

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 25 OCTOBER 1934

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

QUESTION.

UNEMPLOYMENT RELIEF WORK ON CHURCH AND
NON-STATE SCHOOL PROPERTIES.

Mr. COSTELLO (*Carnarvon*) asked the Secretary for Labour and Industry—

“1. What was the total amount approved in 1933-34 for expenditure from the Unemployment Relief Tax Fund on church and school properties, other than properties owned by the State?”

“2. Will he kindly furnish a statement showing the designation, ownership, and location of each such property and the amount approved respectively?”

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY (Hon. M. P. Hynes, *Townsville*) replied—

“1. No particular amount is approved. Schemes for ground improvement work are submitted, and, on being approved, intermittent labour is allotted until the approved works are completed, the work being inspected periodically as it progresses. The total wages cost for the year 1933-34 was £74,484.

“2. The information is being obtained.”

PAPER.

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

Eighth annual report of the Director of
Infant Welfare.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—ESTIMATES—
EIGHTH AND NINTH ALLOTTED DAYS.

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

ESTIMATES IN CHIEF, 1934-35.

HOME SECRETARY'S DEPARTMENT.

HOSPITALS.

Question stated—

“That £201,602 be granted for ‘Hospitals.’”

Mr. R. M. KING (*Logan*) [10.34]: In the course of the debate yesterday the hon. member for Enoggera made the statement that the picture-talking machine which has been erected in the recreation hall at the Diamantina Hospital had been purchased at the expense of the Government. That is not true. The original machine was installed by the Diamantina Patients' Welfare Association with money collected from public subscriptions. When the silent pictures were supplanted by the talkies a talking machine was substituted for the old machine by the association, and again moneys collected by public subscription enabled this work to be done. The department did lend some assistance in installing the machine; that is all.

The HOME SECRETARY: The department altered the theatre.

Mr. R. M. KING: That is quite true. The department altered the theatre to permit of the screen being drawn up to the roof of the building.

Mr. R. M. King.]

Mr. KENNY (*Cook*) [10.36 a.m.]: I should like the Home Secretary to give some information concerning the Mareeba Hospital, which for a long period has been in a very awkward financial position, and concerning which application has been made to the Home Department for relief. Efforts in that direction have been made by the Deputy Leader of the Government, the Secretary for Public Works, the president of the Australian Labour Party at Mareeba, the local authority concerned, and myself, but in the meantime the whole question is in abeyance. Some months ago Mr. Bradbury, of the Home Department, spent a week in Mareeba investigating the position, but so far as I can ascertain no finality has been reached. The Mareeba hospital committee is anxious for some decision on the matter. The Home Secretary probably knows that the committee desires to have the hospital "districted," whereas the council does not, but in the meantime a strong necessity exists for the erection of a new hospital building. Grants and subsidies are being paid to other hospitals from "Golden Casket" funds for construction of and improvements to the hospitals. Unfortunately, the position at Mareeba is indefinite, and I am inclined to think that the matter is held in abeyance for political reasons. Some definite decision should be given, and I trust the Home Secretary will give some information in the matter.

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*) [10.40 a.m.]: When the Home Secretary is replying he might also give some information concerning the Ipswich hospital, which is the largest hospital in the State being carried on under the voluntary system. In the past few years the hospital has had a strenuous time in raising finance, and we have to thank the Home Secretary for rendering assistance that enabled the hospital to be carried on this year. Some time ago it was agreed that if the local authorities that would be affected if the hospital were "districted"—I refer to Ipswich, Moreton, Rosewood, Esk, and Normanby—contributed a certain sum of money to tide the hospital over its difficulties, a subsidy would be paid on the amount contributed. That was done last year, and this year the request has been made for the same thing to be done. But the point arises that these local authorities have no direct representation on the hospital committee. Moreover, another matter arises, which has been discussed previously, that a large amount of money is subscribed by employees towards the upkeep of the Ipswich General Hospital. Miners, railway men, factory workers, shop assistants—in fact all employees in the Ipswich district have, as far back as I can remember, made regular subscriptions to the hospital and, although in the aggregate their subscriptions exceed those of private subscribers, these employees have no representation on that hospital committee which, with the exception of one Government representative, comprises representatives of private subscribers of £1 and upwards. Only the latter are entitled to vote for representatives on the hospital committee—the local authorities and the employees have no direct representation.

Mr. EDWARDS: Would not the hospital committee also represent them?

Mr. GLEDSON: The hospital committee represents all sections for that matter, but my point is that only private subscribers of

[*Mr. Kenny.*]

£1 and upwards are permitted to vote for representatives on the hospital committee, whereas employees whose contributions amount to a considerable sum in the aggregate, have no direct representation.

Mr. NIMMO: Don't they get a vote?

Mr. GLEDSON: No. On the other hand, they have a right to vote for representatives on the ambulance committee. People who contribute a large sum of money in the aggregate to the upkeep of the Ipswich General Hospital have no direct representation on the committee. If the committee is to continue on the present system I consider it essential for the Home Secretary to give this matter serious consideration, and if necessary amend the Hospitals Act so as to enable the component local authorities, who are voluntarily contributing to its funds, some say in the management and the expenditure of those funds. The amount contributed by the Ipswich City Council was £850, and sums, varying according to the valuations, have been contributed by the other local authorities—Moreton, Esk, Rosewood, and Normanby. I do not know whether the Home Secretary can increase the strength of the committee and give the local authorities, who are contributing, some representation, and thus carry out the principle that he who pays the piper should also call the tune.

The Ipswich hospital has been fortunate in the assistance that has been rendered to it by the "Queensland Times," and the Sunshine League, which was formed some years ago, and is comprised of the children of the district, who have banded together for the purpose of assisting it. The league was formed during the time Sir Matthew Nathan was Governor, and he kindly consented to become its patron. The children collect pennies and threepences—the biggest contribution would be about a shilling—and by this means have been able to raise a sum, including the subsidy, amounting to £12,000, which is a remarkable achievement. Some time ago the Sunshine League decided that it would endeavour to provide not only cots in the children's ward, but also an up-to-date laboratory and operating theatre. Numerous cots have been provided, and provision has been made for their upkeep. They also undertook to have the children's ward, which had been erected for over fifty years, removed and a new ward erected, and they guaranteed to raise the quota required. They have now raised about £2,000, and through the generous help of the Home Secretary they have been enabled already to see the commencement of the building of that ward. The Home Secretary will grant a loan, and they have undertaken to raise the necessary balance over a number of years. In the event of any alteration being made in regard to the representation or management of the hospital, I should like the Home Secretary to see that this league will be enabled to go on with its work, so as it will be able to say that the ward was built by the Sunshine League, assisted by the Guild of Youth, and that it thus will be a lasting monument to their efforts. It will be a monument to them for years to come. Work has already commenced on the foundations for that ward, and from the plans prepared by the Department of Public Works, which I have seen, it will be a very fine up-to-date building. The fittings in the interior are the most modern available. I understand the Home

Secretary has approved of the plan, and provision has been made so that the matron and nurses will be able to give necessary attention to their patients under conditions very much superior to those which obtain in the old building, which has been in existence for some fifty years. I should like the Home Secretary to give some indication as to whether the children will be permitted to proceed with their charitable work.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Nanango*) [10.50 a.m.]: Every hospital committee would be proud to have such a body as the Ipswich Sunshine League connected with its hospital. The Home Secretary and his officers should make every effort to encourage such work. The work of the children shows a beautiful and unselfish spirit; if every community were imbued with it we should not have seen the amount of trouble with regard to hospital upkeep that has been the case. I have always heard of the Ipswich hospital as being the shining example of the voluntary system of financing hospitals. I sincerely hope it will be able to continue its work successfully.

With regard to the remarks made by the hon. member for Ipswich about representation of local authorities and subscribers through Labour organisations, I think a solution of the difficulty would be to lower the amount of the subscription which entitles a person to a vote. In my opinion, it is a wrong principle to divide into different sections people who all work a common cause for the upkeep of a hospital. The working man, through his organisation, subscribes such a large amount to the funds of the hospital that contributors of 5s. upwards should have representation on the committee. It is entirely wrong that a man who subscribes through his Labour organisation should have no representation on the controlling body. If my suggestion were carried into effect, the great majority of subscribers would receive representation, which is desirable in the interests of harmonious working.

It must be admitted that the district system is not working as satisfactorily as it was originally intended. I understand that if voluntary subscribers fail to contribute sufficient to the upkeep of a hospital their representation automatically lapses. The Government appoint five representatives, and the local authorities in the areas concerned four representatives to the board. The Government might as well take over full control, inasmuch as when it comes to a question of policy the Government are practically in control. After all, the local authorities are subscribing a large amount by way of local taxation to the finances of the institution.

The HOME SECRETARY: The Government do not desire any say at all.

Mr. EDWARDS: I understand that, but the hon. gentleman must see that they are placed in full control by preponderance of their representation. I do not for one moment say that the Government dictate to the representatives appointed by them, but those representatives, feeling that they have been appointed by the Government, take it upon themselves to act as they think the Government expect them to do.

The HOME SECRETARY: The Government do not want control.

Mr. EDWARDS: I understand that. It would be quite sufficient if the Government

had one thoroughly competent representative with a proper understanding of the financial implications of hospital management, and I am satisfied, speaking for country districts in particular, that the other representatives on the committee would cheerfully co-operate with such a Government representative with a view to conducting the hospital upon efficient lines. The Home Secretary knows as well as I do that in many cases representatives on hospital committees are inclined to take very drastic sectional views, and this results in continual bickerings.

I feel bound again to stress the need to educate people to carry out charitable work along the lines mentioned by the hon. member for Ipswich. There can be nothing more uplifting in the community than the sight of boys and girls, and even men and women, working cheerfully to maintain their hospitals and other charitable institutions upon a voluntary basis. Nothing can be more uplifting than to realise that the heart and soul is in the work which is being carried out in the interests of the afflicted. I am sure the Home Secretary will agree with me that the women of the State are deserving of a very great measure of gratitude for their noble work in the interests of these institutions, and it is to be regretted that they do not receive a greater measure of financial assistance in certain quarters. Nevertheless, we should not lose sight of the fact that this noble body of voluntary workers should be encouraged, and it behoves us to educate the people generally as to the benefits of conducting these wonderful institutions upon a voluntary basis.

Mr. LLEWELYN (*Toowoomba*) [10.58 a.m.]: Although one or two exceptions can be quoted in favour of the voluntary system, I do not think it can be denied that the more efficient system of hospital management and conduct is the district system. The hon. member for Ipswich has claimed that the Ipswich hospital has been successfully conducted upon a voluntary basis, and whilst all due credit should be extended to that institution for its noble work, it must be admitted that many hospitals throughout the State are in their present efficient condition because of the district system. Prior to the time that the Toowoomba General Hospital became a "districted" hospital its management was cause for daily anxiety, but since the hospital was brought under the Act that anxiety has been entirely eliminated. The board is now able to manage the institution in a much more efficient manner, to provide additional modern equipment, and to give full attention to the needs of the patients. The hospital possesses a very fine plant for therapeutic treatment, it has a dental clinic and a radiologist. These modern helps to the treatment of hospital patients can, in Toowoomba, be attributed to the present system of "districting" hospitals. I should be very sorry to see a reversion to the old system in Toowoomba, at all events.

Reference has been made to the number of Government representatives on hospital committees. Private subscriptions and receipts from paying patients fall so short of the income necessary in hospital administration that the Government provide three-fifths of the total amount. It is only reasonable, therefore, that the Government should have proportionate representation

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on the hospitals board. I am in the happy position of being able to state that the Toowoomba hospital is giving splendid service to the community. We find occasionally that members of the board come into conflict on matters of policy, but in the main agree to disagree, with the result that the work of the hospital proceeds smoothly.

It will be generally agreed by hon. members that it is necessary at all times to be on the qui vive in the improvement of hospital equipment, and thus keep pace with the trend of modern thought. That idea is inculcated in us by medical men day in and day out. In this connection it is pleasing to notice that the Home Secretary has decided to construct a hospital in Brisbane, at a cost of something like £200,000, to be exclusively used for the treatment of women, particularly those diseases peculiar to them. I am not sure what assistance the Federal Government gives in the treatment of women other than assistance from the research or laboratory side. I am aware that the Commonwealth has installed laboratories in the various States, but apart from that it renders no assistance whatever in the treatment of diseases peculiar to women. Having regard to the fact that the Federal Government obtain a very much larger revenue from Queensland in taxation than the State Government—

MR. KENNY: Is that correct?

HR. LLEWELYN: Yes.

MR. KENNY: No; they give back more than they take.

MR. LLEWELYN: The Commonwealth Government have some responsibility. Just on the eve of the recent election the Prime Minister, in the course of an address before a gathering of ladies in Adelaide, said that maternal mortality was increasing, and it was a matter of which legislators must take notice. Mr. Lyons claimed that he had data showing that one in every four women after reaching the age of forty years died from causes attributable directly or indirectly to cancer caused by some abnormality arising from childbirth. Consequently, I submit that the Commonwealth Government have a very great responsibility in the matter. I have no knowledge—I may be wrong—of any interest displayed by the Commonwealth Government by providing equipment, or assisting any State Government to deal with this serious question. The State Government day in and day out, and year in and year out, have given due regard to the importance of this subject, and the action of the Home Secretary in proceeding with the erection of a new women's hospital is to be commended.

MR. DEACON (*Cunningham*) [11.5 a.m.]: The system of issuing precepts on local authorities for the maintenance of hospitals which have been "districted" operates very unfairly in many country towns. The system is unfair. The findings of the Royal Commission on Hospitals show that people in the cities, who get most of the advantages from hospitals, pay only one-half of what the individual in the country has to pay.

MR. G. C. TAYLOR: Have you the figures available?

MR. DEACON: The hon. member can peruse the report of that royal commission and see the remedy suggested.

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THE HOME SECRETARY: Why did you disregard its recommendations?

MR. DEACON: They were not disregarded.

THE HOME SECRETARY: You did not do anything in regard to those recommendations.

MR. DEACON: In the matter of infectious diseases we did something, but the present Government reimposed the burden on the local authorities, which is an injustice. I know how the Home Secretary feels. He represents a city electorate, and quite naturally thinks it would be unpopular to ask people in the city to pay their share; but that is a mean way of looking at the matter. All the people should pay a fair share towards the upkeep of hospitals, and there is nothing wrong with the present method of raising money, provided all contribute; but when the system permits the inhabitants of a town where a hospital is situated to escape with paying only half their share and asks outside people who do not get the same advantage to pay double, then the system is unreasonable. We never hear of any city member espousing the cause of the country districts in this matter, but it behoves the Government to do something. We appointed a royal commission to inquire into the matter, and to suggest an alternative. So far as we could, we adjusted matters.

THE HOME SECRETARY: You did not take one step to follow out the recommendations of that commission.

MR. DEACON: These things take time, and had we remained in office we should have done more.

THE HOME SECRETARY: You were not game to do it.

MR. DEACON: The present Government cannot talk to anyone else, in view of their record; they have made the position worse than it was. They have had three years in which to give effect to these recommendations. It is impossible for the present state of affairs to continue. As it is, the local authorities continually have to reduce valuations in order to secure something approximating to their rights. If the local authorities keep on reducing their valuations, we may get to the position that they will not be paying anything. It amounts to this: We have to have a low valuation and a higher rate for shire councils. The present system of raising money for hospitals is unfair and unjust, and the responsibility is on the Government to remedy the evil.

MR. G. C. TAYLOR: Do you favour nationalisation of hospitals?

MR. DEACON: The hon. member escapes altogether, but no man in the country can escape.

MR. G. C. TAYLOR: When I spoke on the matter last night you said nothing.

MR. DEACON: If the hon. member agrees that the present position is unfair, let him say so this morning. I am arguing for fair play. Take the city of Toowoomba; it pays rather less than it should pay, and the same applies to other cities and towns which are paying less than they would pay if contributions were on an equitable basis. Can the Minister stand up for that? There must be a way out of it. We must try to find it. The Minister will find the way out if he will only read the royal commission's report, where the present injustice is

clearly indicated. There is no cogent argument in favour of the present system. Nothing can be reasonably suggested in favour of it. It cannot be said that it is fair. The most that can be said for it is that it raises the money by hook or by crook.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: Would you be in favour of nationalisation?

Mr. DEACON: Nationalisation is not necessary. The Home Secretary is not in favour of nationalisation. The money can be raised through the shire councils.

The HOME SECRETARY: The basic creed through history has been—let somebody else pay.

Mr. DEACON: That is the Minister's creed—let the cities escape and the country people pay. All I am asking for is a fair and equitable basis of contribution. Let everybody pay his share. Let us alter the present system so that the money required will be raised, if not on an absolutely equitable basis, on a basis which approaches that equality. It is impossible that this system can continue. Hon. members opposite should be agreed on that. It is only necessary for them to make inquiries, read the report of the commission, to be convinced that it is unfair and unjust. This matter has been argued before, and the Labour Government have stood for the present system and refused even to inquire into the matter.

The HOME SECRETARY: You swallowed your case when you were over here. Why did you not do it three years ago?

Mr. DEACON: I have not spoilt my argument. The Minister has no argument. Can the Minister deny that after the first complaints were made the system was shown to be unfair, but the Labour Government refused even to make inquiries, and that they have not done so now? Their cry has been, "Let the other fellow pay; let the country follow pay."

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, *Ithaca*) [11.16 a.m.]: I should like to say a word in reply to the hon. member for Cunningham in regard to alleged neglect of the Labour Government to carry out the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Hospitals. In the first place the method of financing hospitals was arrived at by the previous Labour Government after very exhaustive inquiries and consideration as to the most equitable method that could be arrived at, and nothing has since been offered as an improvement. During the time hon. members opposite were in Opposition they railed against this hospitals tax, against the unfair burden placed on the local authorities, and one of their own supporters, Mr. W. L. Osborne, had the following to say in regard to them:—

"On the hustings preceding the election in 1929 Country Party-Nationalist candidates made emphatic promises that their election would ensure alteration of this unfair legislation. But what happens? Elected to power, the Moore Government appointed a royal commission to inquire into hospital administration; and, in due course, pigeon-holed the commission's report and recommendations—because such, if put into effect, were calculated to alienate the industrial vote."

The plain truth of the matter was that the recommendation of that commission was that the hospital services should be maintained by a tax on wages. The basic principle laid down by the gentlemen who made that inquiry was that as the working people used the hospitals so they should pay for them. Following that argument to its logical conclusion we reach the proposition "The hospitals, being used by the poor, should be paid for by the poor."

Mr. KENNY: Anything about income?

The HOME SECRETARY: A tax on wages was recommended. There was only one reason why the Moore Government pigeon-holed the recommendation and that was because an election was approaching. The Moore Government had proved themselves to be men of prudence on many occasions and they realised they could not face an election after placing the burden of the upkeep of hospitals on the wages of the working man. It was in consequence of this that that Government pigeon-holed the recommendation of the commission, but with a view of imposing such a tax when they were safely over the election.

Mr. KENNY: Do not be silly.

The HOME SECRETARY: Of course they did. When they were returned to power these big, broad-minded country fellows who found that they were perhaps paying 4d. more than somebody else for the alleviation of pain and suffering would have forced the Government to carry out the recommendation of the commission. But the public of Queensland are showing a very keen interest in health matters; year by year they are gradually taking a greater interest in hospital matters. No Government would come into this Chamber and put into effect the system of maintaining hospitals by a tax on wages. The public to-day are displaying too great an interest in such matters for any Government to propose it. The Moore Government would have cheerfully carried out the recommendation of the commission, but for the fact that they were afraid of the vengeance of the people when they found them out. (Opposition dissent.)

Mr. BELL: The wage-earner recognises his obligations.

The HOME SECRETARY: The wage-earner has always recognised his obligation. It is those who can best afford to finance hospitals who have not recognised their obligations.

Mr. BELL: That is not always the case.

The HOME SECRETARY: There are very prominent exceptions which prove the rule, but the experience of all our public institutions bears testimony to the fact that those who can afford to subscribe do not do so. In the city of Brisbane we do not ask for a penny subscription for the maintenance of the hospitals, but hon. members should consider what is happening as regards the ambulance brigade. That organisation is struggling day and night, year in and year out, in an endeavour to keep that section of the hospital service in existence. Hon. members must also not forget that the Art Society is going round with a "Golden Book," in which will be placed the photograph of anybody who will subscribe a few pounds. It is also found that those people

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who can well afford to make a bequest to the University do not do it. Are not these instances of the fact that people who can afford to support charities and institutions do not do it voluntarily? It must not be forgotten also that when the maintenance of Brisbane hospitals was left to voluntary subscription 70 per cent. of the money raised by that system came out of the pockets of the working people of this city. We then had the spectacle of processions proceeding along Queen street and George street and with pannikins at the end of long poles being stuck into doors and windows in the hope of getting a few coppers. The people who could afford to do so did not do their duty. We have now a hospital service worthy of the name, which gives the people a real hospital service. The people are receiving real treatment and real comfort and the services essential for their health. The hon. member talks about the unfairness of the system. As I say, he was returned to power in 1929, pledged to alter the system, but did not do so during his term of three years because he knew he could not make the alteration without putting a tax on the wages of the working people.

