsafing information, he might do a great injustice at some later period to some person when a question of property or some material interest arose. It is the duty of the Registrar-General to be as absolutely correct as he can. Most certainly the court has power to order him to make an alteration if, on the matter being mentioned, the judges are satisfied as to the actual facts.

Mr. R. M. KING (*Logan*) [5.8 p.m.]: I quite agree with the remarks of the Attorney-General, and also with the opinion of the hon. member for Gympie, that the decision arrived at by the Attorney-General in the particular case quoted was quite sound. The English law does not permit parents to bastardise a child, it being presumed that the husband and wife are living in lawful wedlock. In the case of a child born out of wedlock the usual practice is for the mother to register the child as illegitimate in the name of the mother. In such a case as the hon. member for West Moreton referred to, it is quite open to a husband to prove that a child was born during non-access. That certainly would be strong evidence in support of a divorce if he desired to take divorce proceedings. A single girl who is a mother usually registers the illegitimate child in her name. If the father registered it in his name, as was frequently done, that would be strong evidence to be used against him in a divorce court or other proceedings.

Mention has been made of the good work that has been carried out by the Registrar-General. I quite agree with the eulogy passed upon him by the hon. member for Ipswich, because he has carried out his duties very well indeed. Mr. Porter is a very tactful, courteous, sympathetic, and approachable public officer. One thing which stands to his credit is that he was able to devise a method by which illegitimate children were able to get a certificate of birth which would pass muster for all necessary purposes without disclosing their illegitimacy. Mr. Porter is to be congratulated for his action in that matter.

Mr. Beak is another officer of the department who should be publicly commended for the excellent service he has rendered to the State. He is a painstaking officer who has rendered excellent service, not only to members of Parliament but to the public generally. It is regrettable that the exigencies of the situation demand that he should retire on account of age.

Mr. W. T. KING (*Maree*) [5.12 p.m.]: We are indebted to Mr. Porter for the efficient manner in which he controls this department and for the useful information which he collects and disseminates for the use not only of members of Parliament but also of the public of Queensland.

In connection with the case which has been referred to by the Attorney-General and the hon. members for West Moreton, Gympie, and Logan, the Registrar-General behaved in the only way open to him. As an officer of the public service, he is acting in an administrative capacity, and he administers his office to the best of his ability. When an application was made to him on a matter in which he had a doubt he naturally asked the Crown Law Office for a legal opinion, and that opinion was that he should act in the way he did. The person who considered he had been wrongly treated had the right to make representations to the court. The court gave its decision, and we know that decision stands unless and until the Privy Council finally decides to the contrary.

I understand that under the present law, if a child is born before the husband and wife are married, that child can subsequently be legitimatised if the father takes advantage of certain provisions dealing with the

matter. I have known of instances where the father has not taken that action, because of a sense of shame or for some other reason, and thus the child is regarded by the law as illegitimate. The Attorney-General should give some consideration to an amendment of the law where a child is not legitimatised through the neglect of the father. Perhaps it might be as well if the mother were given the right to take action as well as the father. It is a very hard thing for a child that it should be compelled to go through life branded as the child of nobody simply because the father failed to legitimatise it. I would ask the Attorney-General to look into that matter and see that these children, who are valuable assets of the State, have an opportunity of becoming legitimatised.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Carpentaria*) [5.16 p.m.]: I understand from the Registrar-General that a few cases similar to those mentioned by the hon. member for Maree have come under his notice where the father died before the child was legitimatised, and it is certainly worth devising some way out of the difficulty. With the father dead, the mother would be the person upon whose word or declaration legitimatisation would take place, and corroboration might be necessary. However, it is a very interesting point. It is the first time it has been raised in this Chamber, and I shall certainly look into it and see if the difficulty can be overcome.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN (*Murilla*) [5.17 p.m.]: At present the man on the land is compelled to make out numerous returns each year. The farmer is expected to be a Philadelphia lawyer and know everything, and he is subject to heavy penalties if his returns are incorrect. I would ask the Minister to see if it is not possible to arrange for one return only.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The Leader of the Opposition brought that matter up, and I replied to him. We are going into the question now.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: If that could be done, it would help considerably. I am compelled to make out a return at the beginning of the year, and then later on a policeman comes round to know how many fowls I have got and wants information about one hundred and one other things. I admit that it is useful information, but it is very annoying; and, if it were possible to arrange for one return at the beginning of the year, it would save a lot of inconvenience and annoyance. I suggest that the return be made out from the beginning of the calendar year, and not from the beginning of the financial year. It would serve the same purpose, and in many cases cost considerably less, as it would not then be necessary for the police to make so many visits as they do at the present time. In every way it would be beneficial, and I hope the Minister will give the matter every consideration. It will be of great assistance to the man on the land and the information supplied will be more correct than it is at the present time, when we are being asked to send in four or five different forms. Any assistance the Minister can give us in that direction will be much appreciated by the man on the land.

Item (Registrar-General) agreed to.

*Mr. Morgan.]*

## SHERIFF AND SUPREME COURTS.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Carpentaria*) [5.21 p.m.]: I move—

“That £24,326 be granted for ‘Sheriff and Supreme Courts.’”

Mr. R. M. KING (*Logan*) [3.21 p.m.]: I notice that there is no provision made for an acting sheriff. Mr. Carvosso, who has been sheriff for a good many years, has now been retired, in conjunction with Mr. Baines, the taxing officer, and Mr. Woodhouse, the chief clerk.

I have had the pleasure of a long acquaintance with these three gentlemen, who have been splendid officers of the Supreme Court. Mr. Baines has been kept on perhaps longer than the ordinary public servant because of his special qualifications. He holds a unique position on account of his ability and qualification for carrying out the work of his office. As taxing officer he has been called upon to adjudicate and give decisions on many matters of importance involving costs as between party and party and between solicitor and client. He is recognised all over Australia as a man of extraordinary ability in his work. The judges have referred important points to Mr. Baines in many cases of taxation, and he has been invariably trusted by the profession and the public generally. He has been an excellent protection to the public while he has occupied the important position of taxing officer. There are legal men in this Chamber who will support what I say. I know the hon. member for Maree knows Mr. Baines very well, and can testify to his excellent qualities. Apart altogether from his work as taxing officer, Mr. Baines has also had to undertake the duties of deputy registrar, and has had to deal with most difficult matters in regard to executors and trustees' accounts. These are matters which need almost a lifelong study to master them, to know where an executor's duties end and a trustee's duties commence; to see that executors' duties are kept distinct from trustees' duties, and that there is no fusing of the funds held by executors and those held by trustees. These are matters of vital importance to the general public, and it will be very difficult indeed to fill Mr. Baines's position, because he has left behind him a wealth of long experience and assured knowledge, and he has also satisfied everybody in the community so far as his official duties are concerned. He has earned the trust and confidence of the community. Above all, he has the trust and confidence of the judiciary, and a man who has earned that reputation is a man to be envied.

Mr. Carvosso has also rendered long and faithful service to the Crown, and has carried out his duties in a most capable way. He also is a man to be trusted, always courteous to the public, always accessible, always giving of his best in the service of the community. He has also to make way for a younger man—a fact to be regretted, but not to be avoided.

Then we have another man connected with the registry of the Brisbane court who, in his own sphere, has done equally good work. It is to be regretted that the public have to lose the services of men like Mr. Woodhouse, who also has given excellent services. I sincerely regret his retirement and that of Mr. Baines and Mr. Carvosso. We all recognise that the time comes when everyone of

us has to make way for others; but, when that time comes, we sincerely regret it.

Men who follow these men will have no easy task. I notice that temporary appointments have been made. Mr. O'Flynn has been appointed acting taxing officer. I have had a very close professional association with Mr. O'Flynn, and I think he is about the best appointment that could be made from the service. He also is very courteous and painstaking, and I have no doubt that he will be an acquisition. At the same time, the position is a difficult one to fill, as I think Mr. O'Flynn himself recognises in following a man like Mr. Baines. If, however, loyal service, application to his work, and enthusiasm will get a man anywhere, Mr. O'Flynn will get there. I know his excellent qualities. Then we have another clerk, Mr. Emerson, who is to take the place of Mr. Gair as acting registrar at Rockhampton. Mr. Gair has been registrar for many years, and I have known him for many years as a personal friend. He is a kindly, tactful, capable man, who has been able to hold down his job to the satisfaction of everybody, and I am very sorry that he too is going. There again, you have a man who will do his best in his place to give satisfaction in every way to the general public. Mr. Emerson has the ability which is necessary, and also the courtesy, and a happy way with the general public which will stand him in good stead. I think that he will make a success of his job.

I wish these appointees every success in their new spheres. They are following men who may almost be said to have made history in our Supreme Court. They have difficult tasks to fulfil, but with my knowledge of them I feel that we may confidently expect that they will do their duty to the satisfaction of everybody concerned.

Mr. MAHER (*West Moreton*) [5.29 p.m.]: After the eloquent references to the valuable work performed by many officers of the Supreme Court, it may not be out of place to pay a tribute to the work of the bailiffs. Not many people recognise its value; and not many appreciate a visit from one of these estimable officers of the Supreme Court. It is only those who belong to the creditor class and who have taken risks in business and perhaps stand to lose £50, £60, or £100 who really appreciate the valuable work they perform throughout the State. After all, a bailiff has to undertake very disagreeable tasks and run many risks. I have known bailiffs to be badly kicked, beaten, and assaulted in the exercise of their duty. Others have been subjected to invective and to the use of umbrellas by the lady of the household when they called. I do not think that we in Parliament appreciate to the full the splendid work done by the bailiffs throughout Queensland to-day.

At 5.31 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. MAHER: There was a rather unique case in my electorate last year when the Commissioner of Taxes took action against a farmer for the non-payment of taxation. I felt rather sorry for the farmer, because every time I sign a cheque to pay taxation I know full well how he felt. He seemed to think that the Commissioner had no right to collect taxation from him. He stood his ground, and went to such a point that the commissioner was obliged to issue a writ

[*Mr. R. M. King.*]

against him. He still stood his ground. I might say that he was a fighting Irishman, and he stood his ground to the last ditch. In due course, it was necessary for the Commissioner to send a bailiff to levy on his goods. The bailiff arrived, was received with due courtesy, admitted to the household, and permitted to take an inventory. He was also provided with a noggin of rum at his evening meal. When he retired that night somewhere in the vicinity of midnight, the farmer arrived in the room with a gun. The bailiff quickly jumped to attention and said, "What do you mean? Are you going to shoot foxes or ducks?" The old chap said, "No, I am going shooting bailiffs," and with that he put the gun into position. It will stand to the agility of the bailiff that he lost no time in diving through the window. He took refuge in a barn. The farmer thereupon discharged a number of shots into the night, and the bailiff sought refuge in the creek. He stood his ground for four days. Finally, being starved out, he emerged and left a message on the post for the farmer which wound up with love and kisses, illustrating that even a bailiff may have a sense of humour in such trying circumstances. The farmer has complained to me on a number of occasions since that he was charged by the bailiff or by his officers a sum of £4, being wages for stockmen employed in mustering his cattle. He asserts that his cattle were never mustered, and that he never saw any stockmen on the property. The only visitor he had was the bailiff. The farmer, too, supports my view that we do not properly recognise the value of a bailiff. He realises that the bailiff was a very courageous fellow to remain for four days while shots were being fired indiscriminately night and day during his stay on the property. I just mention that to show that bailiffs have not been appreciated in Queensland in the past, and I should like to pay my tribute to the good work they are performing in every part of Queensland.

I do not think it would be out of place if I were to suggest to the Attorney-General that he consider the appointment of one of these valuable officers at Laidley, which is the centre of the Lockyer district. At the present time Laidley is without a bailiff. The appointment of such an officer might add to the dignity of the local clerk of petty sessions office, and would give employment to another man at present out of work. The importance of Laidley justifies this appointment.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*) [5.35 p.m.]: We are being asked to vote £24,326 for "Sheriff and Supreme Courts" after having voted an appropriation of £75,664 for "Courts of Petty Sessions." That is a sum approximating £100,000 for courts; but that is a mere commencement of the cost to the community. We must also take into consideration the legal expenses incurred annually by the people. If we could add the cost of that to this £100,000, we would realise that legal costs in such a community as ours are altogether out of proportion. This is a fitting opportunity to draw attention to another court which exists, but which does not function or cost the parties anything like the litigants in these other courts. The costs are at a minimum. I refer to courts of conciliation. The use of courts of conciliation would very often be a useful alternative to the courts for which we are now asked to

vote money, and the courts for which we previously voted an appropriation. I have already discussed the courts of conciliation with the Minister, and I have his fullest sympathy with regard to their increased use for matters which are now determined by the Supreme Courts and the courts of petty session. Litigation in the higher courts very often accrues from litigation in the lower courts.

It would not be out of place if I gave a brief resume of the functions of the courts of conciliation. These were first initiated by Sir Samuel Griffith as far back as 1892 in order to afford an alternative to the courts for which we are now asked to vote money. The use of courts of conciliation would be a means of largely reducing this and the vote for courts of petty sessions, not to speak of the costs incurred in other directions by litigants. I notice that Sir Samuel Griffith, when moving the second reading of his Bill, pointed out that courts of conciliation had been eminently successful on the continent of Europe, and had averted a considerable proportion of disputes which otherwise would have come before the ordinary courts. I have made inquiries on the subject, and I found that this is a fact to-day. Sir Samuel Griffith quoted Sweden and Prussia as examples where courts of conciliation were functioning to advantage. My informant tells me that these courts are availed of to a large extent in Denmark, and that fully 50 per cent. of the litigation that would otherwise take place is averted by their intervention. I shall not be out of order if I briefly describe the procedure in connection with these courts. Certain officials, called conciliation justices, are appointed; and, in the event of any civil action pending between two parties, either party can call upon the other, even after contentious proceedings have been instituted, or after preliminary proceedings have taken place in court, to have the matter in dispute determined by a court of conciliation. He may call upon the other party to appear with him before a conciliation justice. No other persons would be present but the two parties concerned and the conciliation justice. I think it will be agreed that, if the two parties could be brought together before a man possessed of some tact, judgment, and business knowledge, and that man pointed out where one party was unreasonable and the other party was unreasonable in this and that respect, there would be some hope of subsequent legal proceedings being avoided. I feel sure that, if such a system were instituted in Queensland, the experience of other countries would be repeated here; and that a great number of cases which would be ordinarily dealt with by the courts would be settled quite early in the proceedings, with a consequent saving of the country's money and also of the fees paid to legal advisers. In the event of one of the parties refusing the invitation to appear before the conciliation justice, under the amending Act I was able to put through last session, he is liable to a fine of £10. Neither party is necessarily bound by a decision of the conciliation justice, but I feel sure that, with the parties meeting in a spirit of reasonableness, there would be every prospect of an agreement being reached, and, once an agreement was reached, it would take the form of a verdict of the court.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have given the hon. member a good deal of latitude, but

*Mr. Swayne.]*

really his remarks should have been directed to the vote for the Chief Office. No provision is made in this vote for conciliation courts, and the hon. member is out of order in pursuing that line of argument.

Mr. SWAYNE: I respectfully point out, Mr. Hanson, that I am offering a means whereby in the future we may reduce this vote. Surely, if I can show that the vote can be reduced, it comes within the scope of the present discussion. I have shown that many cases would not require to be dealt with by courts of petty sessions and by the Supreme Court, so that there would be no need for maintaining such an expensive establishment. Moreover, considerable savings could be effected, as intending litigants would be spared the expense of paying legal advisers and court fees, whilst, from the point of view of the State, the expense of a judge and jury would not be entailed in many cases. I thought it was a suitable opportunity on this vote to point out how, in future, expenses could be substantially reduced. The utmost sum that it can cost a litigant to appear before a conciliation justice is £5. We have such a law on the statute-book, and I take this opportunity of suggesting to the Attorney-General that some appointments as conciliation justices be made. Men connected with business should be appointed. I think I have made out a case for a trial of these tribunals which have been so successful on the continent, and there is no reason why they should not be equally successful in Queensland. If these courts were established, tens of thousands of pounds could be saved annually.

Mr. TOZER (*Gympie*) [5.47 p.m.]: I congratulate the Minister on being able to reduce this vote, because in times like the present it is absolutely necessary that we should economise wherever possible. The first item in the vote is for bailiffs, and I notice that, so far as Brisbane is concerned, there is no reduction, while there is a reduction of £50 in the vote for country districts. I should like the Minister to explain the reason for that reduction. Country members are brought into contact with bailiffs on occasions, and we recognise that they are absolutely necessary for the carrying out of the business of the country. We find they are human beings just the same as anyone else. Certainly they have unpleasant work to do at times, but I find that many of them are of considerable convenience to litigants. When they serve writs, they often give the recipients very good advice. When a person is served with a summons, he naturally gets hot; but, after conversing with the bailiff for a time, the case is, very often, settled as the result of the good advice the bailiff has given. What I cannot understand is that the bailiffs in Brisbane receive £260, £250, and £221, respectively, while the bailiffs in the country towns receive from £50 to £100. Presumably they have not the same amount of work to do as the bailiffs in Brisbane.

I notice that three of the oldest officers of the Supreme Court—Mr. Carvosso, Mr. Woodhouse, and Mr. Baines—are retiring on account of the age limit.

My experience of these gentlemen goes back a great many years. I remember when I was first admitted I came into contact with Mr. Woodhouse, who was the first clerk in the Supreme Court at the time, and, after

[*Mr. Swayne.*

I was admitted, I came into contact with Mr. Carvosso and Mr. Baines; and I always found them obliging and willing to do everything possible to assist a young solicitor, and more especially a young country solicitor, who had not the same opportunities as articulated clerks serving in Brisbane, who come more frequently into contact with the officers of the Supreme Court. I greatly appreciate the assistance given to me by these three gentlemen on various occasions. I was brought more into contact with Mr. Baines than the other gentlemen through having to do with the taxation of costs. It is advisable in probate matters to have your costs taxed by the taxing officer, and it is necessary for a country solicitor to come down to a taxation in order to explain certain matters. Having been brought into contact with Mr. Baines, I can speak as to his value, and realise the services he has rendered to the State as taxing master.