Mr. MOORE: I do not think the workers would object to a tax for hospital service.

The HOME SECRETARY: I will admit they suffer a good deal. I do not think hon. members opposite would object to a tax on wages for the upkeep of hospitals. As a matter of fact, that is the only substitute they have to offer for what the hon. member for Cunningham called an unfair tax. The average farmer and country man is bigger, broader, and brighter in outlook than hon. members opposite on this question. I have visited a great number of our country hospitals and have met the local people. I have met members of the local authorities who are charged with the raising of the money for the local authorities' share of the taxation for the upkeep of hospitals, and it is rare to find any of such people complaining.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: What about the last local authorities conference?

The HOME SECRETARY: It adopted the Labour Party's platform and its representatives came to me requesting the nationalisation of hospitals. I assured them that in due course that policy would be put into operation.

Mr. KENNY: What is stopping you now?

The HOME SECRETARY: The Local Authorities Conference absolutely departed from the suggestion that hospitals should be maintained by a tax on the wages of working people. It adopted the policy of the Labour Party, thereby showing that it was attended by men of vision and courage and patriotism, and men who have the interests of the suffering people of the State at heart. They recommended the nationalisation of hospitals. The only real complaint that one hears in the country against the present form of hospital taxation is that the average rate of tax per head in one local authority area is higher than the average rate per head in another area. Naturally, in a local authority area where there is a large number of working people who do not own land the average taxation per capita is lower than in another local authority area where persons own large areas of

land. The per capita basis is not a fair basis on which to judge. Under the present system a taxpayer pays in accordance with the value of the land he holds, or in accordance with his capacity to pay. That is the only way in which local authority revenue can be raised. The same exception can be taken to the hospital precepts levied on local authorities as can be taken to any other form of local authority obligation. Just as local authority precepts on a per capita basis may appear at first sight to be unfair to country areas as compared with thickly populated areas, the same argument could be applied to other forms of local authority taxation.

The hon. member for Nanango made reference to the contributors' representation on hospital boards, but that is decided according to the voluntary contributions for the upkeep of the hospital concerned. It is laid down that when a hospital is "districted" there shall be three representatives of the Government, three representatives of the local authorities, and three representatives of the contributors, provided the latter contribute a certain sum of money. In that case the Government have only one-third of the representation, although they shoulder the major portion of the financial obligation. Generally, when a hospital is "districted," public contributions gradually cease and the whole of the financial burden of the institution must then be met by the revenue from paying patients, precepts on local authorities, or the Government. If the contributors fail to contribute a certain amount they are not entitled to three representatives, and if the sum falls to such an extent that they are only entitled to two representatives, that representation goes to the Government, and it then becomes four representatives of the Government, three representatives of the local authorities, and two representatives of the contributors. If the voluntary contributions fall off to a further extent it becomes four representatives of the Government, four representatives of the local authorities, and one representative of the contributors.

Mr. KENNY: Are you sure that they are representatives of the Government, or are they representatives of the Australian Labour Party?

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member does not seem to be too sure of anything.

Mr. KENNY: I am pretty sure about the Australian Labour Party.

The HOME SECRETARY: One thing that I am sure about is that if the hon. member devoted a little more study and attention to the work of his electorate instead of merely making a meaningless noise in this Chamber, the people of Cook would be better served. If the voluntary contributions fall away still further it becomes five representatives of the Government, and four representatives of the local authorities. The Government do not desire any representation on hospital boards at all. If the local people would contribute voluntarily sufficient for the management of their hospital the Government would be pleased to fade out of the administration altogether, but unfortunately many people are of the same frame of mind as the hon. member for Nanango and the hon. member for Cunningham, people who would gladly run a hospital if someone else

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would pay. They would take an unholy delight in spending the funds supplied by the Government or by someone else, but whether they would spend it wisely or not is another question. Such persons experience the greatest pleasure in the world in managing hospitals and in conducting all sorts of business so long as someone else "coughs up" the money, but so long as the Government provide 60 per cent. of the money they are certainly entitled to 60 per cent. of the representation, although they do not seek this representation. The Government are not going to provide 60 per cent. of the cost without claiming some right to a voice in the management of the hospital concerned. Taking it by and large, hospital boards are doing splendid, unselfish work throughout the State. Service on hospital boards and committees entails a good deal of sacrifice of time and energy and a good deal of expense. Any person who serves as a member of a hospital board and carries out his work properly in the interests of the people is considerably out of pocket, and sacrifices a considerable amount of time. Taking it by and large, from one end of the State to the other, the representatives on hospital boards and committees, whether Government or local authority, give their time unselfishly. Some of the members have made the conduct of hospitals their hobby in life. They devote the whole of their time to this cause, and every spare moment they have is given to hospital work. It is a very fine thing to see this splendid spirit, and to know that the people are willing to give such unselfish public service to the community.

The hon. member for Cook wants to know what is to be the destiny of the Mareeba hospital.

Mr. KENNY: I want to know when you are going to make up your mind as to what you are going to do.

The HOME SECRETARY: Unlike that of the hon. member, my mind is made up; he has not yet reached the age when he can make up his mind on anything. The destiny of the Mareeba hospital is entirely in the hands of the people. The Government have not forced any hospital to come under the Hospitals Act. The maintenance of a hospital is left to the people of the district if they can maintain it. Sixty per cent. of the total cost of running that hospital is borne by the Government, and its position is similar to what it would be if it were "districted." In addition, the Government made a grant to the committee from the "Golden Casket" funds of £10 per occupied bed. Last year I made it a further special grant of £500.

Mr. KENNY: To come off the subsidy to be paid later.

The HOME SECRETARY: Again I would call the attention of the people of Mareeba to the entire lack of knowledge of their representative of district affairs. The advance of £500 was made some months ago to the Mareeba hospital committee to enable it to carry on, and was made as a free gift.

Mr. KENNY: Now you are right.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member for Cook has been so busy, like Caesar of picture fame, trailing the hon. member for Sandgate, that he has had no time in recent months to give any attention to the affairs of the Cook electorate. While he does not know how the Mareeba hospital

is situated, he does know every nook and cranny of the Sandgate electorate.

The remedy of the position raised by the hon. member for Ipswich also is in the hands of the Ipswich hospital committee and the local authorities concerned. I have agreed that any contributions by local authorities to a hospital will be subsidised in the same manner as private subscriptions. Local authorities have given very generous assistance to the Ipswich hospital, and the committee of that institution can alter its rules to give representation to those bodies. It is only right that it should do so. If the committee were requested to give that representation I am sure it would immediately alter the rules for that purpose. The representatives on that committee, with the exception of one nominated by the Government, are elected by the contributors. The Ipswich hospital has a large number of contributors of weekly sums from their wages. Employees of the railway workshops, the mines, and some of the business firms in the Ipswich district have agreed to the deduction of a small sum every week to enable the good work of that institution to be carried on. That is another notable instance of the working people—the wage-earners—agreeing without complaint to a weekly deduction, that in the course of a year becomes a heavy tax. The success of the Ipswich hospital prior to the depression was due to the fact that the great bulk of wage-earners in the district agreed to tax themselves more heavily than the average wealthy person ever did, to enable the work of the hospital to be carried on.

The Ipswich hospital, like the Mareeba hospital, is faced with bad times, and may possibly have to be "districted." The Government will give every possible assistance to enable voluntary committees to carry on, but if they fail the only alternative is for these hospitals to come under the Hospitals Act. They will then be controlled at the expense of the local authorities concerned and the Government. I am quite sure that if the local authorities in the Ipswich district make a submission to the Ipswich hospital committee it will be delighted to alter its rules to give the desired representation.

Mr. GLEDSON: It was asked to do so, but turned down the request because it said it had no power under the law.

Mr. KENNY (*Cook*) [11.35 a.m.]: At different times I have witnessed the prostitution of power and authority, but this is the first example I have had in this Chamber of that occurring in the case of an hon. member occupying the position of a Minister. Because I merely brought under the notice of the Home Secretary this morning a matter relating to the Mareeba hospital, that hon. gentleman advised me to look after my own electorate and endeavoured to gain a little political kudos from the information he had at hand. He referred to a grant of £500 that had been made to the Mareeba hospital.

The HOME SECRETARY: That was made three or four months ago.

Mr. KENNY: I, as the representative of the district, did not know that fact. The hon. gentleman advised me to keep in touch with matters affecting my electorate and find out these things. I did not know about

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that grant, simply because I was not advised by the Minister or his department.

The HOME SECRETARY: You were at Sandgate.

Mr. KENNY: You are a liar!

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must withdraw the remark he has made.

Mr. KENNY: Yes, I withdraw, Mr. Hanson, but when a Minister gets down into the gutter in order to obtain a little political kudos, it is time that somebody took him in hand. I approached the Minister nine months ago with a representative of the Mareeba hospital committee, and ask for financial assistance to enable the work of the hospital to be carried on. He advised me that he would consider the representations. Later I approached him on a second deputation and got his approval for making an advance of £500, which later would come out of the subsidy payable by the Government. They had their precept issued.

The HOME SECRETARY: That sum was made a gift to the committee in June last—four months ago.

Mr. KENNY: From that time onwards I had no notification from the Minister or his department as to whether he had changed his mind or not. When I visited the department to see how the matter was progressing, I found letters from the Secretary for Public Works, the Secretary for Public Lands, and my late political opponent, Mr. Gardner, advising the Minister to take the whole matter out of the hands of the hospital committee and put control under the local authority. I also found another letter from the president of the Australian Labour Party, who is the brother-in-law of my late political opponent. I am looking for information, and I cannot get finality; yet the Minister says, "Look after your electorate." The Minister knows that the hospital committee recommended that this hospital be "districted," and it advised him time and again that it could not carry on. The council says, "We do not want the hospital 'districted.'" The Australian Labour Party says to the Minister, "Don't 'district' the hospital; you may incur some political antagonism if you do." The whole question is being held up for electioneering or political reasons. In the meantime the hospital is decaying and its disrepair is a disgrace to the Home Department. A request has been made for an advance of money to repair or rebuild it, but that cannot be done. When I approached the Minister with a deputation, I was told by the hon. gentleman that if the hospital were "districted" a grant or subsidy would be given to construct a new hospital. In the meantime, the Government are taking no action, but the Minister has the audacity to try to gain some political kudos by belittling the member for the district, from whom information has been withheld—whether on his instructions or not I do not know. Whenever a Minister adopts such tactics in this Chamber, I shall defend myself and the people I represent. The Minister can look through his file and see whether I have been advised about this grant.

Other questions can be referred to on this vote, but I shall reserve my time so that I may reply to the Minister when he furnishes this information.

[*Mr. Kenny.*]

Mr. FOLEY (*Normanby*) [11.38 a.m.]: Much interesting discussion has taken place on the question of hospitals, and stress has been laid on the advance made in providing hospital buildings. A considerable amount of work has been done in that direction with the help of the tremendous "Golden Casket" funds available, but whilst that is an important matter, it has been permitted to overshadow the more important question of the hospital treatment of patients. I have in mind particularly the system of honorary staffs in operation at the largest hospital in this State, the Brisbane General Hospital. The method of appointing that honorary staff is not in the hands of the Hospitals Board, but under the control of a committee appointed by the honorary staff themselves, and the result is that a good deal of discontent is simmering amongst the medical profession because many members of the profession who over a period of years have made repeated application for appointment to the honorary staff of the Brisbane General Hospital have been unable to secure appointment. Quite apart from that, the commercial considerations of the medical profession in relation to patients seeking admission to the General Hospital cannot be overlooked, for the average honorary doctor with a private practice naturally has a leaning towards that practice. In consequence complaints are made—I have had a number—that people who for a considerable time have been unable to secure the recommendation of members of the honorary staff for admission to the Brisbane General Hospital have eventually had to have recourse to private medical practitioners, which has put them to considerable expense that they could ill afford to incur. The time is opportune for the Government to give consideration to the elimination of the system of honorary medical staffs in the Brisbane General Hospital and the adoption of the system followed in most of the hospitals throughout Queensland, where a paid staff carries out the work now undertaken at the Brisbane General Hospital by honoraries. I think that would be more satisfactory to the medical fraternity, and it would tend to a more efficient service to that section of the community, who from time to time get treatment in that hospital.

Mr. MOORE: You do not believe that?

Mr. FOLEY: I do. I have some idea of what I am speaking about. If the hon. gentleman would make investigations himself in the right quarter, he would find that what I am saying is based on fact. The time is opportune for consideration of the appointment of a paid staff of specialists in place of the present honorary staff. If that were done, the commercial aspect that at present enters into the matter would be eliminated, which would be a lasting benefit to the medical fraternity as well as to those people who have occasion to require the services of specialists.

I think greater consideration should be given to devising a system that would afford better facilities to our young doctors for practice in operating before they take up their duties at country hospitals. As a result of certain practices or rules of etiquette, many of our young doctors are not allowed to approach within 7 or 8 feet of the operating doctor, and from that distance they are expected to absorb all the information necessary to make them masters of the

technique of the operation. What is the result? In our country districts throughout Queensland we have young doctors who have the necessary theoretical knowledge to pass a medical examination and obtain the necessary certificate to enable them to practice, but many of them have not the necessary practical experience in operations, and the result is that they obtain their practical experience in those districts. That is not in the interests of the community. If we had paid specialists in our big hospitals and our young doctors received practical training under the guidance of skilled experts, then doctors who went out to the country districts would have that practical experience which is desirable, and there would be a resultant benefit to the people generally.

I put forward those suggestions for the consideration of the Minister. If he has not already investigated the matter, he will find that my statements are accurate and that the time is ripe for a general alteration in the policy now adopted, particularly in regard to the honorary staff at the Brisbane General Hospital.

Mr. MOORE (*Avignon*) [11.46 a.m.]: I am unable to agree with the suggestion put forward by the hon. member for Leichhardt. Under the present system the hospital gets the services of specialists who come there voluntarily, week after week, and sacrifice a large proportion of their incomes. If his suggestion were adopted, and the specialists were salaried men, the hospital would not be able to get the same efficient specialists.

Mr. FOLEY: How do they do it in other parts of the world?

Mr. MOORE: They do not get them.

Mr. FOLEY: They do.

Mr. MOORE: The voluntary system secures the very best service available from men of the highest qualifications and great experience. The Home Secretary made a most remarkable statement this morning. He suggested that the hon. member for Cunningham was giving an exhibition of swallowing his principles. If any exhibition was given of a party swallowing its principles it was supplied by the party on the other side of the Chamber. The ex-Home Secretary, the present Secretary for Mines, was of the opinion that the people in the country were suffering by the present system. Realising that it was advantageous to get the people in the country to make voluntary efforts to support their own hospitals, he introduced a Bill to amend the Hospitals Act, and was supported by every member on the Government side of the Chamber. The object of that amendment was to allow contributions made voluntarily to be set off against the contributions of the local authorities, the idea being to encourage people to assist voluntarily in the upkeep of their hospitals rather than have it done by taxation. To the extent that they assisted, there would be a reduction of the rate imposed on them. The present Home Secretary brought in an amendment to repeal the very amendment that his predecessor had made. If there was ever an example of swallowing a principle, we have it here.

The HOME SECRETARY: That was to encourage people to work for the hospitals.

Mr. MOORE: The hon. gentleman is not going to get away so easily with that. The amendment of the then Home Secretary was that any voluntary contribution would be regarded as part of the precept of the local

authority. The hon. gentleman did away with that. The Secretary for Mines himself said he did not agree with that action because he recognised that the principle of his own amendment was good.

The Home Secretary comes this morning and asserts that the Royal Commission on Hospitals recommended a tax on wages, but he was careful not to mention anything else. I should like to tell the Committee what the commission did say, and these are the words of the report—

“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 is not always a sure index to a ratepayer’s ability to pay;
- (b) A considerable number of people escape direct payment;
- (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 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.”

On page 14 of the report will be found the recommendation of the commissioners, reading as follows:—

“After full consideration your commissioners recommend 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.”

Not wages only, but “wages, salaries, and income,” with an exemption of £52 per annum! Another passage in the report reads—

“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 for the board, out of the hospitals fund, an amount equal to 80 per centum of such difference;

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

Mr. W. J. COPLEY: Your Government had that report in 1930.

Mr. MOORE: I would ask the hon. member not to be so impatient. I will read further. I do not think the hon. member has read the report; if he did he would not have enough intelligence to understand it. The last paragraph reads—

"Your commissioners recognise that, owing to the present economic position and the nation-wide depression, your Excellency's advisers may deem this a most inopportune time to consider the advisableness to levy any additional taxation either on the individual or on industry. In the meantime in order to mitigate in some measure the present inequity existing in many of the rural areas, your commissioners recommend the basis of computing the quota to be contributed by the component local authorities should be altered forthwith as hereinafter suggested.

"In districts which are not, or may hereafter be, brought under 'The Hospitals, Acts, 1923-1929,' a greater measure of equity would be secured by altering the present basis of computing the quota to be contributed by the component local authorities under the precepts issued by the respective hospital boards from the value of the 'ratable lands' to that shown in column 9—appendix A—which is based on the average of the levies calculated on—

- (a) Unimproved value (the present method);
- (b) Number of ratepayers; and
- (c) Rates levied."

The commissioners then proceed to give their reasons for the recommendation.

That was exactly the position, but owing to the depression then being experienced by every State in Australia the time was not favourable to put the recommendation into operation. There is no occasion for the hon. gentleman to tell a half-truth in this Chamber. A half-truth is really worse than a lie.

The HOME SECRETARY: I did not tell a half-truth, it was the truth.

Mr. MOORE: It was a half-truth. The Home Secretary never mentioned "income" or "salaries" at all, but stated only that it was "a tax on wages." And he did not mention any exemption was suggested. Now, of course, he has to admit the facts and he is endeavouring to get out of an invidious position. It is most unsatisfactory that a Minister of the Crown, instead of giving the Committee information calmly and dispassionately, should endeavour to gain political capital out of the hospital question. He knows the present system is inequitable. It must be inequitable. The commissioners say that it is inequitable. Everybody outside knows the value of the assertions made by the Minister. They are taken at their true value. It does not matter very much to him that the assertions he makes in this Committee are half-truths. The inequity of the basis is set out in the report in the following paragraph:—

"The reason for taking into consideration the rates levied instead of 'the un-

improved value' only is that the practice of valuing land is not uniform throughout the State. Some local authorities value 'low' and rate 'high'; others value 'high' and rate 'low.'"

There is the suggestion that to make the system more equitable it should be worked on a different basis. It must be so. The report points out that the system does not work equitably and it gives examples to show that the cities pay considerably less than the country districts. It is not a question of anybody wishing to evade his financial responsibilities; it is only a question of adopting a more equitable basis, and that should be the aim of the Government. The commission pointed out that owing to the depression throughout the country and the fact that an unemployment relief tax has been imposed upon wages and salaries it might not be advisable at the moment to impose a similar tax for the purpose of hospital finance. That was a reasonable view to take. The question of an impending election was not involved, because no election was pending in 1930.

The HOME SECRETARY: Of course you would never study its effect upon an election!

Mr. MOORE: Every Government studies an election, but this was two years prior to one. Would not hon. members on this side have gained if that action had been taken in the interests of the country districts, and would they not have gained if we had decided to study the possible consequences on an election? Would it not have been to our advantage to ignore the depression and the tax upon industry, and to impose this additional tax as a sop to country districts? The whole hospital position had to be considered in its relation to the industries of the State. The Home Secretary has referred to a tax upon wages for hospital administration, but is there not a tax on wages and salaries in Western Australia? The whole position in Queensland is an inequitable one, but if the position of the various industries improve and increased employment is provided it should be the aim of the Government to get away from an inequitable system and adopt a more equitable one. I do not suppose that any hon. member opposite really desires that a person who owns a farm should—because of the mere fact that he owns a farm—contribute to a far greater extent to hospitals than a man who has an assured income from salary. This should not be a question of politics; it should be a question of equity.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: I agree that industry should contribute towards the upkeep of the hospitals.

Mr. MOORE: It should contribute on an equitable basis, and that is the whole burden of my suggestion. The present system could not be more inequitable, and in considering its alteration we should not be guided by political considerations, but by the need of providing a hospital service for all the people on the most equitable basis so that each individual would contribute according to his capacity to pay. The Home Secretary must know that the mere fact of owning a piece of land with an unimproved value of £4,000 does not provide capacity to pay a hospital tax. The mere fact of

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being an owner in possession does not provide ability to pay. Climatic conditions, low prices for commodities, and many other things must be considered.

The HOME SECRETARY: An income of £3 14s. a week to a wage-earner with a wife and family does not provide much ability to pay.

Mr. MOORE: There are many owners of land with an unimproved value of £1,000 or more who do not enjoy an income of even £3 14s. a week and have to contribute to hospital upkeep to a greater extent than people with large incomes; but nobody bothers whether they are able to contribute or not. We should endeavour to see that the contributions are based on ability to pay and not merely on the unimproved value of the land owned. If the Home Secretary knew anything about the conditions of people in the country he would not sneer at them and say that because their land carried a certain unimproved value they could pay. No consideration whatever is given to the fact that there may be a mortgage on the land.