I believe it was suggested some years ago that an understudy should be given to the taxing master, who would ultimately have to retire, but for some reason or other that was refused by the Government of the day. That was a mistake, because a man must have a certain amount of experience to act as a taxing officer. It is no use putting a man into the position and just saying that he is a good man. He may be a very good man for other things, but may be no good at all as a taxing officer. I understand that in New South Wales and Victoria it is made a condition that, before a man can become a taxing officer, he has to be either a solicitor, barrister, or a clerk in a solicitor's office of ten years' standing. We can see the reason for that when we consider the duties of a taxing officer. In taxing the costs of an action he has to understand the whole procedure in the action, because he has to put a value on the different parts of the work which the solicitors have performed. Instructions for brief to counsel, for instance, are the main item. He has also to take into consideration the items detailed in the bill of costs with regard to attendances and other things, which may run into hundreds of pounds. He must thoroughly understand the position. When taxing costs in connection with a probate matter, he has to take into consideration the application for probate, the inventory, and the application to dispense with or pass accounts; he has to understand all that the solicitor has to do. If a man who has never been in a solicitor's office, or practised as a solicitor or barrister, is appointed to the position, how can he put a fair value on the different items in the account? He can make a guess and come to a conclusion, but that would not be fair to the profession.

Take, for instance, the question of accounts. He has to draw the line—imaginary, so far as I can see—between executors' accounts and trustees' accounts. Then he has to decide whether a payment should be made from capital or from income of the estate. Only a man with practical experience can do that, and in Mr. Baines we had a man who had been doing such work for many years and did it expeditiously and well, and to the absolute satisfaction of everybody. He had experience in solicitors' offices not only in Queensland but also in Victoria, and understood thoroughly the nature of solicitors' work. One could reason with him and appreciate

his reasons for allowing or disallowing certain items. Such an officer must also be able to detect a breach of trust in connection with accounts. A man without legal training might guess right or he might guess wrong, and, if he guessed wrong, put an estate to considerable expense and everybody to a great deal of trouble. He also has power to allow commission to executors and trustees, which again calls for practical experience of what is a fair and reasonable allowance. The executor may happen to be a solicitor, and there may be a provision in the will that the solicitor shall be entitled to his costs as if he were not executor. Mr. Baines had the knowledge which enabled him to apportion these charges. He was able to say to the solicitor, "You have done a certain amount of work here as executor and not as solicitor." The Government would have been well advised if they had kept Mr. Baines on for another year and appointed an understudy, who in that period would have had the opportunity of gaining some of the knowledge which is absolutely essential. Mr. Baines is still active, and has all his faculties. My suggestion that Mr. Baines should have been retained for a further twelve months is made in the interests of the legal profession and of their clients. Mr. Baines is exceptionally smart at figures, and, if a solicitor had not added up his column of figures when Mr. Baines had ascertained his total, the latter proceeded immediately to the following page. If the solicitor was not quick enough at figures, Mr. Baines would eventually lose him in the process of his work. If Mr. Baines was of the opinion that the grounds advanced by a solicitor for the retention of certain items were not sound, the items were immediately disallowed, and Mr. Baines proceeded at once to other matters. I do not know Mr. O'Flynn personally; but from repute, he is an exceptionally good clerk and competent in regard to the duties which he has performed. He has now to enter upon the new sphere of taxing master. Some people imagine that it is easy to draw a bill of costs; but, unless a person is an expert, the bill will probably be cut to pieces by the taxing master. Many solicitors employ experts at this work, because they realise that, when a bill, properly drawn, is considered by the taxing master, the work is expedited and a better taxed bill is obtained. I understand that it was suggested that certain persons in the city were qualified for this position, but they were not in the service; but it was considered by the Government that the position should be filled by a person already in the service. It would have been advisable to go outside the service if there was not an officer already qualified to assume responsibility right away. If an inexperienced taxing master has to tax a big bill of costs for an experienced man, the chances are that the former will be bluffed, and the opposing client or an estate may have to carry a heavier financial burden than otherwise. Naturally a solicitor endeavours to obtain the best allowance that he can, recognising that a taxing master knows his work and will tax the bill of costs in a proper manner. The solicitor also knows that he must bear the cost of taxation, if one-sixth of the costs claimed by him are disallowed. That is fair and reasonable. A man who takes an interest in his work is only too pleased to get a bill drawn in such a manner as to

have a reasonable prospect of having it passed without being reduced. It is a feather in any man's cap to get a bill of costs passed by a taxing officer such as Mr. Baines without having anything taxed off it. That shows that he is proficient. I am sorry in the interests of the members of the profession and their clients that Mr. Baines has not been allowed to continue for another twelve months with a good understudy under him so that he would learn his ways and know how to tax a bill of costs.

I notice under the heading of "Contingencies" that the appropriation for expenses of witnesses attending Supreme and Circuit courts has been reduced from £2,800 to £2,300. Does the Minister expect that there will be a reduction in court work to justify this reduction, or is it the intention of the Government to reduce the amount allowed to witnesses as expenses? The State is going ahead, and that being so there will presumably be an increased amount of legal work. It must be understood that this amount applies only to Crown witnesses, because in civil actions the parties must pay the expenses of their own witnesses. No one can definitely say what amount of criminal work will be undertaken during the year.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The £2,800 appropriated for witnesses' expenses last year was not all spent, and the appropriation for the following year is always fixed on the basis of the previous year's expenditure.

Mr. TOZER: I take it that the Attorney-General assumes that the amount asked for will be sufficient.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That is so.

Mr. TOZER: The hon. gentleman may be correct in his assumption, although there is no evidence of any diminution in criminal court work. Criminal work is not of much use to solicitors; the barristers usually get the plums of that branch of legal work.

Mr. W. T. KING (*Maree*) [7.8 p.m.] I have had a long experience of the officers of the Supreme Court, and I can pay a just tribute to their tact, industry, courtesy, and general behaviour during the whole term I have known them. I include in my tribute the Registrar, Mr. Kennedy, and all his officers, including the bailiffs. Any person having an association with the court knows the amount of good work done by the officers there, and the assistance they give to those having business with the court. It is good for the State when we can pay a tribute to the officers of this department, as I can do with sincerity at this juncture.

I desire to express my appreciation of the excellent work that has been performed by the three gentlemen who have recently retired from the service. These gentlemen have reached the age limit; and, although a man may become famous in his time, I think there is a duty to those who will follow him; and it is a recognition of that duty which has necessitated the retirement of Messrs. Carvosso, Baines, and Woodhouse. All these gentlemen have performed long and valuable service in a gracious and courteous manner.

I agree with the hon. member for Gympie that an understudy should have been provided for Mr. Baines in order that a sound knowledge might have been obtained of the intricate questions dealing with the taxation of costs. As the same time, I think

*Mr. W. T. King.]*

the hon. member for Gympie has made the job appear more important than it really is. I realise, of course, the intricacies of taxing work, but I think the acting appointment that has been made in the person of Mr. D. M. O'Flynn is a wise one. I have no doubt that Mr. O'Flynn possesses all those essential qualifications which are required for successful service. Mr. O'Flynn is a versatile officer, who is capable of performing most of the duties in the various departments of the Supreme Court, and I feel that he will make a success of his new job.

I disagree with the hon. member for Gympie in that I think that, as far as possible, every appointment should be made from within the service when retirements take place. I realise that a public servant has accumulated a wealth of knowledge when he works under conditions which bring him into close contact with a particular job; and in those circumstances it is only fair, both to the individual and to the State, that appointments to the higher positions should be made from the ranks of those already in the service. The mere fact that we have gentlemen outside the service who are wonderfully expert in taxing work is no reason why we should depart from the course of appointing our own officers, particularly when we have competent officers available. Except in a few specialised cases, every promotion can be made from within the ranks of the public service, and, if we depart from that rule, we shall not be acting in the best interests of the State. I sincerely hope that Mr. O'Flynn will secure the permanent appointment of taxing officer. Mr. Emerson, who is another young man in the service, has made a mark for himself in the service, and I hope that, when the acting position to which he has been appointed is finalised, he too, will get a permanent appointment also. He is a man who is outstanding in that regard, and one who can efficiently fulfil the position.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*) [7.16 p.m.]: I notice in the vote for "Contingencies" that the item "Expenses of jurors attending Supreme and Circuit Courts" has been reduced from £6,500 voted last year to £5,700 for this year. The item "Expenses of witnesses attending Supreme and Circuit Courts" was £2,800 last year and is £2,300 this year; and for the item "Railway fares and freights, printing, and stationery" £975 was voted last year, and £900 is asked for this year. My reason for rising is to ask the Attorney-General what was the actual expenditure last year in connection with the items to which I have made reference. If the hon. gentleman will give us that information, it will be a guide to us as to the probabilities for the coming year. I quite admit that it is almost impossible to forecast what the expenses will be twelve months ahead; but I think this Committee is entitled to know what the actual expenditure was last year and what are the probabilities of being able to live within the amounts set down for the present year. It is essential that there should be the closest attention given to expenditure. No one at this stage can say what any department is going to expend during the year, but it will certainly be helpful if the Minister will furnish the information I ask for, as then we shall know whether the forecast is a reasonable one or not. When fore-

casting, and especially when you are trying to bring down your Estimates as much as possible, there is always the danger of leaning to one side.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You ought to know that. You were the worst hand at forecasting we ever had.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman knows more about that drastic statement of his in regard to not paying interest. We on this side have always regarded it as essential that interest should be paid. I feel quite sure that the Minister will give the information we desire.

Mr. NIMMO (*Oxley*) [7.20 p.m.]: This vote shows a reduction of 10 per cent. on the previous amount. While I have no fault to find with reductions, recognising that we are going through very strenuous times, I would point out that every economy practised by the Moore Government is being continued by the present Government, and that they are further reducing charges.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Do you object to that?

Mr. NIMMO: As I have said before, I have no objection; but, when the hon. member went up North, before the elections, he said the Moore Government were deflating everything and bringing things down to the lowest level; yet the Government have reduced this vote by 10 per cent! In addition to that, we have had a Bill put through this Chamber recently materially increasing the fees payable in the Supreme Court and other Government departments, which makes it more difficult for people in business to carry on their operations. The fees are raised for everything you go to the court about. Even if you want to search for the name of a particular company, a fairly heavy charge is made for the search, and, if an officer there witnesses a signature, it has to be paid for. I cannot agree with the hon. member for West Moreton that bailiffs are such a wonderful class of people; I understand that the bailiffs in the Brisbane area are nearly as well paid as the judges. They are well paid and are making a good living.

I want to refer briefly in passing to the retirement of Messrs. Carvosso, Woodhouse, and Baines. I think we have here one of the most glaring instances of the absurdity of having a hide-bound policy of making men retire at a certain age. I know Mr. Baines personally, but not the other two gentlemen. Mr. Baines has a reputation as a taxing master throughout Australia. He is still quite competent to carry on that work, and it is a mistake to let him go. No matter who is appointed to the position, he should have been an understudy for a certain period. Just because he has arrived at a certain age, it is an absurdity to dump him.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: At what age would you retire a man?

Mr. NIMMO: I say there should be no fixed age for retiring public servants. There are men who are not competent at forty years of age and who should be retired; and I know of others seventy years of age who are quite competent to carry on their work. There should be no hard and fast rule. The Minister who is in charge of a department should be the man to say whether men under him are competent to carry on or not. I would not have any fixed rule. If a man is incompetent to carry on even at forty

[*Mr. W. T. King.*]

or fifty years of age, let him go; but, if he is competent to carry on at seventy years of age, let him carry on.

I notice a reduction of £800 in the appropriation for expenses of jurors attending supreme and circuit courts. I have no objection to reductions being made provided they are necessary; but this reduction is being made on the top of the criticism of the Moore Government for practising economy. It would be a very good thing to reconsider the whole question of juries and come to a conclusion as to whether they are any good for the people of Queensland.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Would you abolish juries?

Mr. NIMMO: I am not going to make a statement of that sort. The matter should be very carefully gone into. Possibly justice could be made much cheaper and be better carried out by having a panel of judges. An inquiry could be made as to whether the jury system is a good one or not. Some of the decisions which have been given would give a lead to a commission inquiring into the question of whether the jury system is a success or not.

I notice also a reduction in the appropriation for the expenses of witnesses attending the Supreme Court. To make further reductions in appropriations is all right if one wants to reduce a deficit to a certain figure; but the question is whether we are going to live up to that estimate. Merely to make reductions in the appropriation is sailing very close to the wind, and does not indicate that the Government are worrying whether the deficit is £1,000,000, £2,000,000, or £3,000,000.

Mr. W. T. KING: What do you mean by that?

Mr. NIMMO: I rose mainly to speak with regard to the retirement of Mr. Baines. I do not know whether it is too late to reconsider his retirement, or whether he can be brought back for another year at least.

Mr. RUSSELL (*Hamilton*) [7.26 p.m.]: I am in accord with the remark of the hon. member for Maree to the effect that appointments in the public service should be given to members of the public service. The Moore Government made a point of seeing that every public servant was given the opportunity to reach the highest office in the service, if he had the required merit. It is not right that appointments to high positions should go to men outside the service. Our public servants are a very fine body of men, trained to their jobs; and it is only right that men who have devoted themselves to such work for so many years should be able to reach the highest office. Our policy was to give the blue ribbons in the service to men who were in the service, but the Labour Government have appointed many ex-politicians. Hon. members opposite cannot deny that during their regime high offices were not in every case granted to members of the public service. We could truthfully say at election time that, although we had asked public servants to make sacrifices in common with the rest of the community, we had not interfered with any of their privileges in respect of promotion. That is the right policy. I do not know Mr. O'Flynn; but, if he is the right man, he should get the job. Every such appointment should be bestowed on a man who has faithfully and diligently served the State.

The voice of the hon. member for Mirani may seem like that of one crying in the wilderness. We know very well that the hon. member proposed a motion some two years ago in regard to the cheapening of litigation in commercial causes. It was passed, but received very scant attention. On that occasion I seconded his motion. Last year, at the instance of the hon. member, Parliament passed an amendment of "The Courts of Conciliation Act of 1892." The Government might very well give a good deal of consideration to the question raised by the hon. member. I commend the measure to the attention of the legal fraternity. They belong to a very honourable profession—a profession which has its beginnings in antiquity. The man who rises to eminence in the profession must be endowed with a good deal of intelligence and acumen; but I am inclined to think that, when it comes to the settlement of commercial disputes, what is wanted is not so much a knowledge of law as a good deal of common sense and a knowledge of every-day affairs.

The hon. member for Mirani suggested that a good deal of litigation that now obtains in regard to commercial disputes might easily be settled by other means. He advocated the introduction of a system of arbitration whereby disputants could get together and endeavour to have their disputes settled by arbitration. He proposed that a panel of justices of the peace might be called upon to deal with commercial disputes. I differed from him when he made that suggestion, because I did not think that, because a man was a justice of the peace, he was altogether fitted to adjudicate on commercial squabbles; but I do think that the suggestion is well worthy of consideration, and that some system of commercial arbitration might be resorted to whereby the parties to a dispute might have their quarrels settled by arbitrators. It has already been proposed in various parts of the world that chambers of commerce or chambers of manufactures might be called upon to supply the names of men capable of giving an honest opinion in commercial disputes. The idea was that we might constitute a panel of men versed in the various branches of commerce, manufactures, etc., so that it would be possible for men to be nominated to act as arbitrators who would be competent to express an unbiased opinion on a matter in dispute. I think that our laws relating to commercial disputes might well be altered to enable parties to a commercial dispute to resort to arbitration rather than to the costly and cumbersome method that obtains in the courts. There is a good deal of commonsense in the proposal made by the hon. member for Mirani, and there is a germ of a great idea what might well be followed out, as it would prevent the enormous expense in going to the law courts; and it would be possible to obtain men to adjudicate who would be well versed in the causes of the dispute. It is quite possible in our own community to get a number of men who are well versed in various vocations who might well be called upon to give an honest verdict in regard to disputes between the different parties. I commend that proposal to the Government. While the Act which was passed by the hon. member for Mirani might be imperfect in some details, at the same time it should offer a basis for the founding of a Bill that might have for its essential qualification the privilege that would be offered to disputants to call in arbitrators

*Mr. Russell.]*

to settle disputes which are of common occurrence and thus avoid the enormous delay that occurs in the law courts, the enormous expense, and the employment of men who, while well versed in their profession, are certainly not well acquainted with commercial usage.