The HOME SECRETARY: I did not sneer at the country people.

Mr. MOORE: The hon. gentleman has been sneering at them ever since this debate began, and he has suggested that they possess ability to pay because they own land with a certain unimproved value. No consideration is given to the fact that the land may be mortgaged or that it may otherwise be liable to certain commitments. Nobody can justify the principles of ownership of land and unimproved value of land as a basis for hospital taxation. Naturally, in the more closely settled areas of the cities the hospital service is availed of to a much greater extent than elsewhere, but there should be equity in the system providing for contributions for the upkeep of hospitals.

At 12 noon,

Mr. W. T. KING (*Maree*), one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, relieved the Chairman in the chair.

Mr. MOORE: I cannot see that there is anything wrong in that.

The HOME SECRETARY: It is quite sound if we could get a definition of "equity."

Mr. MOORE: On account of the altered financial position of the people it might be possible to make alterations in the suggestions put forward at that particular time. The suggestion that because a man has land of a certain unimproved value in the books of the local authority does not take into consideration any liabilities that he may have on that land. Therefore, any precept levied on that land on the assumption that it returns the landholder an income is quite wrong.

The whole position is inequitable. That is the point we have arrived at. No matter what Government are in power the inequity should be recognised and an endeavour made to devise some method whereby the people who have the ability to pay should have responsibility placed on their shoulders. If a hospital is to be a community service, then the cost of its upkeep should be shouldered by the whole community. The hon. gentleman knows that the prices of sheep and cattle and all

produce obtained from the land are so low that the mere fact of possession of land does not connote ability to pay. The basis of hospital taxation should be altered to a more equitable system.

Mr. WATERS (*Kelvin Grove*) [12.2 p.m.]: After listening to the Leader of the Opposition, one does not need very much imagination to understand the reason why the Nationalist Party desires to displace him from its leadership. (Opposition dissent.)

Mr. KENNY: There is no desire to displace him. He has the unanimous support of all his followers.

Mr. WATERS: He may have the unanimous support of the hon. member for Cook, who wants to transfer his political allegiance to Sandgate.

Mr. KENNY: I should not want your support at any price.

Mr. WATERS: The hon. member will not face the issue. I do not know how any electorate could give him its unanimous support.

Mr. KENNY: What has that got to do with this vote?

Mr. WATERS: The hon. member introduced the matter, and I am going to reply to him.

Mr. KENNY: We can get down to that level this morning if the Chairman will allow it.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MOORE interjected.

Mr. WATERS: I thought you had just come out of the sewer to deliver your speech.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to address himself to the matter under discussion.

Mr. WATERS: I was getting to that point when I was interrupted.

Mr. MAXWELL: Mr. King, I ask that the hon. member for Kelvin Grove be asked to withdraw his statement that the Leader of the Opposition had just come out of the sewer to deliver his speech. It is offensive to me.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member for Kelvin Grove to withdraw that statement.

Mr. WATERS: I withdraw. The remarks of the Leader of the Opposition, particularly as to the findings of the royal commission on hospitals, reveal the fact that behind all the statements made by him and his followers about the equality of hospital maintenance there is a desire to compel the wage-earners to pay for the upkeep of hospitals and let that section to which they owe allegiance go unscathed. That is the point of view they always take up. It is interesting to note that despite the findings of the royal commission that they appointed—which they appointed in the full knowledge that commissioners appointed by Conservative Governments would bring in certain findings—the Moore Government were not game to give effect to them. Those findings were made in November, 1930. Hon. members opposite knew full well that if they imposed a tax on wages as recommended by the commission, it would mean their political extinction, hence their speeches this morning.

Mr. Waters.]

I hope that the present hospital policy of the Government will continue. It has proved a success, and has been responsible for the development of our hospitals to a pitch unequalled in any other State in Australia. Labour's policy in this State, particularly the policy of the Home Secretary in relation to hospitals, has achieved success second to none in Australia. In fact, it will be very difficult to get a more advanced hospital policy than exists in Queensland to-day. Undoubtedly, Mr. Chuter, the Assistant Under Secretary of the Home Department, is one of those responsible for the development of that policy, for he has given very valuable service. Mr. Chuter was one of the persons whom the Moore Government desired to "get at." Several reasons actuated the Moore Government in appointing that royal commission; one was to displace Mr. Chuter from the Brisbane and South Coast Hospitals Board, where he was rendering such excellent public service for the community. The vested interests—the British Medical Association—were anxious to have him removed, and were able to bring such pressure to bear on the then weak Premier that they accomplished their objective. In his administration Mr. Chuter has undoubtedly given the public service aspect major consideration, which is as it should be. No particular reason exists why the British Medical Association, who, after all represent themselves and no other section of the community, should have the last word in hospital administration. I hope the time is not far distant when the honorary medical system at the Brisbane General Hospital will be abolished and the work undertaken by a staff of paid specialists. The delays which occur at present by reason of the cumbersome honorary system indicate definitely that a change is needed, and I trust that action will be taken in the direction of this and other more efficient hospital facilities when finance is available.

It is interesting to note that the British Medical Association, as a body, consistently oppose the erection of such hospitals as we are building in Queensland, claiming that the modern general hospital is too good for the ordinary patient. In a recent issue of the "British Medical Journal" the opinion was expressed that hospitals were being made too attractive and that the present expenditure on that class of building should cease. I hold the view that we cannot do enough for the public hospitals, and I hope that, with the extension of public hospital facilities, consideration will be given to the setting up of intermediate wards in these hospitals. At the present time persons in receipt of slightly in excess of the basic wage are forced to go to a private hospital, which, as those who have had experience know, is a heavy expense. I trust that ultimately, when the Brisbane General Hospital is established to the fullest extent, a full-time medical staff will be provided in every section and that treatment will be available to all persons who come within a specified income category. After all, the Brisbane General Hospital, or any other public hospital, should have such facilities as will enable any case of major importance to be dealt with, and the most up-to-date equipment should be installed.

I pay tribute to the Home Secretary for making funds available for the erection of a

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Women's Hospital in Brisbane. When completed, that hospital will be one of the finest in the southern hemisphere and will be a lasting monument to the humanitarian policy of Labour and to the fact that the Labour Government in Queensland have done much for the sick and needy of the community.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, *Ithaca*) [12.11 p.m.]: The Leader of the Opposition appeared to be rather hurt because I suggested that the policy of the Nationalist Party was to support hospitals by a tax on wages. That is the recommendation as he read it from the report of the royal commission. "Salaries and incomes" are added with the intention of deluding the wage-earner into the belief that he was not to be so badly hit. The recommendation was that there should be a tax on wages. It was not recommended that there should be a graduated tax, it meant that the same rate should be imposed, and if that method were carried out it would mean that an unfortunate wage-earner who might be engaged at some laborious occupation on half wages would have to shoulder the same burden as people who are able to indulge in the highest forms of extravagance. No mention is made of a graduated tax, and knowing the objection of the Moore Government to that form of taxation we can rest assured it would not have been a graduated tax.

I will explain to hon. members what a tax on wages, salaries, and incomes would mean. The tax on wages, salaries, and incomes for relief purposes, which is a graduated tax, and applies at rates of from 3d. to 1s. in the £1 on incomes over £1,000 a year, brings in a return of £1,954,000. The stamp tax on wages brings in £1,214,000, leaving a balance of £740,000. It will be seen that a flat rate tax on wages, salaries, and incomes would mean that the wage-earner would pay five-sixths of the cost of running the hospitals. That is what I meant when I said that the late Government wanted to unload the cost of maintaining the hospitals on to the wage-earner. The late Government did not do it, because they feared the axe, which they eventually got at the 1932 election.

Reference was made by the Leader of the Opposition to my having eliminated something which had previously been inserted in the Hospitals Act by the ex-Home Secretary, the present Secretary for Mines. That is true. The Labour Government are not concrete from the ears up. Having intelligence and a desire to do things, the Government keep on improving their work at every available opportunity. Because we passed an Act in 1915 with the object of doing certain things, it does not follow that it represents the limit of our wisdom or achievement. The work of the Labour Party is progressive, and if we can see a way clear to make improvements we have the intelligence to do so. The Leader of the Opposition referred to the provision which allowed the people in a local authority area to raise their share of the contributions by voluntary effort if they wished to do so. They could raise the money by art unions, fetes, dances, and so on, and not have to put a penny on to the rates at all; but no local authority received a shilling under that provision, showing that the people as a whole would sooner have a tax equitably spread over all residents of the hospital district rather than have the work left on the shoulders of those

who are more generous and willing to do it. Nobody has taken any interest in raising funds for any hospital in this way, and a great percentage of those who can best afford to contribute do not do so. Those people who have done the work have always a sneaking sort of feeling that they are looked upon as fools by the people who are evading their share of responsibility to the State. That provision was put in by the hon. member for Maryborough when he was Home Secretary, in order to allow the local authority to raise by voluntary means—

Mr. TOZER: Did you ever try since the hospitals tax came in?

The HOME SECRETARY: Nobody tried to do it.

Mr. TOZER: You cannot raise a penny.

The HOME SECRETARY: The people realise that it is better to make everybody do his share. In addition, provision was made in the Act that in the event of bequests being made to hospitals, they also would be set off against the local authorities contributions to the hospital maintenance fund. If any one left a bequest to the Brisbane General Hospital, instead of being an advantage to the Hospitals Board it would become a credit to the Brisbane City Council and other component local authorities and reduce their precept by that amount. We have not many people in Queensland who do leave such bequests—I do not think there are any from Cape York to Coolangatta who would make a bequest to a local authority in order to save it from levying rates. Consequently bequests become almost unheard of. The only ones received now are those under wills made years ago before the Hospitals Act was passed. Recently a woman left £5,000 to the Maryborough Hospital. That lady never intended to leave that sum to the Maryborough City Council. Had that been her intention she would have been intelligent enough to word her will in such a way as to say so. She left that sum to the hospital. That matter was taken up at the request of those local authorities who knew it would be immoral to thwart the wishes of the deceased lady by handing the sum over to the local authority. They requested that the amount be used for the improvement of the hospital service, which was in operation for the benefit of the community. The amendment to the act I introduced enabled this to be done. Before the Act was thus amended the Local Authorities Conference passed a resolution asking that it be done and a deputation waited upon me asking me to do it. They realised that with the Act as it was no effort would ever be made locally for hospital services, nor would it induce people who might happen to be desirous of making a bequest to the hospital to put their desires into effect. The amendment to the Act now makes it possible for the people of any district to make an effort locally for some modern equipment to be installed in their hospital. For instance, a local effort can be made to provide an X-ray plant or any other special service. Moneys can be raised and used for a specific purpose. Any person desirous of making a bequest to a particular hospital can do so, knowing that the purpose for which the money is bequeathed will be respected. If money is left to the hospital board as a general bequest, it must be used to provide some additional or improved service, and not for general maintenance

or the reduction of the amount of precept to be levied by the local authority. No testator would bequeath money for the relief of rates. When money is bequeathed to a hospital, the benefactor must have at the back of his or her mind a desire to improve the hospital service.

Mr. TOZER: Your Government amended the Act the year before last.

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes, at the request of the Local Authorities' Association. As a matter of fact, it was that association which brought that phase of the Act to my notice; and, after consideration, the Government decided that the Local Authorities' Association was right. The section as it previously read was a deterrent against bequests to a hospital or the raising of money by local effort.

The matter of the Mareeba Hospital has been brought before the Committee. The last communication received from the hon. member for Cook is dated "2nd October, 1934," and is addressed to the Assistant Under Secretary, Mr. C. E. Chuter. Searching through the file I find that no other letter or communication was received from him since the 14th February last. On 14th February last the hon. member for Cook called upon me, accompanied by a Mr. Newell. The latter gentleman placed the position of the Mareeba Hospital before me, and I decided that that institution should receive some assistance. And this is an instance of the condition into which voluntary hospitals get during times of depression, when the workers have not got the money to contribute towards the maintenance of the hospital. The position of the Mareeba Hospital last year was as follows:—

	£
Local subscriptions	710
Workers' contributions	228
	938
Endowment	1,165
Golden Casket grant	395
Special grant	500
	£2,060

The contributions to the Mareeba Hospital last year amounted to £710. The working people of the Railway Department have a contributory scheme, and by deductions from their wages the amount of £228 was raised. A group of workers contributed £228, as against the £710 contributed by the remainder of the community! The Government made a contribution of £2,060 towards the maintenance of that hospital. What sort of "voluntary system" could one call this, when £2,060 has to come from the Government because the local community raised only £938, and of that amount £228 came by way of voluntary deductions from the wages of the working people? Hon. members can see the position into which these hospitals are drifting. Certainly the Government did not begrudge the hospital the amount granted. Times had been bad in the Mareeba district. The Government make every endeavour towards the maintenance of a hospital. The service must be kept going at all costs. If the community desire that their institution be carried on under the "voluntary system," then, of course, we, as the Government, give all the assistance in our power. The viewpoint of the Government is that the hospital service must not cease, and if the circumstances are such that

a given hospital cannot function as a "voluntary" hospital, then it must function as a "district" hospital. The service must be there for the benefit of the people. The special grant to the Mareeba Hospital was first given as an advance in order to see how the committee would carry on; but it was converted into a grant in June last. The department has been very liberal towards the Mareeba Hospital in maintaining the service; but it is our duty to see that such services are carried on. The story of Mareeba could be repeated in connection with a multitude of other country districts in the State. The Leader of the Opposition suggested that the Government did not worry about the country people; but I guarantee that he could not go into any country hospital in Queensland to-day without seeing somewhat the same kind of record—assistance gladly and freely given by the Home Department to enable the hospital services to be carried on.

Mr. KENNY (*Cook*) [12.25 p.m.]: In reply to the Minister I wish to say that it is quite correct that there is no communication on the files of the department from me between 14th February, 1934 and 2nd October, 1934. Although I wrote on 2nd October, 1934, after an interview with the Mareeba hospital committee, I have had no acknowledgment to that letter, and that is twenty-three days ago.

The HOME SECRETARY: You did not write to me.

Mr. KENNY: That makes no difference; all the correspondence comes before the hon. gentleman. The department has been trying to get him to make up his mind.

The HOME SECRETARY: Where were you between February and October?

Mr. KENNY: I shall tell the Minister. During that time I was interviewing departmental officers, and time and time again I told them that I realised the position of the department and that I did not wish to embarrass it.

The HOME SECRETARY: I went to Mareeba and saw the hospital committee myself.

Mr. KENNY: I allowed the Minister to make his speech without interruption, and I expect the same courtesy from him. I tried to help him when I raised this question, but he endeavoured to belittle me by getting down to the gutter, as he usually tries to get down to the gutter.

The HOME SECRETARY: I wanted to see you.

Mr. KENNY: On 16th February, 1934, I received a notification from the department advising that if the council would make a payment to the hospital committee the Government would endow the grant. After that the Government did make an advance to the hospital committee against endowment that it was to get later on. I was advised of that on 16th February, 1934, but I had no communication after that. The grant of £500 that the Minister mentioned in this Chamber, which I should have known about, was agreed to by him when he interviewed the committee in the course of his visit North in July this year. He made that grant then, but he did not notify me, as the hon. member for the district, and he did not intimate to his officers that they should advise me.

Mr. BRAND: Why?

[*Hon. F. M. Hanlon.*]

Mr. KENNY: For political purposes, purely and simply. How could he expect the hon. member for the district to know about that grant? It shows where the abuse of privilege and power is coming in for political purposes.

The HOME SECRETARY: Have you not had time to call since July?

Mr. KENNY: If the Minister will inquire from his officers they will tell him that I have been in his office every month inquiring about the position. It is not the function of a member of Parliament to annoy a department by calling every day when a request has been lodged; he awaits notification when action is taken.

Mr. WILLIAMS: The Minister has been in this Chamber for four days a week.

Mr. KENNY: He was not in this Chamber between 16th February, 1934, and 14th August, 1934.

The HOME SECRETARY: I have been here since August.

Mr. KENNY: I do not blame an hon. member for developing an argument against his opponent, but at least I expect the hon. gentleman to be fair and to quote facts. I do not expect an abuse of power and privilege for political purposes. The Minister has yet to learn that if he cannot be fair we shall treat with him in that way so as to secure the justice to which we are entitled. If he will develop his arguments on sound lines based on facts we shall deal with him on the same basis. He has never received anything but courtesy from me, and he is never likely to be treated otherwise so long as I am treated with courtesy by him. I object to the attitude he has taken up to-day. He made that grant at Mareeba, and did not notify me, and on looking at the file I can see no notification thereon. He has not said a word about the repairs to that hospital. One of his officers visited the institution to report upon its physical condition, and I now challenge the Minister to read Mr. Bradbury's report to the Committee. The report sets out that the buildings are in a dilapidated condition, that the floors and walls are rotting away, and that naturally people with money go elsewhere for treatment. No definite decision has been made by the Government, but if they are determined to "district" this hospital then the Minister knows that he can make an advance to enable the people to build a new hospital.

The HOME SECRETARY: Do you not think that the people who have money and go elsewhere for treatment should contribute voluntarily to this hospital?

Mr. KENNY: If it was "districted" they would have to do so. I am referring to the report of Mr. Bradbury.

The HOME SECRETARY interjected.

Mr. KENNY: I know it is getting under the skin of the Minister, but I cannot help that. Mr. Bradbury also reports that no provision is made—

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

Mr. BRASSINGTON (*Portitude Valley*) [12.30 p.m.]: I desire on this vote to pay a tribute to the efficiency and good work carried out by the Brisbane and South Coast Hospitals Board in the administration of

the Brisbane General Hospital. That work has been noted by all, who will agree that the administration is highly efficient and that the general public receive good service. I commend the work of the secretary, Mr. Bolton, and the Assistant Under Secretary, Mr. Chuter. As representative of the district in which the hospital is situated I have had much to do with them in the last twelve months. I can say sincerely that at all times they have given me much assistance in the interests of the hospital and the district I represent.

It is also pleasing to say that the very progressive hospital policy laid down by the former Labour Administration is being continued by the present Government under the careful guidance of the present Home Secretary. It is gratifying to learn that the hospital system throughout the State has in recent years shown a distinct improvement. One has a vivid recollection of the old time system believed in by hon. members opposite when hospitals were allowed practically to look after themselves. It remained for this party to introduce a sound progressive policy which meant much in the administration and progress of hospital services. Thanks to the Labour Party the hospital system operating in this State is the finest in the Commonwealth. The system whereby maternity wards have been added to the hospitals has brought immense benefits to the people.

As the representative of Fortitude Valley I desire to express my appreciation of the fact that the Government are now proceeding with the erection of a Women's Hospital adjacent to the General Hospital. I admire that decision, but shall not be satisfied until I witness on the present site of the Brisbane General Hospital an up-to-date hospital block in keeping with the importance of this city, and one which will be a credit not only to the Government but the people as well.

Considerable comment has been made by the Opposition relative to the methods of financing hospitals. In assessing the value of those comments one is justified in recalling the attitude adopted by them in the past and comparing it with their present attitude. Apparently their attitude is similar to their attitude generally on the principles of taxation, that is, that the masses of the people should bear the burden while their rich friends should be exempted where possible. This much can be said: that boiled down the arguments advanced by the Opposition amount to taking the burden of hospital taxation off the shoulders of those best able to bear it and placing it on the shoulders of those least able to bear it. I subscribe to the policy of the Government which lays down the axiom that the incidence of taxation shall be borne by those best able to bear it. Much criticism has taken place on that policy. The hon. member for Cook, in the irresponsible way in which he usually addresses this Committee, has endeavoured to make out a case in favour of the retention of the worn out system of voluntary contributions for hospital finance. Charity is all right in its place, and voluntary contributions also have their place, but experience is most valuable in deciding whether committees administering hospitals should rely on voluntary contributions, the great bulk of which come from those least able to afford them. I can bring practical experience to my aid, for I was

once the member for an electorate in the south-western portion of this State in which I observed the operation of the voluntary system. I have a very definite argument to adduce this morning to show that the system introduced by the Government providing for district hospitals and for equitable taxation is far ahead of the old system which relied upon voluntary contributions, backed by subsidies from the Government.

At 12.37 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: I need only refer to the fact that the majority of the efforts under the voluntary system, so far as country hospitals were concerned, were undertaken by working men. Race meetings and other forms of entertainments were organised for the purpose of raising funds, and after a number of years of experience an examination of that system leads me to the conclusion that approximately 75 per cent. of the revenue raised for the support of hospitals came from the efforts of the working people in those districts. A further examination will show that where the system of voluntary support is retained in country districts to-day, that system is justified and supported by those who, under the district system, would contribute most. That in itself is a straightout proof that under the voluntary system the owners of large properties in pastoral and other districts do not pay proportionately the sum contributed by the workers in those districts. That system is retained by people who fear the introduction of the district system because they will be called upon to pay an equitable amount if that system is applied to their district. Let me give an illustration to show which is the more successful system. The progressive town of Charleville has been much in the limelight in the past few days in connection with the Melbourne Centenary air race. Although it is one of the most progressive towns in Western Queensland, up to the present it can only claim to have a hospital that is inferior, both in design and construction, to hospitals in the St. George and Dirranbandi districts. The reason is that Charleville has retained the old system of voluntary support, but I am glad to note that recently a move was made to introduce a better system and to erect an up-to-date hospital more in keeping with the town and the ideals of its people. As against the experience of that town, let me quote the position in the St. George and Dirranbandi portions of the Balonne district. Some considerable time ago the district system was applied, and as a result a most up-to-date and fully-equipped hospital is available in each town. Moreover, these hospitals meet with no criticism, either from those who subscribe the bulk of the tax or from those who may not contribute owing to their very limited income. It can be very definitely stated, therefore, that more progress has been made in hospital administration where the district system is availed of than in districts that still cling to the old wornout idea of maintaining their institutions by voluntary subscriptions.

I have very decided views on the important question of hospital administration, and whilst I desire to compliment the Government on the introduction of a progressive policy I shall not be satisfied until the day arrives when hospital and ambulance services—and the ambulance organisation is finding

Mr. Brassington.]

it difficult to carry on under the present voluntary system—are directly controlled by and responsible to the State all along the line. When that day arrives we shall be able to say with truth that an equitable progressive system is operating in the interests of the people of the State.

Mr. W. J. COPLEY (*Dulimba*) [12.41 p.m.]: Reference has been made this morning to the report of the Royal Commission on Hospitals appointed by the Moore Government in 1930. That commission drew attention to the desirability of compulsory third-party risk insurance in respect of motor vehicles and pointed out the burden on public hospitals arising from motor vehicle accidents. During the year prior to the sitting of the commission 269 motor car accident cases were admitted to the Brisbane General Hospital, and on the average each case was attended to for twenty-one days; in other words 5,716 days were spent in hospital by patients who had suffered injury through motor cars. The commission rightly pointed out that it was unable to say definitely how many of those accidents could be attributed to negligence on the part of drivers or negligence on the part of the individual who was injured, but the commission definitely recognised that consideration should be given to the desirableness of introducing compulsory insurance against third-party risk. I wish to advocate that method. At the present time there are a tremendous number of cars being driven in Brisbane and throughout the State which do not carry one penny of third-party insurance, and are a definite menace to the community if driven negligently. It does not matter how careful an individual is, there is always likely to be an element of negligence in his driving.

A motor car company which is in liquidation has cars plying for hire in Brisbane at the present time, and in the event of accident with serious or fatal results due to negligence on the part of drivers employed by the company, not one penny of compensation could be obtained from the company; nor would there be any possibility of obtaining anything from the car driver, because his wages would hardly be sufficient to support him. In 1928 the New Zealand Government considered this matter and introduced a measure compelling owners of motor vehicles to take out insurance against third-party insurance. It is under the control of the Government, and I take it that the premiums are collected in a similar manner to the collection of main roads registration fees in this State. I suggest to the Home Secretary, and also to the Assistant Treasurer as Minister administering the State Government Insurance Office, that a thorough investigation be made into the possibility of introducing compulsory third-party insurance for motor cars in Queensland.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR (*Enoggera*) [12.44 p.m.]: I think the discussion this morning has, to a certain extent, developed the argument put forward by me last night in regard to the maintenance and equipment of hospitals. There is evidently a feeling amongst members on both sides of the Committee that the old system cannot successfully maintain the hospital services of this State; and the only difference of opinion is in regard to the manner in which the tax shall be raised. I believe that the workers

[*Mr. Brassington.*

in industry, who contribute the major cost of hospital maintenance to-day, and the controllers of industry should be taxed to maintain hospitals upon a national basis. The Government are doing their best under the system of subsidies.

The people who control the hospitals and the subscribers in the various centres cannot agree on the question of "distracting" their hospitals. During my recent trip North I visited the Mareeba hospital. The institution was a disgrace not only to the district but also to the persons who were functioning as the committee of the hospital. The buildings were falling to pieces and were unhealthy and unhygienic. There was the sorry spectacle of a nursing sister endeavouring to sterilise instruments in a cut down kerosene tin over a primus stove. That is a striking illustration both to the Government and the people of the district of the need of a system of nationalisation of hospitals. Under the present system of public subscription, hospitals cannot be maintained in an efficient manner, equipped with the necessary implements and made hygienic enough to give the best service to the unfortunate individuals who have to make use of them. There is no doubt that if the State has arrived at this stage of development and under-equipment of hospitals the question of their upkeep will have to become a national one. Whether the hon. member for Cunningham likes it or not, the system in operation to-day can be improved upon, but only by an equitable distribution of the costs of the service. Nationalisation is based on the principle of equity. I consider that the industrial workers would not contribute one penny more under such a system than they are contributing under the system in operation at the present time. The instance of the Mareeba Hospital proves conclusively what can happen when there is a difference of opinion between the hospital committee and the local authority. One section cares not whether the hospital be "distracted" or otherwise so long as the money is forthcoming and the conditions of the institution, which should be the paramount consideration, is of no concern. The system under which the Mareeba Hospital is working is not in the best interests of the health of the community.

Mr. WILLIAMS (*Port Curtis*) [12.50 p.m.]: I should like to express my appreciation of the work of the officers of the Home Department and the Department of Public Works for the very fine type of hospital buildings being erected throughout the State at the present time. Just recently the Minister had the pleasure of opening a new wing attached to that very fine institution, the Warwick Hospital, and in a few weeks' time he will be accorded the satisfaction of performing a similar function at the Gladstone hospital.

I understand that the number of baby clinics erected or in course of erection throughout the State totals sixteen. It is rather interesting to note that in 1929, when the Labour Government went out of office, the birth-rate of Queensland was the second highest in the world and the death rate the second lowest. I believe New Zealand reached better figures in both instances. I do not know whether the advent of the Moore Government had anything to do with the alteration of those conditions, but whether it was the result of interference with

the social services, or reduction of wages or not it seems remarkable that the birth rate and death rate then took on an entirely different aspect when compared with any other time in the history of the State. I hope the Government will continue the construction of these clinics and the other necessities of public life.

Yesterday the hon. member for Keppel raised the question of a home for the aged and infirm in Central Queensland. He suggested its situation should be Rockhampton. While I have no desire to deny him that pleasure, I wish to urge the claims of Gladstone as being the most usable site for such an institution. Gladstone is favoured with a very beautiful harbour and its climatic conditions are superior to those of Rockhampton. Irrespective of the site, however, I am quite prepared to support the hon. member in his claim for such a home.

The aerial medical service has been referred to by a number of hon. members, and I wish to support them in their remarks that this is a branch of medical service of prime importance, and one which should receive every encouragement from the Government by way of financial assistance. I am afraid that insufficient mention has been made of the wonderful work of Dr. John Flynn, who deserves a generous meed of praise in connection with it. I hope that the Government, through the Home Department, will give every assistance to its maintenance and improvement. I understand that when the present Secretary for Mines was Home Secretary the State and Federal Governments agreed to provide a fund to inaugurate this wonderful aerial medical service to the far flung western portions of the State.

Reference has been made to the services of hospital boards, and, unfortunately, it has been stated that the majority of the members were representatives from the A.L.P.'s. That is not correct, but whether it was so or not, the work carried out by the representatives, whether of the Government, local authorities, or contributors, is very commendable, and has given general satisfaction throughout the State.

Reference has been made to the Sunshine League of Ipswich, which has performed a wonderful service under the devoted guidance of the Ipswich newspaper, the "Queensland Times." The hon. member for Ipswich has pointed out the wonderful work that the hospital committee and its members are doing, and I express the hope that it will be allowed to continue this magnificent work. There was recently formed in Gladstone a committee known as the Hospital Comforts Committee, for the purpose of providing wireless, head phones, library, and other amenities calculated to relieve the tedium and weariness of hospital life. The committee comprises a band of women, of whom the wife of the medical superintendent is the president, the wife of a doctor in private practice is the treasurer, and the wife of a well-known business man in the town is the secretary. The establishment of this committee indicates the interest that is being taken in hospital work. The people recognise the value of hospital work, and they appreciate the very fine services provided by the Government to their officers. That committee is about to appeal to the Home Department for some financial assistance, on

either a £1 for £1 or a 10s. in the £1 basis, and I hope that the department, through one of its channels, will see fit to assist this body in its effort to provide the comforts for a hospital of the size and importance of Gladstone.

In conclusion, I want again to express my pleasure at the treatment that I have received from the Home Department at all times. It has been a pleasure to me to visit it. At no time has the department seen fit to turn down any reasonable request by me for the alleviation of suffering—for the building of clinics, for a dental institute, or for improvements or additions to hospitals throughout my electorate.

Item (Hospitals) agreed to.

INSANITY.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, *Ithaca*) [12.58 p.m.]: I move—
"That £199,459 be granted for 'Insanity.'"

The vote this year has been increased by £5,360. The increase is accounted for by two extra nurses and an apprentice carpenter at Goodna. The increased appropriation for Goodna is £1,771. In the case of Ipswich the increases are accounted for by the appointment of a clerk and extra nurses. A children's ward has been established for imbecile children with specially constructed and specially designed playing areas. At Toowoomba a new ward has been opened. An additional assistant medical superintendent has been appointed, together with a part-time dentist and two extra nurses. An assistant farm bailiff has also been appointed. The increase required in connection with these appointments is £2,120. In connection with contingencies, the additional number of patients at Toowoomba entails an increased maintenance charge of £1,100, whilst the new children's ward at Ipswich requires an additional amount of £273 in connection with contingencies. These are the main directions in which the vote has been increased.

Item (Insanity) agreed to.

LAZARET.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, *Ithaca*) [2 p.m.]: I move—
"That £7,133 be granted for 'Lazaret.'"

The vote is an increase of £296 on the 1933-34 Estimates. The number of patients is about the same, on the sixty mark. Five had been discharged during the year cured. Just recently, in the course of an investigation by Dr. Nimmo, of Thursday Island, whom the department asked to make a survey of the aborigines of the Gulf, a nest of four lepers was located at one of the mission stations. They had to be transported to Brisbane. Early in the year the Federal Minister for Health, Mr. Marr, called on me in Brisbane and made some suggestion with regard to providing a medical inspection of the natives in the whole of Northern Australia. I informed Mr. Marr that the Queensland Government were already doing that in Queensland, and that we already had a medical service for our natives. I raised with Mr. Marr the question of providing an aboriginal lazaret at some point in Northern Australia where leprous aborigines from the Northern portions of Queensland, the Northern Territory, and the north-western portion of

Hon. E. M. Hanlon.]

Western Australia could be segregated and treated. It is most expensive to bring aboriginal lepers from the Cape York Peninsula to Brisbane. In the case of the four leprous aborigines located on the western shores of the Gulf of Carpentaria a special boat was commissioned to bring them around Cape York to Cairns, where they were placed aboard a train and brought to Brisbane. Of course, the Government had to provide a police escort to Brisbane. If the Governments of Australia are going to tackle the whole problem of aborigines thoroughly, then some centrally situated leper station should be established at some point in the northern part of Australia. More than half of the patients at Peel Island are aborigines. It is quite possible that the survey of the aborigines that has been carried on for the past two years will lead to the discovery of more of their number suffering from leprosy. It is a very expensive item to bring them to Brisbane, and it would be far more satisfactory if some centrally situated leprosarium were founded in Northern Australia for their treatment. The entrance of the Commonwealth Government into that scheme will provide a better system of treatment, more complete clinical work, and a more thorough investigation into the disease, which should ultimately eradicate it from Northern Australia. Nothing has been arranged, but we shall endeavour to keep in touch with the Federal Government until the question has been settled.

Mr. R. M. KING (*Logan*) [2.4 p.m.]: I thank the Home Secretary for giving the Committee information regarding the lazaret. Unfortunately we have no information concerning the lazaret either in the report from the Health Department, or in the report of the sub-departments of the Home Departments, and consequently I have not been able to get any information respecting the work there. I want to obtain information more particularly as to whether the chaulmoogra oil treatment is being continued and whether it is proving successful.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: You will find the report at page 7 in the annual report of the Commissioner of Public Health.

Mr. R. M. KING: I am sorry that I failed to find it. Probably the information I want will be found in that report.

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes.

Item (Lazaret) agreed to.

MEDICAL.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, *Ithaca*) [2.6 p.m.]: I move—

“That £2,653 be granted for ‘Medical.’”

This is the vote which covers the salaries of the various Government medical officers throughout the State, and also the Registrar of the Medical Board and other boards. The amount of £629, which is shown under “Medical and Other Boards,” and which represents the salary of the registrar, clerk, and clerk-typist who do the work of the various professional boards, will be refunded to the State by those boards, for whom, in accordance with the alteration last year, this staff now does the work.

Item agreed to.

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

POLICE.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, *Ithaca*) [2.8 p.m.]: I move—

“That £495,485 be granted for ‘Police.’”

This vote is an increase on the appropriation for last year, for several reasons. First, the reintroduction of the 44-hour week makes it necessary again this year to provide overtime allowance for the police. Further, provision is made for thirty additional non-commissioned and commissioned officers and twenty additional constables. In addition, the effective strength of the force has been increased by the appointment of twenty-five cadet clerks in the Commissioner's office, the Traffic office, the Chief Inspector's office, and the Criminal Investigation Branch on work that was previously done by non-commissioned officers and constables. A system of training recruits as cadet policemen has been instituted. The number of active members of the force has been increased by only twenty, but the effective strength has been increased by forty-five.

Mr. R. M. KING (*Logan*) [2.10 p.m.]: I pay a tribute to the work of the police, who perform their many duties in a satisfactory manner. The new traffic regulations are being administered efficiently, and I am hopeful that before long the Queensland police will have reached that high degree of efficiency which characterises the Melbourne traffic police, whose work is of outstanding merit. The public are gradually assimilating the new traffic regulations, and with their co-operation the work of traffic control will be greatly improved. One traffic officer, whose work always excited my admiration, was an individual known as “Sandy,” who was on duty at the Queen-street end of Victoria Bridge—

The HOME SECRETARY: He has been promoted now.

Mr. R. M. KING: I am glad to know that. He is a very efficient officer, who always kept his head. His work was in marked contrast with that of some of the younger members of the force on traffic duty, who sometimes lost their head. When they did make a mistake it sometimes happened that they would turn around and pass an uncomplimentary remark to the motorist concerned. Of course, that conduct should not be tolerated, and, fortunately, is not the general rule. Perhaps the offenders are more guilty of over-zealousness than anything else. At all events, at the present rate of progress we shall have a thoroughly well-regulated traffic control very shortly.

Mr. TOZER (*Gympie*) [2.12 p.m.]: I notice the increase in the vote for “Police” is approximately £13,000, and although the Minister has stated that there has been a considerable increase in the strength of the force, it appears to me from the Estimates that the total has only increased by four. For instance, it will be found that in 1933-34 there were 947 constables, and for the present year the Estimates show 927, and in 1933-34 the number of acting sergeants was 173 and the number for 1934-35 is 203. I assume that the net increase is not any more than four, as disclosed by the Estimates. As the State is progressing and the population increasing, it is only natural that the police force should increase. I cannot see anything unreasonable as far as this vote is concerned. In the country districts the

numbers of the police are limited and at times are scarcely sufficient, but when anything unforeseen occurs additional police are transported to places where they are urgently required.

The HOME SECRETARY: The total number has been reduced by the abolition of thirty trackers.

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*) [2.14 p.m.]: The action of the Home Secretary in re-establishing the police district of Ipswich is commended by the people in that area. Just recently an inspector has been appointed for the whole of that district, and the reorganisation that has taken place will afford the police a better opportunity of efficiently coping with the work in that area. I think everyone realises that the duties of the police are multitudinous, and some of the work which they were called upon to do in times of emergency is now becoming part of their daily work, and the result is that numbers of police attached to sub-stations are unable to leave the office all day unless in response to an urgent call. The appointment of an inspector at Ipswich was not made owing to the prevalence of crime in that area, because it is very seldom that there is a case of crime at Ipswich. Some cases were tried at that court recently, but the offenders were not residents of that area; they were birds of passage who were laid by the heels by alert police officers at that centre.

The question of the control of pedestrian traffic—and I refer particularly to the district I reside in—calls for urgent consideration. I ask the Home Secretary to consider seriously the question of the control of pedestrian traffic with the object of compelling people to walk on the footpaths instead of along the centre of the road. Very serious accidents have occurred during the past few months owing to this practice.

Mr. MAHER: Fatalities.

Mr. GLEDSON: And fatalities. Not very long ago in my locality three young girls were walking to attend a function arranged by the Sunshine League and one of them was knocked down and killed. That case came before the court for trial and I do not intend to go into its merits or demerits. Another fatality occurred in the vicinity, but that is still sub judice. In this instance two young people, one twenty-two and the other twenty-three years of age, were hurled into eternity. When such accidents as these occur it is our duty not only to investigate the cause but also to explore every possible means of preventing such happenings in future. Although local authorities provide footpaths, pedestrians with an utter disregard to the dangers they are running by walking on the road refuse to use them. Motorists who have to make use of the Ipswich road, which is the main arterial route for transport to the West, the South, or the Kingaroy district, are of opinion that the worst stretch of road in this respect is that between Dinmore and Booval. It is on that portion of the road that most of the serious accidents have occurred, and perhaps the main cause is the necessity of pedestrians having to walk on the bitumen road on account of the absence of footpaths. Every motorist is aware of the great difficulty of driving at night against a car coming in the opposite direction. The lights of the oncoming car

dazzle the driver, and if there be two vehicles coming in the opposite direction the difficulties are accentuated. The driver of a car is placed in the predicament of having to stop or proceed at a snail's pace, and even so run the risk of knocking down some person walking along the road. I am giving the illustration in order to urge the Home Secretary to see whether something could not be included in the Traffic Acts giving the police the power to compel pedestrians to make use of the footpaths when such are provided. This might reduce the number of accidents that are occurring. If the local authorities were compelled to provide footpaths the police should have the necessary power to make the people use them. Some years ago, when I was a member of the Moreton Shire Council, the danger to children from the Bundamba School was raised by the school committee because they had to cross a bridge which also conveyed vehicular traffic. As an outcome of negotiations the Ipswich City Council and the Moreton Shire Council constructed a wooden bridge for pedestrians running parallel with the vehicular bridge, but pedestrian traffic still persists in dodging in and out of the vehicular traffic using the main bridge, and the adults are the worst offenders in this respect.

Mr. MOORE: I suppose they complain of the motor traffic dodging in and out among the people.

Mr. GLEDSON: Yes. Only two weeks ago I had occasion to keep an appointment on a Saturday night, and driving on the road I was compelled to pull up three times on the section between Bundamba and Booval. The experience of other motorists using this road is the same. Some pedestrians have the peculiar idea that motor traffic should leave the road to avoid them. When spoken to, they simply laugh at the motorist. We should try to impress upon the pedestrians that they are bound equally with the drivers of vehicles to conform to certain rules of the road, and if we can educate them up to that understanding we shall have achieved something for the protection of pedestrians and in the interests of motor drivers. It is not always that those people who suffer are the primary cause of an accident. A driver of a motor car, in endeavouring to avoid a collision with a pedestrian on the road, may run down a bystander or crash head on to a car coming in the opposite direction. We should endeavour to educate the pedestrian to understand that he owes a duty to himself and to the drivers of vehicles, and that at least he should make use of the special facilities provided for his protection.

I also suggest that, in these days of modern transport facilities, it would be wise to remove the present street lights to the side of the road. In their present situation they are of no assistance to the drivers of motor cars, in fact they are a hindrance. If the lights were suspended, say, over the footpath it would be an added inducement to the pedestrian to use the footpath which has been specially constructed for his protection, and the lights in this situation would also be of greater assistance to the drivers of motor cars. I have often heard it stated, both here and elsewhere, that men love darkness rather than light, but that does not always apply. Whilst the lights are suspended over the centre of

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the bitumen road the pedestrians will frequent that portion of the roadway. I should like the Home Secretary to give serious consideration to these matters with a view to minimising the many serious accidents that occur from time to time.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN (*Murilla*) [2.27 p.m.]: The Government have decided that the system of competitive examination shall be utilised in securing recruits to the police force, and I should like to impress upon the Home Secretary the wisdom of seeing that applicants from the country are not overlooked. I presume that if an applicant can pass the physical test he will be appointed to the service in order of merit—according to his pass at the competitive examination. The efficiency of a police constable in the country is to be gauged by his ability to track cattle and horses rather than from the standpoint of his academic education. It may be of advantage to have a man with superior education patrolling the streets of the city of Brisbane, but there are instances on record where well-educated policemen sent from the city have been absolutely useless in the performance of the duties required of them in the country. I remember one occasion some years ago when a young constable was transferred to a country district where a sergeant and two constables were stationed. It was his duty, amongst others, to patrol the country, but, unfortunately, he knew nothing whatever about the bush, and could not even ride a horse. Eventually, when I brought under the notice of the Commissioner the fact that this man was not suitable for the position of constable in the country, whereas he might make an exceptionally fine constable in the city, he was immediately transferred to the city. That constable proved himself to be an exceptionally good man for duty in the city, but he was absolutely useless in the country, as he knew himself. It was at his own request that he was transferred. If he went outside the town he was unable to find his way back, and he was unable to ride a horse efficiently. What is known as the good old constable has disappeared. Years ago, when I first came to Queensland, the district surrounding the Condamine was looked upon as being a hotbed of cattle thieves. A constable was sent to the Condamine purposely to break up that gang. He succeeded in doing so. He would leave the Condamine with a black tracker, and after riding a mile or two into the bush would turn about, in order to deceive anyone who might be watching his movements, and go in a different direction altogether. That constable would start out with a pack horse, and although he frequently called at various homesteads in the course of his duties, he was never known to accept hospitality. He carried his own food, and made himself independent of the farmer or grazier. He would not accept the offer of a bed or a cup of tea, but preferred to sleep in the open and boil his own billy. Those days have disappeared. To-day we find the police performing their work with the aid of a motor car if it is at all possible. We do not find them going out, as in the old days, with a tracker and pack horses to probe the complaints made to them. We do not encourage that class of man to join the police force to-day. The man now encouraged to join the police force wants a comfortable bed at night, and if his duty causes him to call at a homestead,

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either to collect statistics or make inquiries, he will accept a cup of tea or a meal. The class of man we want in the country districts should be thoroughly versed in bushmanship. I do not care whether that policeman is highly educated or not as long as he is a good bushman. Nowadays we have a sergeant in charge of two or three men stationed in a small town of 500 or 600 people. If they are not allowed to do patrol work, then they might just as well be transferred to Brisbane, because the only work for them to do in such a township is to arrest an occasional drunken man. One policeman can look after a drunken man. I am not advocating that these constables should be transferred from the country districts; I suggest that they be given greater opportunity to do patrol work.