I desire to offer some comment upon the question of the appointment of bailiffs. There has been a good deal of trouble in commercial circles in getting bailiffs to act in regard to judgments that have been obtained by creditors. Traders send their travellers throughout the State, and do business with customers in remote localities. Whilst the recovery of a debt in the large centres of population is comparatively easy, it is becoming more difficult for traders to recover their debts from debtors in the small centres. The calling of bailiff is one to which everyone cannot, and will not, apply himself. It is looked upon with great disfavour. It has been said that men who act as bailiffs earn very large fees; but the point is that facilities should be extended to traders in order that they may recover their just debts. The means traders have of recovering their debts is being made more difficult year by year. If a man owes money to a trader and does not pay, then every facility should be given to the trader to recover; but to employ a bailiff in an outside centre to-day is a costly process. Sometimes the expense is out of all proportion to the amount of the debt. The bailiff has to be sent from a large centre to remote centres. He gets his fees on the basis of so much per day, and receives heavy travelling expenses. In a number of cases rather than incur the expense of sending a bailiff at an enormous expense into a country centre, a trader prefers to write off the debt. This all means that, unless the trader receives some protection, or is afforded greater facilities for collecting his debts, credit will be restricted. The trader is prepared to give credit to all persons of fair repute. He takes a great risk in times of stress like the present. Restricted credit would play into the hands of the big distributor. In all legislation passed by hon. members opposite the tendency is to play into the hands of the big operator. We want to see the small man get a fair run. The small storekeeper or grocer would have credit extended to him if the trader knew that a lot of the obstacles placed in his way to-day were removed. In the first place, the expense in engaging a bailiff should be reduced, and there should be greater facilities afforded to employ a bailiff. It has been suggested that the police might be employed in that capacity. We do not want to load the police with a great number of duties; but they might be employed in order to see that the execution warrant is delivered. I am not wanting the police to act as bailiffs, but the employment of bailiffs in country towns should be under the control of the police in order that someone could be secured to act as bailiff under a system whereby the charges would be more moderate than they are to-day. To-day, if a bailiff is sent from Brisbane to a centre where there is no bailiff, the costs are enormous. The consequence is that, rather than go to that expense, the trader prefers to write off the debt. We want to see the trader protected in every possible way in this connection. Another great obstacle to the trader, apart from the employment of the bailiff, is the enormous increase which has occurred in the fees in the magistrates court and in the

Supreme Court. Every charge has been increased enormously. In addition, other charges have been evolved, so that, when a man endeavours to collect a debt, he is at once faced with an enormous number of petty charges which load the indebtedness to such a degree that the debtor is not able to pay them; consequently, rather than face these enormous expenses in order to recover his debt, the trader decides to take no risk whatever, and restricts credit. That results in putting out of business a number of small storekeepers and grocers in the country. There was no justification for the enormous increase in magistrates' court and Supreme Court fees. The Minister has told us that the services rendered were such that the fees collected were not adequate. I do not think that is correct, because, on analysis, it will be found that fees for trifling services have been enormously increased. For filing a plaint, for example—a matter which occupies a clerk only a few minutes—the fee has been considerably increased. Evidently the desire of the Government is to secure additional revenue. All these extra fees are adding to the expenses of the trader, whereas his costs should be made as inexpensive as possible, and he should be given every facility to collect his due debts.

Mr. P. K. COPLEY (*Kurilpa*) [7.42 p.m.]: As a member of the legal profession, I desire to add my quota of good wishes to the three members of the Supreme Court staff who have recently retired on attaining the age limit. Certainly as a member of the profession who has not practised as a solicitor I have not come very much in contact with them, but on the occasions that I have, I have found these gentlemen to be courteous itself. Association with a man means something, particularly when you know that the type of man you are dealing with can be relied upon. That can truly be said of Messrs. Carvosso, Baines, and Woodhouse.

I believe in the policy of the Labour Party that men should retire at a definitely fixed age. I was particularly interested in the remarks of the hon. member for Gympie. For my part, I believe in the appointment of public servants to all public service positions. When a man takes on a position in the public service, he accepts a contract and binds himself to perform certain public service. When an outsider is brought in, it sometimes destroys the status of the men already in the service. At the Supreme Court the man who occupies the new position of deputy registrar and taxing master can look forward to occupying the next stepping-stone, which is the registrarship of the Supreme Court and joint stock companies. If the suggestion of the hon. member for Gympie were carried out, and an outsider were brought in, it would mean that men who have spent many years on the staff of the Supreme Court would be denied the opportunity of ever attaining to the post of Registrar of the Supreme Court and joint stock companies.

The Public Service Act makes provision in section 18 for the appointment of men to public service positions where no person in the public service is competent and fit to carry out the job. I am, however, of the opinion that these new appointments should be made under the Supreme Court Act and not the Public Service Act.

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Mr. MAHER: That did not apply to the ex-member for Brisbane, the ex-member for Balonne, and the ex-member for Burke.

Mr. P. K. COPLEY: The hon. member knows as well as I do that positions as industrial inspectors have been invariably filled by men outside the ranks of the public service, the appointees being exempted from the provisions of the Public Service Act. Further than that, if the late hon. member for Brisbane possesses qualifications to fill a post that no other person can fill, then I most certainly approve of his appointment, and, what is more, the hon. member knows that this man's appointment is not to a position in the public service proper.

So far as the job of taxing master is concerned, the position is not as was stated by the hon. member for Gympie. We have men in public service positions, such as Mr. O'Flynn and others in the Supreme Court, who are daily coming in contact with the work of the taxing master. When the taxing master goes on leave or when he is sick, someone else has to carry on the job. These officials have been there many years working side by side with the taxing master, and they have acquired a good working knowledge of the work; and, from what I know of Mr. O'Flynn, I realise that he is an ideal man and has all the qualifications for that work.

I would like to go further, and refer to the statement made by the hon. member for Gympie in regard to the bailiffs. In my opinion, he made a ludicrous statement when he said that in delivering a summons or execution or process, bailiffs often give advice to the parties and do the community a good service by saving litigation. The bailiff only delivers the service or process handed to him, and cannot give advice to members of the community. I realise that no one would go to a bailiff for legal advice.

Mr. MAHER: His advice would be as good as that of some solicitors.

Mr. P. K. COPLEY: The hon. member's interjection reminds me of one of the goats or horses that he has on the farm wherever he is. They may be all right for the work on the farm, but they would never be expected to do the work that a racehorse would do. If I wanted a horse to draw a heavy load, I would not get a racehorse for it. The position is the same in the legal work. People requiring advice will go to the trained and tried legal man, and not to the man who performs other duties, though such a man may acquire certain specialised knowledge in his particular work. Reverting to the position of bailiff, the hon. member for Oxley very definitely stated that these men were making as much as the Supreme Court judges. If the hon. member only took the trouble to look at the figures, he would realise that the salary allowed to the bailiff is £260 per annum, and that the maximum allowance for services is £330, making a total of £590.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: They earn a lot more than that.

Mr. P. K. COPLEY: It must be remembered that the Opposition to-day were the Government for three years. They certainly reduced public servants' travelling allowances to a flat rate of 15s. per day. Under the Labour Government it was 15s. per day for officers with salaries up to £300 a year,

and 17s. 6d. for officers with salaries over £300. If the hon. member for Toombul and other hon. members thought these allowances were too high, they had the opportunity then of reducing them.

Then we had the statement made in this Chamber that policemen did not serve summonses and processes of the court. As a matter of fact, that is an every-day occurrence in towns where no bailiff is appointed.

We had the astounding statement made to-night with regard to conciliation that it was a pity that there were not experts appointed to deal with manufacturers' claims in the commercial world. I would like to point out that there is provision to-day for arbitration. If the parties desire it, and the judge thinks it is right that a person skilled in the trade or manufacture should deal with the matter, he has the right to refer it to arbitration. If litigants desire to save the legal costly process that hon. members opposite speak about, they can ask for arbitration to-day; and it is very unfair for hon. members to get up and make these statements when they know only too well that that process can be utilised to-day, if required, especially where special technical knowledge is deemed necessary for a satisfactory settlement.

We also had the statement that large firms will not go to the trouble of serving a process and getting a judgment of the court for a debt. I say that most of the companies to-day will, as they always have done in the past, irrespective of the costs, sue the man that is worth while—the man that has the cash. Irrespective of what costs may be added in the magistrates court or the Supreme Court, they realise that those costs are tacked on to the judgment and are not actually lost to the company concerned. They are certainly an immediate outlay, but they go back to the person concerned when judgment is given. As is pretty well known, companies will not proceed to get a judgment against a person who is a man of straw. It was an error of judgment in giving credit in the first place. I have never yet heard of any large institution of this kind suing any person indiscriminately—that is, spending good money in chasing bad—the thing is ridiculous. I submit that, so far as these fees are concerned, it is only right that they should have been increased.

We also have the statement made by hon. members opposite that in the last three years we complained about the reduction in the Estimates. We have also had the astounding statement made to-night that there was a reduction of 10 per cent. in this vote. If the hon. member making that statement looked at the two items in question, he would see that the expenses of jurors attending Supreme and Circuit Courts is £800 less than last year, and the item for expenses of witnesses attending Supreme and Circuit Courts is £500 less, making a total of £1,300 less, whilst the total decrease is only £1,158. That shows very clearly that the wages side of the question, the cost of living, and the items that count so far as the platform of this party is concerned, have been maintained. I would refer hon. members to page 54 of the Estimates. I could take every instance on that page if I wished. The examiner in the examination and registration section has been retired on reaching the age limit. Hon. members will find that in the endorsement section the

*Mr. P. K. Copley.]*

clerks have been increased from three to six and the amount set down has increased from £875 to £1,665. There has been no reduction in the wages of the persons concerned. There has been no deflation. As a member of the Government Party, I cannot allow any member of the Opposition to say that we are carrying on the deflation which they take so much credit for having started during their three years of office.

Mr. MAHER: You are doing exactly the same thing all along the line.

Mr. P. K. COPLEY: The Supreme Court is absolutely essential for the protection of the people, and, if hon. members opposite advocate the abolition of the Supreme Court, with its criminal jurisdiction, which absolutely protects the rights of the citizens of the State, which protects the pockets of members of this House—probably I for one have not got the cash which hon. members opposite have—but, if the police were able to deal with persons, without such persons having the right of redress by trial before their peers, and the right of being judged according to their deserts—if hon. members opposite advocate that policy, it would be scandalous in the extreme, and would be a very sorry day for them.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Carpentaria*) [7.54 p.m.]: There has been so little adverse criticism, and the little there has been has been so effectively replied to, that little remains for me to do. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition referred to the long and meritorious service of Messrs. Baines, Carvosso, and Woodhouse, who are about to retire from the service. I am glad of the opportunity of expressing my sense of appreciation of the long and honourable services of these men. I regret that their terms as public servants have come to an end, and I hope that they will have a happy time in their retirement. I agree that there must be some arbitrary time fixed for retirement from the service in the interests of the younger members of the service. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has expressed appreciation of the Government's action in appointing Mr. O'Flynn as temporary taxing officer, and Mr. Emerson as temporary registrar at Rockhampton, and I appreciate his remarks.

The hon. member for West Moreton was very much concerned about the appointment of bailiffs. If he brings under my notice any case where one is required I will give it consideration.

The hon. member for Mirani spoke at some length on the question of conciliation. I sympathise very largely with many of the expressions of the hon. member because, like him to a large extent, I would rather have conciliation than litigation. When I have been asked to give advice as to whether people should go to law, I have invariably told them that unless they have plenty of money to burn they ought not to go to law. As evidence of my appreciation of the principles espoused by the hon. member and the amending Act passed last year, I can point to the fact that I have appointed a few conciliation justices in response to the hon. member's request, and I hope that we may be able to do more in that direction. Of course, if people have money to burn and want to go to law, you cannot stop them. Let them go, provided they have the cash.

[Mr. P. K. Copley.]

The hon. member for Gympie was very much alarmed because there was a reduction of £50 in the amount set down for country bailiffs. That is explained by the fact that no bailiff is provided for at Hughenden; consequently no vote is required.

The hon. member also referred to the desirability of continuing the services of Mr. Baines for a further year and appointing an understudy. The question of appointing an understudy should have been considered three years ago, and not when it had been definitely decided to retire Mr. Baines, who is now seventy-two years of age. I admit that he has given faithful and efficient service; nevertheless, when a man reaches the age of seventy-two his retirement must be considered. I think the Deputy Leader of the Opposition raised in this Chamber some years ago the question of continuing Mr. Baines's services beyond 65 years, and I agreed. Having given him an extension for seven years, I think it is only fair that he should now give way to someone else.

The hon. member for Wynnum questioned the accuracy of the Estimates.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: I wanted to know what was expended last year?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The hon. gentleman was concerned to know whether the Estimates would not be exceeded. In framing these Estimates the Minister must rely upon the experts of the department. The hon. member has admitted that. That estimate is arrived at after considering the expenditure over previous years.

The hon. member for Wynnum also wanted to know why there had been a reduction from £6,500 to £5,700 in the vote for "Expenses of jurors attending Supreme and Circuit Courts."

Hon. W. H. BARNES: I wanted to know what was expended last year.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The amount expended last year was £3,894. I asked the expert of the department to explain why it was considered that £5,700 would be sufficient this year. He told me that the expenses last year were very exceptional, and were unlikely to recur this year. He also mentioned other factors that were not likely to occur again this year. The hon. member for Wynnum referred to the item "Expenses of witnesses attending Supreme and Circuit Courts."

Hon. W. H. BARNES: I wanted to know what was expended last year.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The amount expended last year was only £2,447. There must be a certain amount of flexibility in these matters. An officer of the department might estimate too high on one matter and too low on another, but, generally speaking, the Estimates are quite near the mark.

The hon. member for Oxley was entirely wrong in his conclusions that, because we had asked for an appropriation for expenses of jurors attending Supreme and Circuit Courts which was £500 less than the amount asked for last year, we were further deflating. This amount represents an estimate of what the Government will be called upon to pay for certain services during this year. It is estimated by our experts that the services which they will have to pay for this year will not be as great as last year, and that the number

of jurors summoned this year will not be as large as for last year. The hon. member for Oxley knows that if jurors are not required they are not paid. We have not reduced the amount of their fees by one farthing below the rate paid last year.

Mr. MAHER: You have given instructions to your officers to reduce.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I have already stated that we are not reducing the fees by one farthing, and that any individual summoned to act as a juror this year will receive payment on the same basis as was paid last year. That disposes once and for all of the contention of the hon. member for Oxley.

Mr. NIMMO: It is all right so long as you keep within the estimate.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: We will endeavour to do so. The Estimates have been prepared by officers of the department, who have done that work year after year. If they are wrong, then they will hear all about it from me.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: The amount asked for in relation to postage, telegrams, and incidentals is £1,850, whereas the amount appropriated last year was only £1,740. What was the expenditure last year?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The appropriation asked for last year was £1,740, whereas the actual amount expended was £2,800; therefore, the hon. gentleman's Estimates were £1,100 out. I am relying on the advice tendered by my experts. I hope they will give me better service than they did the hon. gentleman. They informed me that it will cost £1,850 to carry out these services this year. That effectively disposes of that matter.

The hon. member for Hamilton referred to the question of bailiffs, and complained that their fees for services were too high. The bailiffs must be paid. Representations have been made by all bailiffs as to the inadequacy of their payments. Every hon. member has at some time or another received representations from bailiffs that the fees are too low. They are small because these officials are only part-time officers. If the hon. member for Hamilton had his way, they would receive nothing at all, because he would not have the commercial community pay fees.

Mr. C. TAYLOR: They should work full time for the charges they make.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Generally speaking, the members of the Committee have been rather friendly disposed towards this vote.

Hon. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*) [8.10 p.m.]: I am pleased that the hon. gentleman answered my question, because the same remarks apply to almost every other vote. The hon. gentleman drew attention to the fact that, whilst he is appropriating £5,700 for the expenses of jurors attending Supreme and Circuit Courts, the expenditure last year was £3,894. It seems to me that there is no warrant for the reduction in the vote this year. The Minister made some reference to officers; but my experience is that all departmental officers are very careful, and I cannot conceive that the Attorney-General did not have submitted to him all the information before he, in turn, submitted his Estimates to the Treasurer, particularly in the light of what happened last year. My

own judgment is that the cutting down has been sanctioned by the Attorney-General himself to try to make the Estimates look as well as possible. I should be false to my position if I did not make that statement. It would appear that the same practice has been adopted in other departments also.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Carpentaria*) [8.11 p.m.]: I cannot allow that statement to go unchallenged. It is an insult to the intelligence of this Committee. To suggest that I have deliberately—

Hon. W. H. BARNES: I said the Estimates had gone before you.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The hon. gentleman inferred that these Estimates had been deflated by my officers at my request. I have not discussed with my officers the inflation or deflation of these Estimates. I told the officers to prepare the Estimates and submit them, and the Estimates were submitted by them as they appear now. I hope the hon. gentleman will accept that statement, which is equally true of all other Estimates. Under no circumstances would I submit to such tactics, although apparently the ex-Treasurer is very familiar with them.

Mr. R. M. KING (*Logan*) [8.14 p.m.]: When commenting on the retirement of certain officers, the Attorney-General said that these officers must retire for the benefit of the younger members of the service. That seems to be the idea of hon. members on the Government side, and also of many members of the public service. I was always under the impression that the public service did not exist for the benefit of the public servant but for the benefit of the general community. Evidently I was wrong in thinking that. Evidently it is for the benefit of the younger members of the service.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: When would you retire them? When they are 100 years of age?

Mr. R. M. KING: When the late Lord Halsbury published his well-known "Laws of England," he was ninety years of age. Some men are old at forty-five; others are young at sixty-five.

Provision is made for the appointment outside Brisbane of twenty-seven Supreme Court bailiffs. I know the difficulties litigants have to contend with when they obtain a judgment of the Supreme Court, and they cannot execute their judgment by reason of the fact that it costs too much to send a bailiff out. If there is no bailiff in the town, their procedure is that the bailiff at the nearest town to the place where the judgment is to be executed is employed, and he charges a mileage rate. I suggest to the Attorney-General that he might very well take into consideration the question of appointing a special bailiff in the particular place where the judgment has to be executed. That would save the additional mileage costs. This does emerge in the whole proceedings, that the defendant in the action must pay the costs, whether they are bailiff's costs or anything else; and the difficulty could be got over to a large extent by appointing special bailiffs to meet any particular case that might arise. For instance, there is a bailiff at Rockhampton, and it might be necessary to execute a judgment in Mount Morgan. There is no Supreme Court bailiff there, and, instead of paying the mileage from Rockhampton to Mount Morgan,

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which the bailiff would be entitled to charge in executing the judgment, why not appoint a special bailiff at Mount Morgan to execute the judgment? That would meet the requirements of many of the commercial people who are suffering through the expense entailed in executing judgment.