I do not propose to reiterate the remarks I made recently concerning police horses. A change is vitally necessary and I am glad that the Minister and Commissioner recognise it. Let the Minister and the Commissioner also recognise the force of my other arguments and effect a change in the direction I have indicated.

On the general question of recruits for the police force, probably the best policemen in the State have come from the ranks of bush boys who have not had the opportunity for higher education that many city boys have. They have had the ordinary State school education—

The HOME SECRETARY: That is all we ask.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: If that is so, there is scarcely need for an educational examination, because almost every boy possesses a State school education. The police officials we want in the country are those with bush training. Some members of the force who have never had country experience could not distinguish a horse track from a cattle track. These men might be all right walking around Brisbane, where big feet would be an asset. (Laughter.) In the country districts, however, let us have the men with small feet, for they are less likely to be caught in the stirrups. (Renewed laughter.)

I notice that the Government have reduced the number of native trackers, and in my district, particularly in the Chinchilla area, a protest was made against their removal. I interviewed the Commissioner on the matter and he expressed the opinion that they were unnecessary, as their services were mainly utilised for chopping wood and cleaning boots. That may be so in some cases, but very often these native trackers have been the means of saving life. I can recall one instance in the Texas district where a native tracker did valuable work in locating a man who was lost. Many of our constables are well experienced in tracking work, but if in the future the force is to be recruited mainly from those who have city experience then the necessity for native trackers will be all the greater, if for no other reason than to prevent the inexperienced policeman who goes into the scrub from getting lost. (Laughter.) The Minister is not saving very much by dispensing with a number of these trackers.

The HOME SECRETARY: £1,500 is a lot of money these days.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: It is remarkable to note the importance attached to

money when it affects the country; thousands of pounds spent in the city are considered a mere bagatelle! I claim that the expenditure of £1,500 in this direction is a mere bagatelle when judged by the amount of good work that is done by these native trackers. I notice that forty-seven native trackers will be retained and I trust they will be so located as to be readily available where their services may be urgently required in tracking lost persons. The saving of £1,500 would not compensate for the loss of a life owing to the absence of a black tracker.

Mr. W. T. KING (*Marce*) [2.43 p.m.]: I have listened attentively to the remarks of the hon. member for Murilla. I recognise that that hon. member is conversant with bush work and is somewhat of an authority on it; but with all due deference to his opinion and giving all due credit to the police of former years, I think there are men in the ranks of the police force to-day who can carry out patrol work very effectively. Whilst I recognise that the black tracker is a great help in tracking, I know there are many native-born Australians who are expert in the art. Proof of this has been afforded on many occasions. One must recognise, however, that the country is becoming more settled and the same amount of patrolling is not required now as previously. I agree, of course, with the hon. member for Murilla that when work has to be done in the bush an officer who is conversant with bush life should be chosen to do it.

I congratulate Mr. Carroll on his appointment as Commissioner of Police. I think the appointment was a good one. Under his control the police force will continue to improve in efficiency.

As the question of examinations and other reforms are at present in the experimental stage, I shall withhold any comment for the time being in order to give them an opportunity to fructify or otherwise. I agree with many of the reforms that have been introduced, and on the whole I feel that the rank and file of the police force are confident of receiving fair and reasonable treatment from the Commissioner and the Government. The men in the lower ranks of the force recognise that they receive every facility to rise to the highest position in the force. Some people may argue that the person appointed to the position of Commissioner of Police should be recruited from the ranks of the police force. Although I am the son of a policeman, I do not subscribe to that doctrine in toto. I think that a man of Mr. Carroll's experience, endowed by nature with the necessary ability to control men, is eminently suited to take charge of this important section of our public service. He is carrying out his duties with conspicuous ability.

Members of the police force have many duties to perform. Their duties have been described by one hon. member as multitudinous. The policeman who is stationed in a little bush town really controls it. I trust that when possible the police vote will be increased and thus some compensation will be provided for the additional duties they perform. Everybody is proud of the Queensland police force, particularly the mounted men. The Queensland police force at the present time enjoys the confidence of the public, and its members possess

all the qualities necessary to carry out the duties allotted to them.

Mr. FOLEY (*Leichhardt*) [2.45 p.m.]: I support some of the remarks of the hon. member for Murilla, particularly in regard to enlisting a greater proportion of bushmen in the police force than has been the case in the past, so that there will be men in country districts who possess the necessary bush experience.

On making inquiry from a senior officer at one of the centres in the district I represent as to why certain men were not patrolling and attending to essential work, his reply was that he had not a man in the station that he could send off the road. That is the position in many police districts in Queensland to-day. The Commissioner would do well to enrol a fair proportion of men of a type suitable for bush work. There is no doubt that they are offering for service. In my district alone there are a number of suitable applicants.

I compliment the Commissioner on his appointment. For the present, so far as the force is concerned, he is on trial. The police, as a force, have not yet given him their blessing, and a great deal will depend on the amount of confidence created by his wise administration. If he gives a fair deal to all members of the force, then he will find that he will readily have the assistance of a loyal and efficient service.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: What do you think of the black tracker question?

Mr. FOLEY: I think, when you investigate the matter, you will find that a number of so-called black trackers in many of the country districts have been black trackers in name only. Really, they have been orderlies. The boy has been employed at wood chopping, blacking boots, washing up, and greasing the harness. The whole of the central district could be served at very short notice by a tracker from Woorabinda. Half a dozen trackers, if necessary, could be obtained in a very short space of time. And the same applies to other districts throughout the State. I take it that the object of the Minister or the Commissioner in withdrawing these trackers from service was to save expense and also to make some officers in charge do a little of their own work instead of having an orderly provided. That is how I see that question.

In conclusion, I would emphasise that if the Commissioner plays the game by the whole of the force, he will find that the force will play the game by him and afford him loyal service. He may desire to make certain innovations; but I would advise him to tread warily and consult with members of the force who have practical knowledge. These men have acquired a good deal of horse sense from experience, and it can be used for the benefit of a new Commissioner. With that co-ordination he will probably find that he is able to introduce many innovations for the improvement of the various organisations. I would also utter a word of warning to him not to make a slave of the average policeman. I find that that is happening in some places. Each Government department is increasing its work, either as the result of the growth of the State or new legislation. Extra work is then imposed on many country policemen, but at a very small remuneration for the services rendered. The Commissioner would do well

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to take a stand in this matter, and, in the interests of the members of the force, approach the various departments for better remuneration. The officers stationed in country centres receive very little remuneration from the different departments for the work they do—for example, as clerk of petty sessions, for the Main Roads Commission, and in industrial matters. In the cotton districts during certain periods of the year the duties of the police increase, but they still have to function as policemen, and at the same time carry on the work of the many other departments and without extra remuneration. That is true also in many other parts of the State. I venture the opinion that if an investigation were made it would be found that some of the departments are not paying adequately for the services performed for them by the police. If the Commissioner attends to these little things, petty though they may seem to him, although probably big in the eyes of the men directly concerned, he will receive the utmost co-operation and loyalty from the members of the force in general.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Nanango*) [2.55 p.m.]: I join with the hon. member for Murilla in expressing the hope that the policemen to be stationed in country districts will be thoroughly fitted for the positions that they are to occupy. I presume that the new organisation at work within the police force will give greater attention to these matters in the future than they have received in the past, but it is astounding to hear the hon. member for Normanby intimate that a sergeant in charge of a police station informed him that he had not a man who was capable of going off the road.

Mr. FOLEY: It is a fact.

Mr. EDWARDS: That just shows why cattle duffing has been so prevalent in the State during the past years.

Mr. W. T. KING: That would not apply generally.

Mr. EDWARDS: I do not say for a moment that it would apply generally, but the new organisation seems to have definitely set its mind on an educational test in the service, and whilst I have no objection to that, particularly in view of the multifarious duties to be performed by the police—

Mr. O'KEEFE: That is only one aspect of it.

Mr. EDWARDS: And it will probably land us in difficulties if we are not careful. There may be too much concentration on the many small things which after all could be performed by an ordinary clerk, but the primary duty of the police is to prevent or to detect crime and sheet the blame home to the guilty persons. The most important duty of the police force is to prevent the commission of crime, and I hope the Home Secretary will not lose sight of that important aspect of police administration. He intimated yesterday that in carrying out the new educational test cadets from the country would be placed in training in police offices in the city for two years and that they would then be drafted to the country. I noted that the Home Secretary did not make any reference to training in horse craft, or even in air craft, which will shortly bulk largely in our consideration of these things. All these matters must be considered if the recruit is to be fitted

for the performance of the important duties of a policeman throughout the State, but I am afraid that we are actually losing sight of the primary need of a police force. If a cadet is to come from the country to serve for a period of two years in a city office without practical training in bush work before he is sworn in he is going to be of very little use as a country constable. I am inclined to look at this matter more from the practical side and so far as education is concerned I feel that we are running a bit mad. The hon. member for West Moreton very ably pointed out yesterday that ordinary educational training does not necessarily fit a man to earn a living and to do the big things that are absolutely necessary and always will be necessary in the real work of developing this country. We should proceed very cautiously in this matter. I have been in personal contact for many years with men who could scarcely write their own names, but I am satisfied that it would be very difficult indeed for any policeman to follow these men in the bush or to equal them in their ability to track cattle, to recognise them and to pick out the brands as quickly as these men can do. I do not contend for one moment that a policeman should not have a better education than that.

In the course of the debate yesterday the hon. member for Murilla was asked by way of interjection whether he had lost any cattle. That hon. member replied in the negative. I can readily understand that his bush instinct would enable him to deal with such a position. He would have a very good idea of the direction his cattle, if any were missed, would go, and if he knew, or came across the persons who had taken the cattle he would probably be able to deal with them himself.

I hope that the Minister will not overlook the important object for which the police force is established. Attention must be directed to countering the new methods adopted in crime. It would be quite wrong to pass over capable police officers having upwards of twenty years' experience, and possessing an intimate knowledge of the bush, in favour of a lad whose principal qualification was that he had been able to pass a University Junior Public Examination. After all, this new type of policemen has to be tried out. The Minister must agree with me that a big percentage of them will fail when their bush craft is tested, no matter what their education may be. When a man gets into difficulties in the vast open spaces of the State he must depend entirely on his bush instinct and independent spirit. A superior education will not stand to an individual in such circumstances. We should not encourage people to settle in vast numbers in the various centres of population because, if for no other reason, than that it necessitates so many policemen to look after them. We should encourage them to go out into the bush by making the conditions in the country such as will attract men from the cities and towns. The Minister should take all these factors into consideration when administering the new system which has been adopted.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR (*Enoggera*) [3.3 p.m.]: The administration by the Home Department of the police force during the past twelve months reflects credit upon it. I congratulate the head of the department on

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the selection made for the office of the Commissioner of Police. That official carries into the police force a splendid record gained in the office of the Commissioner of Taxes, where as chief inspector he gained considerable knowledge in ferreting out individuals who endeavoured to escape their income tax obligations.

Mr. LLEWELYN: And the city also.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: The experience gained by the Commissioner in that office has equipped him with a knowledge of how to go after people and how to control such a large department as he now presides over. As chief inspector of the Income Tax Department he controlled a large number of officers, and covered every portion of the State in the course of his inquiries.

The hon. member for Murilla seemed to think that the black tracker was one of the most important arms in the police force.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Not the most important, but a very necessary unit.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: That was the trend of the hon. member's argument. He said that any curtailment of that particular arm of the force would lead to the deterioration of the force generally. The recruits obtained for the police are equally as good as were ever obtained.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Not from a bush point of view.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: The training of these recruits in the more modern methods of dealing with crime will reflect credit on the Commissioner and his staff. One must recognise that the society crook to-day is becoming educated. The criminal of that type works along entirely different lines from those followed by his predecessors. The new methods of training that have been introduced into the police force have no doubt been dictated by that fact. To listen to the hon. member for Nanango one would think that all the crooks were in the country districts.

Mr. EDWARDS: What a lot of nonsense!

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: The hon. member has been endeavouring to point out to the Committee that the members of the police force must be recruited from persons who were born in the country districts and that at all times the country districts must be manned with the most efficient police officers. The hon. member definitely created the impression that all the crooks are in the country districts, not in the city. Admittedly, it may be necessary to employ a certain number of country recruits in order to provide an effective arm of the force. We know that in his wisdom the Commissioner of Police will not send on mounted duty a policeman who has joined the force as a foot policeman. Apparently hon. members opposite do not recognise that there are foot police and mounted police. The mounted police would certainly not be used for beat duty in the cities.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: You must admit that a mounted policeman could do the work of a foot policeman but that the foot policeman could not satisfactorily carry out the duties of the mounted policeman.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: If a mounted policeman with only country experience were detailed to investigate the operations of safe-blowers or confidence men he would find it difficult to handle the job satisfactorily.

After all, the whole question is one of organisation, and the highest efficiency is only possible when organisation receives careful consideration. My point is that the police force cannot be composed solely of foot police or solely of mounted police. The two arms of the force are equally necessary, and in order to achieve the utmost efficiency the Commissioner has adopted the system of cadet training so that recruits to the force will obtain an insight into various activities that will fit them for their ultimate duties as police officers. We know that policemen in country towns and districts have to perform multifarious duties, perhaps involving bookkeeping, some question concerning insurance, the writing of reports to Government departments, etc. Would any hon. member opposite seriously suggest that a period of office training will be a handicap to persons who will subsequently be called upon to perform these varied duties? The greater our progress along the road of progress the greater the necessity for improvement in police methods.

At the present time the traffic police are controlled by the Commissioner of Police and have no connection with the various local authorities within whose boundaries the traffic laws operate. We find a conflict of opinion between local authorities and the Government regarding traffic regulations, but whatever may be said for a localised police force, the present system of control is infinitely better. To institute any system of localised police for traffic duties would involve extra cost and probably would not give as much efficiency. The traffic regulations contain many intricacies and require careful study on the part of police officers. That is proof that a little knowledge is not lost. The number of accidents on the highways of this city and the State are caused by motor drivers themselves, owing to the fact that the drivers of heavy vehicles will not drive as close to the kerb on their driving side as they are required to do by the regulation, with the result that any one who desires to pass that vehicle must go off the correct driving side and thus face the danger of a head-on smash. I commend that aspect of the matter to the Home Secretary for his consideration. It would probably be better to have police on the lookout for such breaches of the traffic laws than catching people for parking alongside the kerb.

During the last few months there has been a general diminution of the gambling evil in North Queensland. When I was up North recently there was very little gambling. Since then I have had letters from the North informing me that certain individuals who were previously living luxuriously on the proceeds of gambling have left for the Southern States. If that is the case—and I believe it is—I congratulate the Commissioner and the force for cleaning up a growing menace to the State.

Mr. PLUNKETT (*Albert*) [3.15 p.m.]: I think the system of examination for admission to the police force a good one; but, unless suitable provision is made to prevent it, it is possible that it may sometimes result in excluding eminently suitable men. The hon. member for Murilla has stressed the disadvantages that would be experienced by the young men in the country districts if they were compelled to compete with young men in the city at an examination. I have

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in mind a case of a young fellow of outstanding physique, a great athlete and sportsman, a man possessed of initiative, a good horseman conversant with stock. He has had a good education and passed the University junior examination when a boy. He fails in the examination for admittance to the force. His failure is due to the fact that his conditions of life in the country isolate him from educational matters, and the result is he forgot more quickly the subjects he had learned at school. Whilst I approve of the idea of setting a certain standard of education for admittance to the force and improving the standard of the force generally, I feel there is a possibility that some individual of outstanding ability may be excluded by reason of the educational examination. I consider that some consideration should be given to the young men from the country districts. It is easier for the policeman to carry out his duties in the city than in the country towns. In my opinion the man most suited for the police force generally is the one who is possessed of initiative.

He must have resource and be able to adapt himself to varying conditions and quickly-changing environment. It has been suggested that men reared in the country would not be conversant with city life. We quite recognise that. At the same time one must recognise that the young man reared in the country has a source of education denied to the city dweller, and this education would be of value in the execution of his duty as policeman. There are very few boys reared among cattle and stock who once they see a beast are not always able to recognise it, whether it be horse, cow, or bullock. All their lives these young fellows have been used to travelling around the country after nightfall, whereas the city man becomes helpless unless on a good road. During his life in the country the youth has to rely on his own initiative and resource, and thus knows how to cope with trouble when he meets it. I should regret it very much if some of the best men from the country, who would do credit to the force, were refused admittance because of their failure in an examination. It must be remembered that the country-born youth is asked to sit for an examination in an atmosphere utterly foreign to him. He is not used to the city or the court house. He is taken away from his usual surroundings, and has very little idea as to the scope of the examination. I am sure that the Commissioner will give consideration to the necessity of giving some latitude to the country-bred man.

Mr. FUNNELL (*Brisbane*) [3.20 p.m.]: I take this opportunity of protesting against the continuation of the system of requiring police officers to act as clerks under the unemployment relief scheme. In that regard I am of the same mind as is the hon. member for Ipswich. In a number of stations assistance is rendered to the police doing this work by clerks paid from the Unemployment Relief Fund. The time is opportune for the whole of that administration to be transferred to the Department of Labour and Industry. The scheme itself and the machinery for its operation are a bequest from the Moore Government. Were the force to be relieved of this work more officers would be available for police duties.

I also wish to bring under notice of the Minister the grave anomaly that exists

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when a police officer is injured in the performance of his duties. For many years the policy of the administration was to find a somewhat lighter job for a policeman injured in the performance of his duty. I understand that that policy has recently been changed, and nowadays the injured man has to go before a medical board. Should the board decide that he is not fit to carry out the ordinary duties appertaining to his office he is sent out on a pension financed from a fund to which he has contributed. Under these circumstances no reward is made to a policeman who has been unfortunate enough, either because of his courage or for some other reason, to be injured in the discharge of his duty. A police officer with ten years' service and a wife and family dependent upon him who is injured whilst performing his duty, if considered by the medical board to be unfit for further duty, is sent out on a pension of something like £2 a week. A Federal public servant injured whilst on duty receives compensation to the extent of the injury as well as payment under a superannuation scheme.

Clause 14 of the Commonwealth Statutory Rules of 1930 states—

“The authorities under the Commonwealth to employees of which the application of the Act shall extend shall be as follows:—

- Commonwealth Bank of Australia.
- Commonwealth Savings Bank of Australia.
- Repatriation Commission.
- War Service Homes Commission.
- Commonwealth Railways.
- Australian Commonwealth Shipping Board.
- Council for Scientific and Industrial Research.
- North Australian Commission.”

Practically the whole of the Commonwealth public service have the benefits of the Federal Workers' Compensation Act extended to them in addition to the superannuation payments. The Commonwealth schedule lays down the following compensation payments for specified injuries:—

Nature of Injury.	Amount payable.
	£
Loss of both eyes	750
Loss of both hands	
Loss of both feet	
Loss of a hand and a foot	
Total and incurable loss of mental powers, involving inability to work	675
Total and incurable paralysis of limbs or mental powers	
Loss of either arm, or of the greater part thereof	600
Loss of lower part of either arm, either hand, or five fingers of either hand	
Loss of leg	600
Loss of the lower part of the leg	562/10/0
Loss of a foot	525
Loss of one eye, with serious diminution of the sight of the other	675
Loss of sight of one eye	375
Loss of hearing	600
Complete deafness of one ear	200
Loss of a thumb	225
Loss of a forefinger	150
Loss of part of a thumb	112/10/0
Loss of little finger, middle finger or ring finger	112/10/0
Loss of a toe or the joint of a finger	90
Loss of a joint of a toe	75

If the Federal public servants can enjoy Commonwealth Workers' Compensation Act payments as well as superannuation payments I see no reason why similar treatment should not be extended to the police force in this State. In this State, if a State public servant meets with an injury whilst performing his or her duty, he or she receives compensation and a charge is made against the department concerned by the Insurance Commissioner, who also levies an additional 5 per cent. to meet administrative costs. Until recently, also, when the railway superannuation scheme was wound up, the railwaymen of this State also benefited by the provisions of both the Workers' Compensation Acts and the superannuation scheme. If it is to be the policy of the department to insist that policemen injured in the performance of their duties are to submit to an examination by a medical board then in common with Federal public servants, State public servants and railwaymen they should enjoy the benefits of the Workers' Compensation Acts. It would be the most humane way to treat them, it would provide them with some compensation for the injuries received during the performance of their duties and it would assist their wives and dependents as well. I trust that full and earnest consideration will be given to this matter in the near future.