Just the other day Mr. Justice Henchman expressed his horror that a simple undefended divorce action should cost £50. I do not want to make divorce any easier than it is, but in estimating the costs you must consider that it is necessary to issue the writ and issue a petition, both of which are to be served on the parties. Then applications to the court for directions, application for *dedie in diem* expenses, trial of the action, order nisi, and, after that, application for judgment absolute have all to be provided for. Fifty pounds is quite a lot of money; but there are so many intricate little proceedings to take before getting to trial that the Attorney-General might consider a method of dealing with an application for divorce in a less complicated way, at the same time putting upon the petitioner in the action the responsibility for supplying the fullest proof; but, while that is done, things might be made a little easier for the protection of suitors. We know that many women want to come to the court to ask to be relieved from the incumbrance of husbands who are no good to them. The husbands may be regular blackguards, but the women cannot get rid of them simply because they have not money to sue for a divorce, although they know the husbands would not defend. If the Attorney-General could provide a simple method of allowing applicants for a divorce to come to the court, at the same time requiring strictest proof to be given, we should be doing something which would be appreciated by a large section of the public who cannot get justice at the present time. I make this suggestion to the Attorney-General, and hope that he will consider it.

Mr. C. TAYLOR (*Windsor*) [8.22 p.m.]: I desire to support the hon. member for Logan with reference to bailiffs' fees. There are thousands of judgments obtained in Brisbane and elsewhere in Queensland which cannot be put into execution on account of the expense involved. They are, therefore, hung up, and nothing is done. I could mention judgments obtained in connection with my own office for small amounts of £5 or £6 in connection with which judgment cannot be executed. In connection with judgments for small amounts, the costs of execution swallow the amount of the judgment debt, so that the firm taking out the summons gets nothing at all.

Then there is a difficulty in connection with the Statute of Frauds and Limitations. If there has been no demand made for payment and no acknowledgment of debt within a period of six years, it cannot be recovered; and, in order to protect themselves, firms have issued summonses and got judgments in regard to the debts owing to them. The position as it exists at the present time with regard to creditors and debtors when judgments are given is most unsatisfactory and requires overhauling.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Carpentaria*) [8.24 p.m.]: In connection with the question raised by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Windsor, I appreciate the difficulty

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which arises, but the position is that bailiffs are paid a nominal fee in the first place, but sometimes they receive £60, £70, £80, or £100 according to the population of the locality. It is not a very popular job, and no one likes to take it on; and, unless you give somebody a retainer as we do now, you cannot get a bailiff at all. That is our difficulty. I realise that we cannot do as the hon. members suggest and keep men in every town for this job. Government after Government have grappled with this problem and have found it impossible to solve it so far. If the hon. members can give me any idea how to solve it, I shall be very glad to receive their suggestions. I must confess that I would like to find a solution, but I admit that I have not yet heard of any, because it is an unpopular job, and nobody wants it unless he gets a substantial retainer; and one could not possibly afford to give a retainer of dimensions which would be considered adequate in every town.

Item (Sheriff and Supreme Courts) agreed to.

#### TITLES OFFICES.

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

“That £14,175 be granted for ‘Titles Offices.’”

Item agreed to.

#### DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC LANDS.

##### CHIEF OFFICE.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. P. Pease, *Herbert*) [8.26 p.m.]: I move—

“That £44,221 be granted for ‘Department of Public Lands—Chief Office.’”

This is a reduction on the appropriation for last year of £1,387.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*) [8.27 p.m.]: The record of the Department of Public Lands during the last three years has been one of general improvement. I am not saying that because I happened to be Minister; but the fact is that conditions did improve, thanks to the policy of the late Government. One has only to read the report of the department for the last twelve months to understand what was accomplished. The present Government have not yet had time to put the Labour policy into effect; but, when we come to the end of the current year, we shall see the effect of the administration of hon. members opposite and their amendment of the law. During the last three years, however, and especially during the last twelve months, the position has consistently improved. I hope hon. members opposite will read and weigh the evidence we found in the report, especially what it has to say with regard to one of the biggest industries in the State, that is the pastoral industry. On page 8 hon. members will find the following words:—

“These concessions, and all the many pastoral reforms in regard to both cattle and sheep country which preceded them, have placed the pastoral industry in Queensland in a better position to withstand the economic siege than the pastoral industry in any of the other Australian States.”

That paragraph refers to the concessions outlined on page 7 of the report under the late

Government's wool relief scheme. When our Government proposed that scheme, it was contended by hon. members opposite that we were giving away the public estate to large pastoralists, who were thus getting something they had no right to get. It was denied by them that the industry was in a bad way. Certainly one or two hon. members who represent electorates where the pastoral industry is a big thing, or even the one thing, realised that all was not well with the industry; but the majority of the party were prejudiced against the pastoral industry.

They should bear in mind that the greater part of Queensland has been developed by the pastoral industry in one form or another, whether by the dairy farmer, the grazing selector, or the pastoral lessee. The late Government set out to place all Crown tenants, big and small, upon a better footing, so that they could stand the depression and bear up under the tremendous fall in prices. It is gratifying to read in the last annual report of the Land Administration Board, covering the last of the three years of the Moore Administration, that the concession granted by the Moore Government placed the industry upon a better footing to withstand the economic seige. New land legislation is to be considered during this session; and, knowing the land policy of the present Government, I know that the legislation and the form of tenure will be entirely different from that approved by the late Government. It is just as well for hon. members opposite to recognise that everybody on the land is having a serious time, and that any alteration in tenure will probably throw them back to the tragic position that they occupied three years ago, just when the depression had commenced.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: They are in their present position because of three years of your administration.

Mr. DEACON: The hon. member is not a land owner. He does not realise what it means to be a land owner. He does not realise what difference a good tenure makes to the man on the land.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The late Government granted concessions to men who were not on the land. The concessions were granted to companies.

Mr. DEACON: All Governments have granted land to men who, in many cases, were not fitted for the occupation. That has been one of the defects of our land legislation, and has made it very difficult to cope with the problem. All Governments follow the one common policy of allowing any person to take up land without regard to personal fitness. A number of men were placed on the land who were not fit to be there. They had not the necessary training, the knowledge, or the money. The result is that a lot of the land is undeveloped, and is held by absentee owners. That has been one of the difficulties of land legislation ever since this State has been a State.

I am more concerned with the position of the small selector because I have always been one myself. I am still one of the small selectors. My business is that of an ordinary farmer. I will detail the position in which we found a lot of these small farmers. A tremendous number of them were settled on the land under terms of rental which

included the payment of interest and redemption, and permitted them to freehold their land on the agricultural farm tenure; but a great number found that the price of their land was more than it was ever worth. A great quantity of this land was selected in boom times, when the Government took advantage of the boom prices in land right up to the hilt. We gave those selectors an opportunity to have the freeholding price of their land reviewed. This enabled them to secure an adjustment in their values, and placed them in a position of being able to freehold their land at a price not more than it was worth. That is one of the reforms the Moore Government effected. The tenure we gave an opportunity of acquiring was the tenure they desired. That is the freehold tenure—the secure tenure.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: They know it to their cost.

Mr. DEACON: They do not. If the Secretary for Public Works peruses the report of the department he will see that a large number of selectors have taken the opportunity to convert their land from the perpetual leasehold system to the agricultural farm tenure.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It puts them to all the trouble in the world.

Mr. DEACON: That is not so. The hon. gentleman has never been a selector, nor has he ever been on the land. He cannot speak from the point of view of experience. No man knows as well as the man on the land who has had the personal experience. If the hon. gentleman took a perpetual leasehold security to a bank, whether it be the Agricultural Bank or a private banking institution, in order to secure an advance, he would find that it would be refused because it was held under the wrong tenure. One of the difficulties in connection with land settlement mentioned by the Land Administration Board is that a large area of the alienated land is undeveloped. The reason for that is because the people holding it are not able to get the money to develop it. There are many men who have taken up selections who are not able to do anything with them because of the lack of finance, and they have gone to work elsewhere. The fact that they are holding the land under the leasehold tenure system does not enable them to secure an advance from a bank in order to proceed with the work of development.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: Why didn't you better their conditions?

Mr. DEACON: That is just what we did. We gave them an opportunity to go ahead and alter their tenure to one that is negotiable and is a good security. They secured that land at its just marketable value on long terms, and at a low rate of interest, and that gave them an opportunity of saying, when they had completed their payments, that it was their own. The reason why the perpetual leasehold system was adopted by hon. members opposite was because sometimes land increases in value, and they did not want the man on the land to have the benefit of what they term the unearned increment. They wanted to reserve that benefit to the State in order that the rent of the landholder might be raised. Over and over again it has been stated at Labour Conventions that the

*Mr. Deacon.]*

reason why the perpetual leasehold system was adopted as the policy of the department was in order that the Government might secure higher land rentals.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You squeezed the small farmer under the Agricultural Bank, and forced him to go to the private bank.