I notice that a considerable sum is to be appropriated this year for the payment of overtime to the police force, and I should like to know if it could not be reduced by providing additional employment in the police force. It is preferable to give additional employment to unemployed persons who are capable of fulfilling all the requirements of a police recruit than pay this excessive amount of overtime. I hope that when the next Estimates are being considered it will be found that the administration has devised some means whereby this alteration can be made.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, *Ithaca*) [3.30 p.m.]: The matters raised by the hon. members for Murilla and Nanango in relation to the educational tests of the new police recruits were dealt with by me on the vote for the Chief Office. I can assure them that they have nothing to fear in the matter. As I pointed out yesterday the educational examination for a recruit is merely based on a seventh grade State school standard. That standard of education is available to most boys growing up in this State to-day. I cannot for the life of me see how many young people can in these days be denied a State school education. The number must be very small indeed. Police recruits are required to pass an educational examination based on that standard, and not on a University Junior or Senior public examination standard. Personally, I believe that any pupil of a State school who has attained the seventh standard is in a position to pursue further studies if a higher standard of education is desired. Every person must study if he desires to improve his status in life. No boy in the country, any more than a boy in the city, is deprived of the right of entering a State school. The compulsory school age in both the city and country is the same, fourteen years. The average scholar in the city and country does not bother to obtain a standard above the seventh class standard.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: The education of the boy in the city might be directed along

channels to enable him to enter business, while on the other hand the education of the boy in the country is to fit him to go on the land.

The HOME SECRETARY: The man on the land does a little bookkeeping and the country boy no doubt will be educated to do that work.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Very little of that is done.

The HOME SECRETARY: Do they not keep accounts?

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Very few.

The HOME SECRETARY: The boy in the city may never get beyond driving a dray, navvying, or a multitude of occupations that do not require him to keep up his educational studies. A boy must be mentally dull if he cannot brush his knowledge up after having once attained a seventh class education.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: You cannot get the advantage of night schools in the country as you can in Brisbane.

The HOME SECRETARY: If a boy has a seventh class State school standard he should after a lapse of a few years be capable of brushing up that knowledge. If not, he must be lazy or dull. Between 60 and 70 per cent. of the recruits admitted into the police force recently came from country centres. That shows that boys from the country are just as capable of passing that State school examination as the boys in the city. The educational requirements for cadet clerks were based on a public service pass, and included shorthand, typewriting, and bookkeeping. Several boys from the country passed that examination. Naturally, other qualifications requisite for a police recruit were physique and the capability of passing a severe medical test. They are also required to pass certain tests in horsemanship, to be able to ride a bicycle and to be able to drive a motor car. I believe that some of the recruits were well down in the list of educational passes. One man was well down the list, but he is supposed to be one of the best horsemen in Queensland and he obtained preference because he possessed that qualification. Our experience has been that the country lad is quite as capable of passing an examination as the city boy. In their period of training at the depot the recruits are being given riding instruction and some knowledge is being imparted to them concerning motor vehicles. Classes for first-aid instruction are being organised and due importance is being placed on ability to swim. Every member of a batch of recruits sworn in at the Petrie Terrace depot this year had either a certificate or medal for competency in life saving. In all these directions the knowledge acquired by the police recruit during his period of training will be of invaluable assistance in the period of active police service to follow, and every encouragement is given to these recruits to fit themselves for the work ahead of them.

With regard to the native trackers, the amount actually saved is £3,000 per annum, for the figures shown on the Estimates represent only wages and do not take into account rations and allowances. Thirty fewer trackers are being provided for this year, but I do not suppose that the forty-seven trackers who are left would between them do one tracker's job continuously during the year. Still, forty-seven native

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trackers will be available and they will be situated at points easy of access if their services are required. No necessity exists for seventy-seven native trackers in Queensland, and I believe that if a shilling is not being earned it is an outrage to spend it. There is no place in Queensland where the services of a tracker cannot be obtained at short notice. As a matter of fact, in nearly every police district, a police officer is the protector of aborigines, responsible for the earnings of the aborigines being banked and withdrawn only with his approval, so that aborigines would be available in nearly all districts of the State.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: You seldom see a black in the south-west now.

The HOME SECRETARY: But ample native trackers are still stationed in the south-west. In many parts of Queensland any number of aborigines would be available for tracking if wanted.

The matter of the injured policeman raised by the hon. member for Brisbane is one over which I have no control. If a member of the police force loses a limb, whether on or off duty, he is rendered unfit for further police service, and consequently on retirement is eligible only for the amount of pension to which he is entitled under the Act. The pension certainly places him in a better position than if he came only within the ambit of the Workers' Compensation Acts. I cannot do anything in the matter. The law as it stands must be obeyed.

Intermittent relief work does not come within my control, but I realise that the police are doing an immense amount of work for the Department of Labour and Industry, and the exigencies of the position demand that such work should be continued for the time being. If that department can find another way of doing the work, so much the better, for the police would offer no objection to their burden being lightened in that way. I can only pay a tribute to the cheerful manner in which members of the force have carried out that very trying work. The police have to deal with large numbers of unemployed men week by week, and do the work tactfully and carefully. Every possible assistance is given to the unemployed, whilst at the same time a careful watch is kept on the funds of the department. All hon. members will admit that the police have done very fine work, unselfishly and uncomplainingly. When all is said and done, we have not had much complaint, because the police realise the unfortunate position of the unemployed and know that any money taken from relief funds to pay for official services would mean so much less for actual unemployment relief.

The Commissioner of Police will take a note of any matter that has been raised in this debate.

Mr. P. K. COPLEY (*Kurilpa*) [3.41 p.m.]: I desire to add my meed of praise and congratulations to the Commissioner of Police on his work during the past year. Even a casual observer notices the greater efficiency and more alert bearing of the policemen in the street, whilst the innovations in traffic control have been of benefit to the people of Brisbane.

The report of the Commissioner gives a resume of the action he took prior to assuming active control of the force. The Commissioner visited the headquarters of each

of the police districts throughout the State, and made a close study of police organisation and methods in Sydney and Melbourne. That is typical of the thoroughness with which Mr. Carroll works, as was exemplified during his term in the Income Tax Department.

I was pleased to hear the statement by the Home Secretary relating to successful candidates in the recent examination for admittance to the police force. It is, I think, a satisfactory reply to the objections put forward by the hon. member for Murilla and others that these examinations would be of benefit only to men living in the city. Even if by any chance a greater number of the successful candidates came from the metropolitan area, the Commissioner of Police, realising the nature of the work that has to be carried out in the western and northern portions of the State, would not appoint clerical men to all the positions offering. Hon. members will readily realise that there are men in the police force at the present time who have not been promoted because of their inability to take over administrative duties and perform the necessary clerical work attached to those offices. These men perform valuable work in some spheres, and after many years of service and good work in the interests of the community they are deserving of more remuneration, but lack of education holds them back.

I desire to offer my congratulations to the Commissioner for his effective administration in regard to traffic matters. The purchase of twenty cycles and the arrangement for fast-moving motor cars is a step in the right direction. The effect of this improvement has been evidenced when dealing with motor thieves, and I am satisfied the Commissioner will expand that service.

In a superficial way I have seen the police force operating in almost every State, with the exception of Tasmania, and as a result of my observations I consider the standard of intelligence and integrity in the Queensland force is second to none in the Commonwealth.

I desire to make a suggestion—and I do not want to be misunderstood in this matter—in regard to the manner in which confessions are sometimes obtained from people in custody. At least one judge of the Supreme Court has taken very strong exception to the manner in which confessions are sometimes obtained by members of the police force. The method objected to is that of placing accomplices in separate rooms and telling one what the other has confessed to. I do not think any policeman would tell an individual a lie regarding the statement of an accomplice. The Criminal Code is very definite as to accomplices. It says that an offender cannot be convicted on the uncorroborated testimony of an accomplice or accomplices, which means that the evidence of the latter must be corroborated in some material particular implicating the accused. I realise the difficulties confronting the Commissioner in attempting to evolve a system which would eliminate such occurrences as I have mentioned; but I feel that by very careful training the police would become more efficient in cross-examination and better equipped to obtain evidence without resorting to any method which is frowned upon by some judges. I admit that a perusal of Table 1 in the report of the Commissioner

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shows that the work of the police has been very efficient. I realise that there are probably insurmountable difficulties in the way of altering the present method. Every member in this Committee realises that justice, to be of any value in any community, must be administered with scrupulous impartiality, and the punishment meted out must be consistent with good judgment and a consideration of the circumstances of each crime. I quite realise that a man who is over-enthusiastic in his work may do things that in his calmer moments he would not do. That is only a phase of human nature, and may happen to any one of us. The Commissioner should take steps to ensure the careful treatment of prisoners in custody for the purpose of examination.

Mr. KENNY: They have protection under the Vagrants, Gaming, and Other Offences Act.

Mr. P. K. COPLEY: That Act stands to the eternal shame of the Moore Government. Following on the statement of the hon. member for Logan in regard to it, I suggest to the Commissioner that it should be used with the greatest of care. As I pointed out yesterday, if a convicted man goes down the street and accidentally meets a former friend who snubs or ignores him—certainly a sad commentary on our outlook on life to-day—he may become bitter and think others will do the same, and in a desire for conversation may stop to talk to a man he has met in prison. We all know that the practice is that if a man is seen in the company of a convicted man, the detective or other police official who observes him “books” him—that is the term used. The official makes a note in his book and goes back to headquarters, where records are kept, and records the circumstances, time, and place. The individual may later on meet two or three other persons who have been in prison with him, he may meet them on four or five different occasions, and may stand talking for a few minutes only without any criminal intent, and certainly not to plan any nefarious scheme. Should an officious police officer take it into his head to deal with the individual, he can arrest him under the Vagrants, Gaming, and Other Offences Act and charge him with consorting.

Mr. KENNY: He has his protection.

Mr. P. K. COPLEY: As a matter of fact, he is being deprived of his liberty. The provisions of that section of the Act must be very carefully administered in the interests of the people, particularly when a man has already purged himself in respect of an offence committed against society and is endeavouring to lead a new life. It may be, and probably is the case, that he is pulled up by these former gaol acquaintances with a request for money. There are many circumstances to be considered regarding the association of men under these conditions. When eventually he is asked to give an explanation as to his association with such individuals, the man may have entirely forgotten the incident.

Mr. KENNY: He is allowed to have a witness when he is being examined.

Mr. P. K. COPLEY: As a matter of fact, if the hon. member knew as much about it as I do, he would know that the interrogation of these men is finalised before any question is broached as to arrest, and

it is only when the policeman has made up his mind to arrest him that this question of witnesses arises.

The Commissioner is to be commended for his endeavours to look after the welfare of his force. The Welfare Association that is at present in existence is tending to goodwill amongst the members of the force. It has been a necessity for many years. In the past the individual members of the force have not had the opportunity of forgathering and meeting their colleagues. The Commissioner in this respect is working along right lines, and I wish him well. There is no section of the public service in which contentment is more necessary in order that the maximum benefit may be obtained from it than the police force.

Item (Police) agreed to.

POLICE INVESTMENT BOARD.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, *Ithaca*) [3.51 p.m.]: I move—

“That £49,500 be granted for ‘Police Investment Board.’”

This is the fund from which police pensions are paid. Provision has been made for the restoration of the pension cut as from the 1st January next. I am very pleased indeed to be able to see the last of that cut in the pensions of ex-members of the police force. I think they were in the class of things that could well have been left alone when the pruning knife was being used. The scale of pensions for the police force is very liberal, and is for a very definite purpose. No policeman should have to worry about being able to support himself in his old age. Very frequently we hear criticism of the force, and some time ago a suggestion was made that quite a number of members of the force were grafters. The whole of the force had to bear the sin of one or two of its members. The members, as a whole, have been giving the community a very fine and clean service, and it is only right that the community should provide for them when they have to retire from active service. The very nature of their duties makes it necessary that they should be retired whilst comparatively young. The physical standard required of a member of the force makes it inadvisable to keep him in active service until he reaches the retiring age of other branches of the public service. Of course, also, during the course of their careers members of the force are, I suppose, subjected to more temptation than is any other section of the service, and if the community did not make provision for security in their old age, it would mean that a greater degree of temptation would be placed in the way of men of a weaker moral standard than is possessed by the great majority. I am very pleased to be able to announce that pensions will be paid in full as from 1st January next.

Mr. W. T. KING (*Marce*) [3.55 p.m.]: I congratulate the Home Secretary upon deciding to restore the pensions in full to ex-members of the police force. The Moore Government should never have reduced these pensions.

Mr. KENNY: Why did you not restore them two years ago?

Mr. W. T. KING: I shall deal with the hon. member in due course. The fact remains that the pensions should never have

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been reduced. As the Home Secretary has pointed out, the members of the police force have a certain duty to perform, they receive a certain salary, and many temptations can be placed in their way. The promise of a pension upon retirement is an added inducement to them to join the force. The Moore Government in their administration of the affairs of this State cut the police pensions mercilessly to the extent of 15 per cent., 16 per cent., and 17 per cent. These pensions should have been sacrosanct, and no Government, under any conditions, should have dealt with them in the way the Moore Government did. We have restored these pensions. The hon. member for Cook has asked why we did not restore them earlier, but he appears to be wild at present because we have decided to do it now. Financial stringency and the acts of the Moore Government during their term of office prevented our restoring the pensions earlier, but the present Government have improved the financial position of the State to such an extent that it is possible to restore the pensions to the former amount. I had very much pleasure in being associated with a deputation to the Home Secretary at the beginning of my term as a member of Parliament which sought the restoration of these pensions. I had very much pleasure in being associated with other hon. members on this side of the Chamber in keeping the matter before the Home Secretary, and I had very much pleasure in being associated with the deputation that was informed by the Home Secretary that it was his intention to restore the pensions to their original amount.

Mr. MOORE: You will have to pay an amusement tax on all this pleasure.

Mr. W. T. KING: I believe that the amusement tax should be abolished. The hon. gentleman was responsible for much tragedy in the lives of the people during his three years in power, but he seeks now to change from tragedy to comedy. The hon. member for Toowong sat behind the Government who reduced the pensions of the expolicemen. He is always ready to support any proposal to whittle away the rights of the individual. I have very much pleasure in supporting this vote, and I express the hope that these pensions will never again be reduced. If by any chance hon. members of the calibre of hon. members opposite do reach the Treasury benches during the course of the next 1,000 years I hope that they will not interfere with these pensions again.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*) [3.58 p.m.]: The Home Secretary and the hon. member for Maree are the two greatest political humbugs that this Committee has ever seen. Just fancy their trying to put that sort of thing over this Committee! The hon. member for Maree said that police pensions should be sacrosanct, but they were, in the first place, reduced by the Labour Prime Minister, Mr. Scullin.

Mr. W. T. KING: Not the police pensions.

Mr. DEACON: They were reduced by the very man that they supported during the last Federal election campaign, Mr. Scullin. In addition, the present Government have been in power for two and a-half years, yet, not until this Parliament is on its very deathbed do they decide to restore these pensions to the police. They have left the matter until

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the last minute just as an election gesture. Smoodging to the police force for their votes! That is all it means.

Mr. W. T. KING: An act of common justice.

Mr. DEACON: After sticking to the money for two and a-half years. The hon. member for Maree said that the action of the Moore Government was thieving.

Mr. W. T. KING: Mr. Hanson, I rise to a point of order. I did not make use of the word "thieving" at all. The hon. member for Cunningham accused me of saying that his Government thieved.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I would remind the hon. member for Cunningham that had the hon. member for Maree made use of the word "thieving" I should certainly have called him to order.

Mr. DEACON: I accept the denial of the hon. member. Nevertheless, the hon. member insinuated that it was a very wrong thing to do. So did the Home Secretary. Nevertheless, for two and a-half years they have taken advantage of that so-called wrong. They believed it to be wrong; we believed it to be right. We had to make the deductions in the police pensions in the same way as we had to apply the reductions to everyone else. Hon. members opposite talk about these bits of cuts, but look at the people in the country! Look at the cuts they got! Their produce was and still is selling at a very low price, and a large number of them are making very little wages at all. Why should not someone draw attention to that fact? Why all this humbug, cant, and hypocrisy when the present Government continued the cuts they complain of for two and a-half years after the Moore Government went out of office? If they believed them to be wrong, why did they not rectify that wrong when they came into power? If the police fall for this sort of political humbug they are bigger fools than anyone ever believed them to be.

Mr. KENNY (*Cook*) [4.3 p.m.]: I am very pleased to see the increase in this vote, which will enable the pensions to be restored to the police. I was very much interested in the speech delivered by the hon. member for Maree. He shed some crocodile tears about the reductions made by the Moore Government. If he were sincere he would have seen to it two years ago that the injustice he complains about was remedied.

The HOME SECRETARY: He came to me more than two years ago about the matter.

Mr. KENNY: When we occupied the Treasury benches many hon. members now sitting in opposition approached the Government to see if the police and other public officials could not be relieved of the financial restrictions being placed upon them. We realised that a Labour Prime Minister, in conjunction with Labour Premiers and anti-Labour Premiers, came to an agreement whereby all controllable Government expenditure must be reduced by 20 per cent. The Queensland Government reduced the salaries and wages of their employees by a lesser percentage than any other Government in Australia. The action taken by that Government resulted in the rehabilitation of the finances of this State.

Mr. W. T. KING: Mr. Bruce said your Government were retrogressing rapidly in your last year of office.

Mr KENNY: The fact remains that the Moore Government had to combine with all other Australian Governments to restore the financial stability of Australia. Hon. members opposite anticipate that they will get a lot of political kudos from the restoration of the cuts in the police pensions, but I ask them plainly why these cuts were not restored two years ago? Doubtless they will say that they were cleaning up the mess left by the Moore Government. They forget that the Moore Government had to clean up the mess made by fifteen years of Labour control in Queensland. At the same time the financial position of Australia was smashed. No Government, not even the Moore Government, could borrow any money on either the internal or external loan market. That was due largely to fifteen years of Labour administration in Queensland. The people in this State recognise that. (Government interjections.) When the Labour Government went out of office the credit of this State was crippled, and no loan money was to be had in any part of the world. After three years' administration by the Moore Government the present Government are in a position of being able to get funds. Why all this hypocrisy about what should have been done, and the restoration of the police pension cuts from the 1st January next? Why do hon. members opposite not advocate that these cuts should be made retrospective to the 1st July last? But that would be too far away from the elections! As the hon. member for Maree was speaking, I was reading an article on page 9 of to-day's "Telegraph," which deals with the very subject under discussion. It says—

"SAVING FUNDS FOR ELECTIONEERING.

"UNION COMMENT ON BUDGET SPEECH.

"The Treasurer's Financial Statement, as presented to Parliament, discloses that the conservative policy of the Government towards the claims of their employees and those of the unemployed cannot be justified on the ground of financial stringency, states the official organ of the Australian Railways Union, 'The Advocate,' which accuses the Government of saving funds for electioneering purposes."

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Your cobber, the "Advocate"!

Mr. KENNY: An hon. member on the Government side interjects, "Your cobber, the 'Advocate'!"—

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You are welcome to it. They and the Communists.

Mr. KENNY: I have yet to learn that the railwaymen of Queensland are Communists. If that is the opinion of the Deputy Leader of the Government, I challenge him to show that the railwaymen of this State are all Communists. A great majority of them support the present Government. However, the article continues—

"It seems to us, continues this journal, that this conservative policy has been deliberately followed for the purpose of providing political window-dressing in the last session of Parliament. In other words, railwaymen, public servants, and the unemployed have been sacrificed to provide suitable election propaganda material for the Government.

"The Budget statement contains figures and references that indicate that

the pessimistic tone and the negative attitude adopted by the Premier and Treasurer and his colleague (Mr. Pease) towards the many requests made by railway union deputations for improvements in wages and conditions could not be justified on the ground that the granting of them would cause financial embarrassment to the Government."

Thus we have a definite statement by Government employees who realise exactly what is taking place. Practically every action taken by the Government since the commencement of this session has relation to some privilege that will be restored on the 1st January next. We were told that the Agricultural Bank interest would be reduced as from 1st January next.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must return to the vote.

Mr. KENNY: I merely mentioned that in passing. It is peculiar that the restoration of police pensions will date from the 1st January next, which is a date on which many other events will occur. The Moore Government were condemned for reducing the police pensions in a period of financial depression. In the three years of their office the Moore Government had only £7,500,000 available from all sources, whereas the present Government have had £15,300,000—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. KENNY: I mention that to show that the pension cut could be restored now, not on the 1st January next, but even from the 1st July last.

Mr. W. T. KING: Why did you impose that cut in the first place?

Mr. KENNY: I have already told hon. members that the Moore Government had to take certain action to restore financial stability. If that action was wrong, then for two years and three months the present Government have continued the wrong, although they had ample funds at their disposal. Only on the eve of an election do the Government propose to restore the reduction as from the 1st January next. If the present Government expect the people concerned to regard their action as something wonderful—something that merits the sale of their votes, then they are doomed to disappointment. If the Government appraise the intelligence of the community generally in the same manner, they have a very hard lesson to learn.

Mr. BARBER (*Bundaberg*) [4.11 p.m.]: I should like to pay my meed of praise to the Government for their action for restoring these police pensions. Even when the hon. member for Cook and his colleagues have passed into the limbo of forgotten things, the fact will remain that it was left to the Queensland Labour Government to restore the pensions of the police force of the State. I had the pleasure of spending last week-end in Bundaberg, and I met a number of ex-policemen who desired me publicly to convey their appreciation of the Government's action in restoring these pensions. I take it the same feeling actuates all police pensioners throughout Queensland. I have a very happy recollection of seeing several ex-members of the police force at the Home Department a few weeks ago. I think the hon. member for Maree and one or two other metropolitan members were there to

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introduce the deputation to the Home Secretary. I think that was about the shortest deputation on record. They were hardly in the room before the Home Secretary advised them that the pensions would be restored as from 1st January next.

I am sorry the hon. member for Cook has left the Chamber, because I wanted to say a few words for his benefit. I recognise after his outburst last night and again this morning that he is in a bad way; and so is the hon. member for Toowong. I happen to locate myself in Toowong when I am at home. There are two ghosts stalking the hon. member for Toowong at the present time: one is Mr. Neil Macgroarty, who is now residing in the Toowong electorate, and is reported to be looking for the hon. member's scalp, and the other ghost is the crematorium which has recently commenced operations on the other side of the river, which means there will be fewer ghosts to be resurrected at election time to vote for the hon. member.

The work of the police—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is not in order in discussing the police vote generally. That vote has been passed, and the Chamber is now considering the vote for the Police Investment Board, which covers police superannuation.

Mr. BARBER: I was going to observe that the good work of the police has entitled them to these pensions. If I were Mussolini I would have given a pension of £3 a week to every constable who retired from the force.

At 4.15 p.m.,

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

Mr. BARBER: If that were done, I suppose our friends on the opposite side would cry, "Where is the money to come from?" That outlook is in keeping with their attitude on every occasion when social legislation has been introduced by the Labour Party in the interests of the workers. I contend that the policeman is equally as much a social worker as the industrialist, therefore it is perfectly right that industry should find the means of providing an adequate pension for him when he retires.

I compliment the Government on their action in restoring the pension cut.

Mr. GAIR (*South Brisbane*) [4.17 p.m.]: I should like to join with other members of the Government party in registering my appreciation of the Government's decision to restore to the police pensioners the cut in their pension rates which was made by the Moore Government. I consider the action of the Moore Government in interfering with the pensions of ex-police officers was a distinct injustice, and was, in effect, taking away from those people money which they had subscribed to this fund by their contributions.

Mr. MOORE: You know their contributions were not touched.

Mr. GAIR: This fund was established for the purpose of providing a pension for police officers. Police officers are required to subscribe to this fund to make provision for their own retirement, and yet we have the hon. the Leader of the Opposition saying

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that by reducing their pensions by 15 per cent. their subscriptions were not interfered with. It is very difficult to understand his reasoning and I repeat that interference with or reduction of that pension was a distinct injustice. The hon. member for Cook has stated that the pensions of police officers were reduced in every State of the Commonwealth. That remark is distinctly untrue. Queensland was the only State in the Commonwealth where ex-police officers had a reduction made in their pension and the Moore Government were responsible for it. I am pleased that the present Government are taking the first available opportunity of restoring that cut in the pensions of ex-police officers.

Mr. KENNY: You had an opportunity previously.

Mr. GAIR: That is a very wise statement and, of course, characteristic of the truant from Cook. A man who will get up in this Chamber day in and day out and make statements which are of little value, but which fortunately are not taken seriously by people outside—

Mr. KENNY: What are you worrying about then?

Mr. GAIR: Is it any wonder that the members of this Chamber are caused worry, when we have a member of the type of the hon. member for Cook, who persists in giving us his claptrap, which is reducing the standard of this Parliament to the level of the gutter.

Mr. KENNY: I rise to a point of order. I think it is very unparliamentary to refer to any person in this Committee as reducing the prestige of this Parliament to the level of the gutter. It is offensive to me, and I ask that it be withdrawn.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I would ask the hon. member for South Brisbane to withdraw his remark.

Mr. GAIR: I have no objection to withdrawing the remark if it is offensive to the hon. member for Cook.

Mr. KENNY: I am not used to living in the gutter.

Mr. GAIR: We do not know too much about the hon. member's past. The hon. member for Cook takes exception to my charging him with reducing the standard of Parliament to the gutter. I withdraw, but I feel justified in registering my protest against the efforts of many hon. members opposite—not all of them—to reduce the standard of this Parliament to that of a kindergarten, by daily talking a lot of twaddle and claptrap that brings ridicule on members of Parliament generally. That is one of the reasons why members of Parliament are subjected to ridicule by the general public instead of commanding its admiration and support. The hon. member for Cook is one of those members on the Opposition benches who are guilty of that charge.

Again I wish to say that the Government has restored these pensions at the first possible opportunity, and I am sure their action will receive the approval of the people of Queensland and the appreciation of those ex-members of the police force who suffered this reduction at the hands of the Moore Government. The people and the ex-members of the force are intelligent enough to size up the situation for themselves. They will realise that in addition to having

suffered this reduction, had a Labour Government not been returned to office in 1932, they would not have received a restoration, but that probably further reductions would have been inflicted. There is no doubt that members of the public service, and employees of the Crown generally realise that had a Labour Government not been elected in 1932 they would have suffered further reductions in their wages and salaries.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR (*Enoggera*) [4.22 p.m.]: I congratulate the Government on restoring the police pensions. I take up the attitude that whatever little I had to do with the restoration of the pensions to the ex-members of the police force in this State was done as a matter of principle. I am opposed to any Government's making a reduction in pensions of any kind, whether they be old-age, invalid, or police. There is something sacred in a contract to pay pensions. What happened at the Loan Council and the Premiers' Conference may have had something to do with the reductions of police pensions in this State. The restoration gives me very much pleasure indeed. The Government are restoring something to which the ex-policemen are justly entitled and something that should never have been taken from them. The hon. member for Cook has made a characteristic contribution to the debate by criticising the method of restoration, but his remarks are entirely based on political exigencies. He has no other joss to flog and naturally he uses this one on each and every occasion. There is no doubt that the state of the Treasury was responsible for the non-restoration of the pensions in 1932. The matter was thoroughly considered by the Home Secretary and the Government, but owing to the disturbed economic conditions it was decided that it was impossible to restore them before the present time, and as a Government must live within the amount of finance contributed by the taxpayers it was necessary to scrutinise carefully every avenue of expenditure. But during the past two years the country has been steadily recovering from the blight cast on it five years ago and the Government are able to restore not only the pensions to ex-policemen but also to extend a reasonable measure of relief to officers of the public service who came under the sharp axe of deflation swung by the Moore Government.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*) [4.26 p.m.]: I cannot help replying to one or two other little pieces of political propaganda that have emanated from the other side of the Chamber. Apparently the hon. member for South Brisbane does not know that the man responsible for all this cutting in expenditure was the very man that they supported as the possible Prime Minister of Australia a few weeks ago.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: You know that is not correct.

Mr. DEACON: It is correct. Hon. members opposite know very well that even the old-age pensions were cut and that they supported the man who proposed it. The man who did it and the party that proposed it and carried it through had the strongest support of hon. members opposite a few weeks ago, and now they say that it was a great injustice? Last year hon. members opposite had practically the biggest revenue on record, they had any amount of money.

Mr. MOORE: They paid off £2,000,000 in Treasury bills.

Mr. DEACON: They had plenty of money. Now they say that the financial cuts were a great wrong and a great injustice. They stuck to the police money for two and a-half years and even now they propose to stick to it for another two months. I have never heard such political nonsense talked in this Chamber. As a matter of fact, they do not know by how much the pensions were actually reduced. The police contributions were not touched at all, the only contribution that was reduced being the Government contribution to the fund.

Mr. W. T. KING: The police suffered in their pension payments.

Mr. DEACON: Did not the old-age pensioners suffer when their pensions were cut by the friends of hon. members opposite? And did hon. members opposite not support the man who did it? Was it not much harder on the old-age pensioners than on the ex-policemen? Did hon. members opposite think of that when they supported Mr. Scullin during the last Federal election campaign? It makes one tired to listen to hon. members opposite.

Mr. GAIR: Weary Willie!

Mr. DEACON: There is one thing I am not weary about, and that is telling hon. members on the other side what rubbish they talk on matters like this. If they were consistent, sincere, and honest in their belief, they would have restored these contributions three years ago. Even the ex-policemen who are to receive this money must know that it is being restored only for electioneering purposes. Hon. members opposite are no more honest in their attempt to restore the Government contributions to the Police Investment Board than they were during the last Federal election campaign when they failed to denounce Mr. Scullin and Mr. Theodore for having reduced the old-age pensions.

Mr. BRASSINGTON (*Fortitude Valley*) [4.30 p.m.]: In dealing with the remarks made by the hon. member for Cunningham, which call for some comment, I desire to speak for myself. I have a very vivid recollection of the occasion when hon. members opposite piloted through this Chamber the Financial Emergency Act, and I remember, too, the attitude of my party in this Chamber, and how they voted upon that measure. Their attitude was definitely against any cuts in police pensions, as well as any cuts in salaries and wages. It ill becomes the hon. member to attempt to justify this injustice which his Government perpetrated on certain unfortunate sections of the community by shifting the responsibility on to the shoulders of others.

Mr. DEACON: Yet you supported this Government who stuck to that money for two and a-half years, and will not give it back, even now.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: Any remarks that I made when the Financial Emergency Act was being considered are to be found recorded in "Hansard." If the hon. member for Cunningham can show me from those records where I made one single statement in support of a reduction in salaries or wages or in police pensions, I am prepared to resign my seat in this Parliament.

Mr. Brassington.]

If he cannot do so, then he should be prepared to do what I am prepared to do. In addition, is it not a definite fact that hon. members opposite had prepared draft Estimates aiming at a further reduction of salaries and wages and police pensions? I desire to nail down hon. members opposite on that point. Is it not a fact that they proposed, if returned to power at the 1932 elections, to inflict a further cut of 10 per cent. in the directions indicated?

Mr. DEACON: You know that is not true.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: As a matter of fact, that was quoted on the floor of this Chamber by the present Leader of the Government. He made a statement that draft railway estimates had been prepared showing a definite reduction of from 10 to 15 per cent. in the salaries and wages of railway employees.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: That is not true.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: That fact was reported in "Hansard."

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: That is not true.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: The hon. member cannot get away with it.

Mr. MAXWELL: You cannot get away with it, either.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: He will have an opportunity to deny it after this session.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask members on both sides of the Committee to assist me in preserving order; otherwise I shall be compelled to deal with them.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: Mr. O'Keefe, the last thing I desire is to be disorderly in the Committee, but it is the duty and right of every hon. member on this side of the Committee to refute the ridiculous and unfair statements made by hon. members opposite. The Opposition charge us with insincerity in not seeking to restore these cuts until two and a-half years after we have been in office. There can be no basis for that charge when we review the financial position of this State when the present Government took office. The position of Queensland to-day stands as a tribute to the sound administration and foresight of the party now in control of the Treasury benches. After two and a-half years we have been able to rectify many of the mistakes of the Moore Government and place the finances on a sound basis, and this has enabled us to restore many of the cuts made not only in the remuneration of the wage-earner, but also in the pensions of the policemen and in social services. I leave this issue for the consideration of the people at the next election, who, I believe, will endorse the action of this Government.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN (*Murilla*, [4.35 p.m.]): The hon. member who has just resumed his seat made the statement that Estimates for the Railway Department had been prepared by the Moore Government with the object of making a further reduction in salaries and wages. If hon. members have those Estimates I should like to have them tabled.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: When the Premier made the statement in this Chamber two sessions ago you were not game to challenge him.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I, as Minister for Transport at the time, knew nothing what-

[*Mr. Brassington.*

ever about those Estimates. So far as I was concerned no estimates were ever prepared providing for further reductions in the wages of the railwaymen. If any effort had been made further to reduce their wages I should have opposed it. If the papers are available let the hon. member or the Premier table them so that we can discover whether the statement is true or not. I am quite prepared to say that if the Estimates were prepared by the Commissioner for Railways, the Commissioner knows something about a matter of which I know nothing. Let the papers be tabled.

Coming now to the subject before the Committee, we know that reductions in many directions were made as a result of the historic conference at which four representatives of the Labour Party and three representatives of the Nationalist Party attended. That historic Premiers' Conference decided that certain action should be taken in view of the financial position of the country. Mr. Scullin, the Labour Prime Minister, played his part and reduced old-age pensions from £1 to 17s. 6d. a week. In order to fulfil the conditions agreed upon by the Prime Minister and the other Premiers—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must deal with the vote under discussion.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I am endeavouring to show why a reduction was made in the first place.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must deal with the question before the Committee.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: The question before the Committee is the restoration of the police pensions.

The HOME SECRETARY: Are you opposing the restoration?

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: No, but I am trying to point out that the police pensions were reduced just as the old-age pensions were reduced—because it was unanimously agreed upon by four representatives of the Labour Party and three representatives of the Nationalist Party.

Mr. W. T. KING: That is not correct. This is the only State in which the pensions were reduced.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: No, the old-age pensions, common to the whole of Australia, were reduced by the Labour Prime Minister.

If Queensland has reached a financial position that will permit of the restoration of the reduction in police pensions, let it be done; but we must not forget that the present Government robbed the railwaymen of any chance they ever had of securing a pension. (Government interruption.) If it is a good thing for a policeman to have a pension, it is equally good for a railwayman, who is just as important a member of the civil service—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I do not propose to allow the hon. member to continue on these lines.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: We have all been more or less departing from the point, Mr. O'Keefe, but I am sorry that this is being made a political question in order that the Government may secure some political kudos. Although they had just as much money at their disposal twelve months ago

as to-day, the Government did not think it advisable to restore the reduction earlier. It is significant that the restoration is being made on the eve of an election. It is equally significant that we find many members on the Government side taking the opportunity to congratulate the present Administration for restoring this reduction after two and a-half years. If it were wrong to reduce the pensions in the first place, it was equally wrong for the present Government, who had funds available, to take advantage of the reduced pensions for two and a-half years.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You did not leave us any money with which to pay them.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: The hon. gentleman has gone throughout the length and breadth of Queensland telling the people he had money to burn and asking the people to make use of it. So far as the police pensions are concerned, a mere handful of men are affected and their voting power will not make the slightest difference.

Mr. W. T. KING: That is not being considered.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: It is. Why is it necessary for hon. members on the Government side to get up and congratulate the Government on what they have done in regard to the restoration of pensions? They have done so because these police pensioners are spread over numerous electorates. I think it is sickening and degrading to see hon. members on the Government side rising in their seats and saying that the Moore Government did a frightful thing when they reduced the pensions of ex-police officers. Many of these pensioners had incomes irrespective of their pensions, and the old-age pensioner, who was entirely dependent on his pension of £1 a week, had 2s. 6d. deducted from that amount by a Labour Prime Minister. At the last election the Labour Government came forward with a promise to the old-age pensioners which was in the nature of a bribe; but it was not accepted by the people, because the anti-Labour forces had a victory.

Mr. GAIR: I rise to a point of order. I submit that the hon. member for Murilla is not in order in saying that the Labour Party offered a bribe to the people.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: If the hon. member used those words, I ask him to withdraw them.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: If it is offensive I withdraw it. I was talking about the Labour candidates, not the Labour Government, and they are outside the scope of this Chamber.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I desire to draw the hon. member's attention to the fact that the question before the Committee is the grant in aid of the Police Superannuation Fund.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I am very pleased that this amount has been restored, provided the Government are in a position to do so. It seems to me a great shame that the Government did not restore it twelve months or two years ago. Hon. members on this side of the Committee would not then have been able to say that the restoration was made on the eve of an election in order to obtain votes at that election.

Mr. KENNY (*Cook*) [4.46 p.m.]: I listened to a fair amount of abuse from the hon. member for South Brisbane in reply to my speech, but I heard no argument. I would remind the hon. member that abuse is no argument. The hon. member said that the debates had reached a kindergarten stage in this Chamber. I am pleased to see that the hon. member recognises he is in the kindergarten stage. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley said that if it could be shown that he voted for a reduction of salaries or wages during his period in this Chamber he would resign his seat. In reply to that hon. member I need only refer to the police vote, where it will be found the hon. member voted for a reduction in wages and salaries of £60,410 last year and the previous year.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to the vote before the House.

Mr. KENNY: I thought I was entitled to reply to the hon. member for Fortitude Valley.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. KENNY: Can I not reply to those statements?

Mr. KEOGH: Mr. O'Keefe—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to resume his seat.

Mr. KENNY: That is an absolute choke.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. KENNY: It's a damned choke.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. KEOGH: Mr. O'Keefe, on this vote—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I was under the impression that the hon. member wished to raise a point of order. The hon. member for Cook has made a reflection on the Chair. I would ask the hon. member to withdraw and apologise.

Mr. KENNY: There is nothing else under the rules of debate left for me to do. If a member is not entitled in this Chamber to reply to statements made by members opposite then, Sir, what can I think? There is only one thing for me to do, obey your ruling.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to withdraw his remark with reference to the Chair and apologise.

Mr. KENNY: I must obey your ruling, Mr. O'Keefe. I do.

Mr. KEOGH: He has not done it yet.

Mr. KENNY: Of course he has. What do you want me to do, get down on my knees?

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to withdraw and apologise.

Mr. KENNY: I say I have acceded to your request as a member of this Chamber.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: My request for an apology?

Mr. KENNY: I have acceded to your request to do so. I cannot say any more. I am not expected to go down and kneel at the Chair. I say I accede to your request as Chairman of this Committee.

Mr. Kenny.]

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I must ask the hon. member to withdraw and apologise.

Mr. KENNY: I have acceded to your request and I apologise. I cannot do more. I am not prepared to go and kneel at the feet of the Temporary Chairman.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Is the hon. member desirous of resuming his speech?

Mr. KENNY: I have been asked to resume my seat. If I am entitled to reply to the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, I do desire to continue my speech. You asked me, Mr. O'Keefe, to resume my seat. I ask for your ruling as to whether I am entitled to reply to the remarks made by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: What were his remarks?

Mr. KENNY: The statement made by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley was that the Moore Government were responsible for wage reduction and the reduction in the vote for pensions for the police force. He stated that members on that side of the Committee had never voted for any reduction and he challenged us to prove where he had voted. I am now bringing before this Chamber the division on this vote.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: I rise to a point of order. During the course of my remarks I challenged hon. members to show where I had advocated or voted for a reduction of pensions or wages in connection with the Financial Emergency Act.

Mr. KENNY: In reply to that I quote the vote for "Police Investment Board" last session, providing for a reduction, for which the hon. member voted. I also quote the vote for "Police" where there was another reduction under the Financial Emergency Act of £60,410 in wages and salaries. The hon. member voted for that. That being the case, we find we should have a by-election in Fortitude Valley. The hon. member who is Deputy Leader of the Government stated that they did not have the funds to make this restoration previously. Very good. I ask the hon. gentleman why, if they did not have the funds, they could meet £2,000,000 of Treasury bills? These £2,000,000 worth of Treasury bills were there to pay the money. That could have been utilised on this vote. I would also ask why it was necessary to reduce the estimated deficit that was agreed upon by the Loan Council by £600,000? That money could have been utilised to pay the reduction in the police vote. Anything will do for hon. members on the Government side for political purposes! We will not allow hon. members to get away with unqualified statements in this way. (Government interjections.)

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! There is too much noise and too much interruption in the Chamber, and I would ask hon. members to allow the hon. member for Cook to continue his speech.

Mr. KENNY: I should like to draw your attention, Mr. O'Keefe, to the fact that the hon. member for Kelvin Grove remarked that we are brigands and robbers on this side of the Chamber. That is very offensive and should be withdrawn. We are entitled to an apology.

Mr. WATERS: Which member does the hon. member for Cook refer to?

[Mr. Kenny.]

Mr. KENNY: I refer to the hon. member. He referred to members on this side as "robbers and brigands," which is offensive to me and I think every other member on this side of the Chamber. We are entitled to a withdrawal and apology.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Is the hon. member for Cook asking for a withdrawal?

Mr. KENNY: I am asking the Chairman to fix the matter up.

Mr. WATERS: I have had the pleasure of saying it and I now have the satisfaction of withdrawing it.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to withdraw without reservation.