Mr. DEACON: Under any Government the Agricultural Bank lends where there is security. The amount of advance is governed by the value of the security; and, if a loan is made and the borrower cannot repay, then the bank has to realise on the security.

With the change in tenure there was a large increase in the area selected for closer settlement purposes. Last year the increase was approximately 3,000,000 acres, which is a larger increase than has taken place for many years. The attractive terms offered were an inducement for a greater number of people to take up land than would ordinarily have been the case. The difficulty that a great many of the new settlers will have to face is the getting of finance for developmental purposes. The State will not get any benefit from the increased selection of land unless money with which to develop it is made available. Money must be borrowed from someone. The Agricultural Bank is not able to do all the work; it has not the funds with which to do it. Reliance has to be placed, not only upon the banks, but on storekeepers who are prepared to take these risks. Any alteration of tenure which is made by the Government reverting to perpetual leasehold will place the new selectors in difficulties, and development will be retarded.

The Land Administration Board comments that most of the good land has been alienated in one form or another, and that there is not a good deal of first-class land left for selection. There are areas of land which could be developed if access were provided. As a matter of fact, the first essential of any land development schemes in the future will be the provision of permanent roads and facilities to bring selections within reasonable access of the railways. If we cannot do that, we are not going to get much progress in the backblocks and outlying portions where we have land for settlement. There is a good deal of land available in the Cape York Peninsula; but it is no good offering a lot of it for selection unless we are able to assure the selectors that they will have access to a port or railway. It is going to be a very costly business, and the selectors on these outlying areas will not be in the same position as people already settled to compete on the market even if access is given.

I want to reply to a statement made by the Secretary for Public Works on the Financial Statement dealing with land matters. Regarding the timber contract held by Messrs. Kenny Bros., the hon. gentleman said that the action I recommended was taken for electioneering purposes. He based that charge on my statement that Mr. Atherton would be glad to have the matter settled as he was haunted by Kenny Bros. It was not an electioneering matter at all. Certainly I recommended at election time that action should be taken.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: "It would help Mr. Atherton in the election." That is what you said.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

[Mr. Deacon.]

Mr. DEACON: I said it would relieve Mr. Atherton. The hon. member should read the letter.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: "It would help Mr. Atherton."

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. DEACON: The hon. gentleman had his full opportunity. He had all his time to himself without interruption, as I was not here, and now he does not want to listen to me. If he were at all fair minded he would listen to my explanation.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS again interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Secretary for Public Works must observe my call to order. He will have an opportunity of speaking, if he so desires; and I do not intend to allow him to make long speeches by way of interjection.

Mr. DEACON: Messrs. Kenny Bros. had taken a contract, and the Forestry Department was getting very little out of it. It was a difficult contract to carry out. The timber was all down a gorge, and the net result was very small. Kenny Bros. were not making much out of it either, and they asked for relief. I refused to recommend a cancellation of the contract until it was decided to build a road. Then it became a different thing altogether, and was a big gain to the Government to have that contract cancelled.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I agree with you that it was.

Mr. DEACON: The Government benefited to the extent of £15 to £20 an acre; and, when the Government benefited, I recommended that the contract be cancelled and that the Government pay compensation. The fact that it happened at election time had nothing to do with it. It would not have mattered, as Kenny Bros. would have gone out of it in any case. It was just a matter of pure business. It paid the Government to cancel the contract, and it was for that reason that I recommended that the contract should be cancelled and Kenny Bros. be compensated for the cancellation. If they had been left to carry on, and had waited until the road was built, they would have made a considerable profit; but they desired to have the contract cancelled, and that was done, and the Government profited by it. The Secretary for Public Works agreed that the Government will profit by the cancellation of the contract.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Mr. Hanson, I rise to a point of order. I deny that I agreed that the Government would profit by the cancellation of the contract, and I ask that the hon. member withdraw the statement.

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

Mr. DEACON: I will certainly withdraw it. My error arose from hearing the Minister say that he would agree to it. Possibly he was not referring to the statement I was making.

Mr. FOLEY (*Normanby*) [8.52 p.m.]: I am very much surprised at the sentiments expressed by the ex-Secretary for Public Lands, particularly in view of the fact that, as an old farmer, he should know something of the

business of the man on the land. Listening to him to-night, it was surprising to hear him claim that the whole success of the man on the land in Queensland depends upon the form of tenure under which he holds his land.

One does not need to be a farmer to know that the hon. member is utterly wrong in arriving at that conclusion. We have only to look at older countries than Australia, where they have freehold title to land, to find that the settlers there are in much the same position as or are in a worse position than the farmers in Australia to-day, not as the result of the freehold tenure, but purely because of the workings of the economic system.

I have in mind the remarks of an old grazier in the Clermont district, who is now deceased. I remember him conversing on the question of rents with Mr. McCormack, who was then Secretary for Public Lands. He raised a very important point with reference to the rents of cattle holdings. Mr. McCormack was at that time intending to introduce what is now known as "The Land Acts (Review of Cattle Holding Rents) Amendment Act of 1923," and the remarks of this grazier applied to the argument used by the ex-Secretary for Public Lands, the hon. member for Cunningham. He pointed out to Mr. McCormack that, if he reduced rents as he intended, and he could cut out his wages bill, it would not pull him out of the position he found himself in through the fall in cattle prices at that time. The same thing applies generally throughout the world to-day. I would refer the hon. member for Cunningham to an article which appears in the "Daily Standard" to-night. He will find, if he reads the article fairly and impartially, that the whole trouble with the man on the land to-day is the superabundance of production on the one hand and the lack of purchasing power of those who constitute the market on the other hand. In this article, supplied by the International Federation of Trade Unions, we find proof that, notwithstanding that we have gone through two or three years of world-wide depression, we have a superabundance of primary products—more sugar, butter, cotton, coffee, and other things, the product of the land, than in 1927. What does it matter to a man in such a position whether he has a freehold or a perpetual leasehold?

Another argument of the late Minister was that the Labour Government introduced the perpetual leasehold system in order to fleece the man on the land of the products of his labour. It is obvious that the hon. member does not understand what the perpetual leasehold system means. The idea behind it is to see that the State, on behalf of the people, gets any results accruing from the increase in unimproved land values—not the increase in value because of what the farmer may do to improve that piece of land, but the increase in its unimproved value, which, under the freehold system, has gone, not to the people, who are the rightful owners of the land, but to the land owners who have acquired it. That is true not only in this country but throughout the civilised world. In the older and more populated farming centres of Australia the bulk of the trouble is caused by the extortionate payments which men on the land have to make to landlords for the right to use the land. In the coastal districts of New South Wales, in the Maleny

district, and other parts of Queensland, one finds that trouble. This fact, combined with the superabundance of primary products and the lack of purchasing power of the people who constitute the markets of the world, is the cause of the trouble with which we are faced. Instead of carping criticism such as that to which we have just listened from a man who should know better, hon. members opposite ought to offer useful suggestions as to how they will co-operate with the Government to increase the purchasing power of the people. If that were done, the farmer would show better results than he is doing to-day. Owing to the age-long conservatism which permeates farming communities throughout the world, they are opposed to any endeavour to provide an increased purchasing power to absorb the tremendous surplus quantity of primary products. Until they realise that that is the only solution of their problems, so long will they be moaning about the difficulties of the man on the land. No hon. member opposite can argue that the Labour Government have not endeavoured to assist the primary producer to obtain a better return for his products. One has only to read the Labour laws compiled by the Parliamentary Draftsman a few years ago to know that. I need only refer to the primary producers' organisation scheme. That stands as a monument to the endeavours of Labour on behalf of the farmers. As soon as the farmers provide the correct personnel for the administration of that organisation, better results will accrue to them.

It is high time that country representatives opposite supported the Government in the advocacy of the perpetual leasehold tenure. They should endeavour to convince the farming community that the tenure is in their best interests. They would then realise that the initial cost to prospective settlers would be very much less, and eventually any reluctance on the part of the banks to make advances on leasehold tenure would disappear, and the advances would be made just as freely as they are made to-day in respect of pastoral leases.

Mr. MOORE: You never learn anything.

Mr. FOLEY: While we have this illogical criticism of the perpetual leasehold tenure from the Opposition and the Tory press, the farmers will naturally have confusion of thought, and delay will occur before the benefits of the system appeal to them. It is ridiculous for any hon. member opposite, whether he has been on the land from birth or has just settled on it, to try to convince hon. members on this side that, because a piece of land has a freehold title, it will produce more crops or carry more head of dairy stock, beef cattle, or sheep, or that it will give the farmer an enhanced price for his product. There is no possibility of that position being brought about by the tenure under which the land is held. Instead of misleading the farmers, the Opposition should get behind the Government in their advocacy of the perpetual leasehold system, which they know is in the best interests of the farmer. (Opposition dissent.)

The House resumed.

The Chairman reported progress.

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

The House adjourned at 9.8 p.m.

*Mr. Foley.]*