Mr. KENNY: Are we not entitled to an apology, Mr. Chairman?

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I warn the hon. member for Cook that I am not going to allow him to address the Chair in that manner, nor am I going to permit these matters to be treated as a joke. I shall not give him any further latitude. If he continues to make reflections on the Chair I shall have to deal with him.

Mr. KENNY: I am not making any reflection on the Chair. There are some statements to which objection can be taken, but there are other statements that are absolutely offensive, and one is entitled to an apology for them. If you rule that the statement by the hon. member for Kelvin Grove is not worthy of that consideration, then I obey your ruling.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I am in the chair.

Mr. KENNY: I recognise that full well, and I am quite prepared to accept your ruling. If you are content, then I shall be content.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, *Ithaca*) [4.55 p.m.]: I did not intend to speak again on this vote, but I cannot allow the hon. member for Cook to get away with the statement that he has just made. Either he tried deliberately to mislead the Chamber or he is ignorant of the facts. He stated that during the past two years hon. members on this side had voted for a reduction in police superannuation payments. That is not the case. The police superannuation payments last year were larger than the vote for the preceding year, because last year pensions to widows and orphan children of ex-policemen were restored to their original amounts. That was the first step taken by the present Government in restoring the unwarranted deductions imposed on the police force by the Moore Government. The hon. member was not speaking the truth when he said that hon. members on this side had voted for a reduction in police pensions. The appropriation this year is an increase on the appropriation provided by the previous Government.

Item (Police Investment Board) agreed to.

PRISONS.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, *Ithaca*) [4.57 p.m.]: I move—

"That £29,171 be granted for 'Prisons.'"

The appropriation this year shows an increase of £1,025, provision being made

for the appointment for one additional warder, with increases in salaries to existing staff. The number of prisoners in the past year was about the same as the number for the previous year, but the average number of prisoners was less than for some years back. The average number in 1928 was 414.87, whereas to-day the number is 385.74, an increase over the preceding two years, but a decrease compared with 1928, 1929, and 1930.

Mr. R. M. KING (*Logan*) [4.58 p.m.]: After listening to the political propaganda that has just emanated from hon. members opposite I should like to invite the attention of hon. members to the report on the prisons department. On page 40 of the report upon the operations of the sub-departments of the Home Department, it is stated that capital punishment was abolished as from 31st July, 1922. Then it goes on to make very interesting comparisons dealing with capital punishment over a period of twelve years prior to the abolition of capital punishment and over a period of twelve years following the abolition of capital punishment. The comparisons disclose a rather serious position. The report points out that there were seventeen death sentences in respect of charges of wilful murder, murder, and attempted murder, from 1st August, 1910, to 30th July, 1922—the twelve years prior to the abolition of capital punishment—and that there were thirty-four life sentences in respect of charges of wilful murder, murder, and attempted murder during twelve years since 31st July, 1922. The last time that the extreme penalty of the law was carried out was on 22nd September, 1913. It will be noted that seventeen death sentences were imposed in twelve years prior to the abolition of capital punishment, and that thirty-four life sentences were imposed in twelve years since the abolition of capital punishment, or exactly double the number in the same period of time. The increase is greater than the increase in population warrants. The report goes on to say—

“The mean population during that period was 684,320, so that the sentences represented one per 40,254 of the mean population.”

Later, dealing with the second twelve-year period the report states—

“During that period the mean population was 876,611, so that the life sentences passed represented one to every 28,277.”

Notwithstanding the increase in population there has been a very material increase in these serious crimes of wilful murder, murder, and attempted murder since capital punishment was abolished. It is a matter which should give us cause for serious reflection.

The report also deals with convictions on charges of rape and attempted rape previous to the abolition of capital punishment and subsequently. There were thirteen convictions for these offences in twelve years prior to the abolition of capital punishment, but the number of convictions on similar charges in twelve years after the abolition of capital punishment numbered seventeen. Rape has always been looked upon as a very serious offence. The Criminal Code always provided for capital punishment for this offence.

Mr. W. T. KING: How many people were hanged for rape?

Mr. R. M. KING: I do not know, but I do remember one case many years ago. In that case the jury held it was a case of rape by fraud—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: A good number.

The HOME SECRETARY: There were only three executions in Queensland in the period reviewed before the abolition of capital punishment.

Mr. R. M. KING: That conclusively shows that the provisions of capital punishment in the Criminal Code acted as a deterrent to serious crimes.

The HOME SECRETARY: There were seventeen convictions for capital offences and only three executions.

Mr. R. M. KING: That shows the wisdom of whatever Government were in power in keeping in the statute the extreme penalty of the law. I know it is the policy of the Government to abolish capital punishment. They abolished it in 1922. I remember the discussion on the Bill and I shall not raise any academic discussion on the question, as I expressed my views then.

Mr. KEUGH: Do you believe in capital punishment?

Mr. R. M. KING: Yes, I do believe in capital punishment.

Mr. KEUGH: Why didn't you bring in a Bill to re-enact it?

Mr. R. M. KING: The abolition of capital punishment is not the policy of all Labour Governments throughout Australia. I have a distinct recollection of executions taking place in Western Australia under the Collier Labour Government. We had executions in New South Wales whilst Mr. Lang was in power. Therefore, capital punishment has not been abolished in that State. That leads me to this point: A very serious crime took place in our State last year. A woman was brought over the border from New South Wales to Glenore Grove, near Lowood, where one of the most atrocious crimes ever committed in the history of this State was perpetrated. The trial judge said that the two prisoners probably knew that capital punishment had been abolished in Queensland, and, therefore, they were quite safe in coming over the border because had they committed the crime in New South Wales and been convicted they would probably have been executed.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: One of the men attempted to administer strychnine to the woman in a glass of beer when they were on the Clarence River, but she did not drink it.

Mr. R. M. KING: I do not know anything about the merits of that case, which is all over now; according to our laws we have to accept the verdict of the jury.

The HOME SECRETARY: That, nevertheless, is true. The first attempt to kill the woman was in New South Wales.

Mr. R. M. KING: I am not raising this question simply for the purpose of talking about it, but with a view to its receiving the serious attention of the Government. I know perfectly well that the Government do not believe in carrying out the extreme penalty of death.

The HOME SECRETARY: Frankly, I have a horror of it.

Mr. R. M. King.]

Mr. R. M. KING: I have a horror of it myself.

Mr. KEOGH: You want somebody else to do it.

Mr. R. M. KING: The whole thing is abhorrent to all people, but a provision for capital punishment would act as a deterrent. The evidence before us inclines one to the belief that the provision for capital punishment did act as a deterrent and that its abolition has meant an increase in serious crimes. Why should our attention be so sharply drawn to the fact in the report of the Prisons Department?

The HOME SECRETARY: I asked the Comptroller-General to give that information.

Mr. R. M. KING: No harm will be done if provision is made in the statutes for capital punishment.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It will not be put in the statute book while we are here.

Mr. R. M. KING: That may be so; nevertheless better results would have been obtained had the provision for capital punishment been retained. The Labour Government could always exercise clemency, which after all is within the power of any Executive. The statistics furnished in the report show that from the 1st August, 1910, to the 30th July, 1922—capital punishment was abolished as from 31st July, 1922—only three executions took place. Undoubtedly serious crime is on the increase and I merely bring this matter forward so that something can be done to remedy the position.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR (*Enoggera*) [5.10 p.m.]: The hon. member for Logan endorses capital punishment because he considers it necessary as a deterrent to serious crime, which he says has increased in the last twelve years. We must not lose sight of the fact that during the great war hundreds of thousands of human beings were taught to kill, and a psychology was created that held life cheap. Sentiments of brotherly love and peace were relegated to the background, and human beings were regarded as machines of murder in the interests of the belligerent countries. Furthermore, many soldiers returned to this country with shattered nerves. From every rostrum in the State speakers urged men to enlist for the purpose of destroying life. Women were worked up into a state of hysteria against people who did not see eye to eye with them on the conscription issue. All these things have a bearing upon the psychology of the people.

Mr. EDWARDS: I do not think they have.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: What could one expect after an orgy of slaughter and bloodshed? It is not surprising that life is not held as sacred as it should be.

Mr. WIENHOLT: Do you think the motor cars have made life cheap?

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: A motor car does not murder. From a psychological aspect the war was responsible for many of the murders that have taken place since. The motor car has certainly contributed to the number of murders committed by the underworld, that section of the community which is at war with society generally. With modern means at their disposal, automatic revolvers, machine guns, and methods of fast transport, these people gain the idea that they can commit murder in the further-

ance of their crime and get away with it, and that is one of the causes of increase in such offences. A study of American conditions during the war as compared with those of to-day will offer hon. members opposite a good illustration of why this class of crime has increased.

The time has arrived in this and every other civilised community when more humane methods must be adopted when dealing with first offenders and men and women who have committed crimes which do not come within the category of serious crime. The time is opportune for the investigation of prison life and methods of reform. Any system adopted should ensure that first offenders and those who committed lesser crimes would be segregated and taught a trade. In the near future when the prison farm is established in Queensland, such prisoners will be able to learn the rudiments of primary production, which will fit them to go on the land.

At 5.15 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. EDWARDS: Why do you always pick on the primary producer when you want to get rid of your burdens?

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: Our friends opposite have always been crying out for labour.

Mr. EDWARDS: We don't want that sort of labour; you can keep them down here.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: Will the hon. member say that because a man commits a misdemeanour he should be ostracised for the rest of his life? Would he not make as good a farm labourer if he were given the opportunity? Do hon. members who pose as Christians mean to tell me that they really follow the ethics of Christ? Do they mean to tell me that a man who has served a small sentence for a minor crime should not have every opportunity to make good afterwards? Hon. members opposite know that many men who were pillars of Australian society came out to this country as convicts. Thousands of convicts were sent out to Australia and they never let their friends down either. Some of the older families of Victoria, New South Wales, and I daresay in this State, can trace their ancestors to those who left England for—shall I say—Australia's good. The application of humanitarian principles to this question will solve the problem and not the infliction of capital punishment for crimes which are sometimes attributable to psychological influences. Medical science should be used. Criminals should be treated psychologically and medically and not treated in the inhuman manner of the past. If the matter were tackled from this aspect, no doubt the problem of crime would be solved.

Mr. P. K. COPLEY (*Kurilpa*) [5.13 p.m.]: I did not intend to say anything on this vote until I heard the hon. member for Logan make a statement regarding capital punishment. To me his statement appeared rather paradoxical, when taken with his remarks concerning the treatment of discharged prisoners. Of the seventeen death sentences that were passed in the twelve years prior to 1922, as mentioned on page 40 of the report, only three were actually carried into effect. If the hon. member makes the point that these executions were a deterrent, why could not any person contemplating the commission of any of the then capital offences have said, "I shall be

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very unlucky if I am executed when so many of these sentences are commuted to life imprisonment or imprisonment for a definite term." Were the hon. member for Logan, who is a member of the legal profession, to turn up a very elementary text-book on law, which is in the hands of any student going for his intermediate examination—I refer to Salmon's "Jurisprudence"—he would find there are four different kinds of punishment—reformatory, deterrent, preventive, and retributive. Jurisprudence demands that one of these four different types of punishment be applied to the offender for any particular crime. It is all very well saying that the punishment inflicted is a deterrent against the commission of certain crimes. It is common knowledge that many crimes are committed to-day on impulse, by persons not of sound mind—temporarily insane. In Queensland our Criminal Code came into effect in 1901 after the giant intellect of Sir Samuel Griffith had codified our criminal law. There are many instances in the Criminal Code where an excuse can be set up and accepted by a court for the commission of a criminal act. So far as the taking of the life of an individual is concerned, the defence of intoxication can be set up if it is intoxication to such a degree that it robs the individual of his power of self-control and his ability to know the nature of the act he is doing, so long as he did not deliberately get himself into that condition. I can give the Committee many other cases where excuses can be set up and will be accepted by the court. I do not desire that this Committee should let it go to the world that we are retrogressing. As a matter of fact, in the treatment of our prisoners we are progressing. One may journey to New South Wales and see the road over the Blue Mountains built by criminal labour—by men chained together in gangs. If one died, his body was thrown over the side of the mountain. We do not desire to return to such treatment. Or one can proceed to Western Australia and inspect the town hall at Perth. The architect of this structure was a convicted criminal. I appreciate his humour. The clock on the tower is surrounded by a scroll—a hangman's noose—and the "lookouts" in that tower are in the form of broad arrows pointing to the ground. A controversy exists in Western Australia as to whether the building should not be destroyed, because of the fact that it stands there a monument to the horrors associated with the treatment of convicts in the past. Port Arthur, in Tasmania, and many other convict settlements are a blot on the fair name of our civilisation. We do not want to return to that system of capital punishment so closely associated with our past. I am an earnest advocate of prison reform, and should like to see the Home Secretary pushing forward with his scheme in this respect as quickly as possible. I realise I am treading on somewhat dangerous ground, but there are certain features associated with our prisons of to-day that make me feel rather ashamed of being a Christian. I have inspected the prisons at Boggo road and Stewart's Creek, Townsville, but not Rockhampton. In the main, the conditions operating there are wonderful—that is, so far as it is possible to give good surroundings within four walls.

I realise that a man who commits an offence against society should pay the penalty, but I also realise that there are

men in prison who are by no means dangerous. Certain human actions have to be performed during the night, and facilities could be made available to the less dangerous men who would not endeavour to obtain their liberty. It would not be wise to give dangerous criminals any latitude, especially when an institution is perhaps half-staffed, in the dead hours of the night. These men must be adequately guarded, but at the same time there are features associated with prison life to-day, even in its very best form, which, to me, require the attention of the authorities with a view to improvement. I for one will never be a party to going back to the old days of capital punishment. I entirely endorse the present-day forms of punishment and the manner in which they should be applied.

Mr. WATERS (*Kelvin Grove*) [5.27 p.m.]: I should like to comment upon the methods that are employed in dealing, particularly, with crimes due to sexual perversion and sex offences generally. The methods employed in Queensland are hopelessly inadequate and out of date, and constitute a blot upon a civilised community. Time after time magistrates in this city have stated that it is practically useless to send this type of offender to gaol for the maximum period of six months, because it is no deterrent to him at all. If a person is abnormal to the extent that he is a sexual pervert there should be some more scientific method of dealing with the case. A psychological laboratory should be established where a medical man could examine cases of this description instead of their being sent to gaol—from which they will emerge, probably, with their perverse instincts more highly developed. If they are placed under the care of medical men they may have some chance of being reclaimed to society, and there may be some possibility of their instincts and habits being diverted to normal channels. We read in the newspaper that persons are sent to gaol for periods of six months for committing an unnatural offence, for exposing themselves in public, and for committing other offences usually committed by sexual perverts. Anyone who has read the works of Havelock Ellis, Kraft Ebing, and other sex psychologists must realise that a more efficient method of dealing with that type of offender is required in a civilised community if we are to make any advance in that direction at all. I hope the Home Secretary will give some attention to this phase of prison reform. To send these people to gaol in existing circumstances is a reflection on prison administration, and something to which those associated with prison reform in this State should have given attention long ago. Governments of all shades of political opinions must share the responsibility for failing to take action in this direction in the days gone by. But, as we are living in advanced times and in a civilisation which has vast facilities to offer, I believe that the Government should take the necessary steps along the lines that I have suggested to deal with sexual offenders.

Another reform which should be hastened deals with the position of the first offenders. I hope that a prison farm will be expedited, and that instead of youthful offenders who, perhaps, have committed a minor crime against society being herded with old and hardened criminals they will have there an

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opportunity to make a genuine attempt to reclaim themselves and once more become useful members of society.

Mr. RUSSELL (*Hamilton*) [5.30 p.m.]: I want to assure the hon. member for Enoggera that the Opposition have no desire to go back to the old days. He imagines that this party is opposed to any system of prison reform. On the contrary, we are just as humane in our attitude towards this question as members of his own party. Any movement that makes for reform of prison life and would act towards a retardation of crime will have our hearty support.

We know that the debates that took place on capital punishment in this Chamber were mostly of an academic character. Capital punishment is abhorrent to me and I should not like to see the system restored. There are many good citizens who think that the mere fact that capital punishment is provided as a punishment for capital crimes acts as a deterrent. For all that, I think that society in civilised countries now generally recognises that it is proper that capital punishment should be abolished.

The hon. member for Logan drew attention to the growth of crime. The hon. member for Enoggera attributed it to the psychology of the times. He is rather inclined to trace the cause back to the effects of the war. He stated that men were taught and encouraged to kill, and that this certainly affected the psychology of the people. I join issue with him on that statement. My experience of soldiers teaches me that they are just as law-abiding as any other section of the community.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: I did not say they were not.

Mr. RUSSELL: The hon. member stretched the matter too far when he said that the cause of the increase in crime was the psychology created by the war. I am inclined to think that the increase in crime in some countries is due chiefly to the tremendous amount of unrest that exists to-day. There is no doubt that in the last decade, owing to the promulgation of various doctrines, people have become very dissatisfied with the laws that govern their country. The world is not going back to the old conditions which existed a quarter of a century ago, but there is a good deal of restlessness and a good deal of dissatisfaction with present conditions. There is not the same respect for law and authority to-day as existed, say, ten years ago. The hon. member for Enoggera cited the United States of America. There is no doubt that in that great country there is a spirit of lawlessness and a disregard of authority, and but for the introduction of drastic measures to stamp them out we might expect a perpetuation of the trouble. Fortunately, British countries have not had the same increase in crime as the United States of America, although we deplore the fact that our records show that here in Australia there has been an increase in crime. That is due to the increase of the spirit of lawlessness and disregard of authority. I am afraid that many doctrines broadcast to-day do not make for greater discipline among our people, and a due respect for the law. It behoves the men in charge of our affairs to see to it that these lawless tendencies are checked. As a rule, the Australian is a law-abiding citizen. He may be free and

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easy in manner and impatient of restraint, nevertheless, if his energies are rightly directed he is just as law-abiding as a citizen of any other country. The Opposition, as I said, has no desire to go back to the old days. No doubt—

“Man’s inhumanity to man
Makes countless thousands mourn.”

We are all heartily ashamed of the things that were done in the early days of Australia, but they were due to a system which prevailed not in Australia but in the motherland. We know how rigorously offenders against the law were dealt with, and how men were transported for a most trivial offence. We now forget all that. Australia, despite her temporary increase in crime, can show that her criminal records bear favourable comparison with those of any other country in the world.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, *Ithaca*) [5.35 p.m.]: Matters raised under this vote are of considerable public importance and a great deal of public interest has been taken in them. It was with a view to getting some check on the number of capital offences committed that I asked the Comptroller of Prisons to prepare a table showing the number of capital offences committed both before and after the abolition of capital punishment. The table which has been supplied gives the number of convictions, but does not necessarily display the proportionate increase in offences. Undoubtedly juries hesitated to convict on charges of wilful murder when capital punishment existed. When the inquiries that I am now making are complete we may find that the figures do not look so significant. A comparison will have to be made with the position in other States, where capital punishment still exists. Certainly no noticeable falling off in capital crimes is evident in New South Wales and Victoria, for we are from time to time regaled at breakfast with news of serious crime in those States. Until comparisons are made it would be unfair to pass judgment on our system. Furthermore, the number of offences committed in those States and in Queensland, and the proportion of convictions in the respective States will have to be taken into consideration. Personally, I do not believe that a provision for capital punishment is any deterrent to the commission of serious crime. A person who contemplates the killing of a fellowbeing does not sit down and calculate the probable sentence he will receive. If he did, then probably very little serious crime would be committed, because no one would contemplate with equanimity even the prospect of spending a lifetime in gaol; indeed, the prospect of capital punishment would appear preferable to many than spending a lifetime in gaol. However, so soon as I get complete information I shall make it available for publication.

Reference has been made to the proposed prison farm. Recently, on my way to Stanthorpe, I inspected the property. All that is needed before prisoners can go on that farm is a burn off, and the Forestry Board officials say it is probable that a good burn off will be made at the beginning or middle of next month. So soon as that is done the first draft of prisoners will go on that farm and commence work.

Mr. MOORE: Will they camp there?

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes. I do not propose to spend a large sum of money in constructing elaborate buildings, for I think these people are capable of doing their own work. It is desirable to get offenders who are not naturally criminally inclined away from the association of the Boggo Road Gaol. With all the care that is taken in that gaol, it is impossible to stamp out associations between first offenders and experienced criminals. Mess orderlies have to be appointed, and it is remarkable with what rapidity information travels around. It is impossible to stamp out the means of communication, and, although every attempt is made by prison officials to segregate first offenders and to classify prisoners generally, all prisoners have to go into the workshops, and thus in the course of their work have common associations and opportunities for an interchange of ideas. Victims of the law who are not natural criminals should be dissociated from the prison altogether, for in that way much can be done in the way of reform. Nobody likes prison. The most hardened criminal has only one desire in life when he is imprisoned; he wants to get out. Certainly criminals do everything in their power to avoid getting into gaol, and, although life in prison has been made less inhuman than it was gaol does not offer attractions to anyone. I shall be pleased when the prison farm is established, for we shall be better able to segregate different classes of prisoners. It is expected that the first draft of prisoners will be on the prison farm before the end of the year.

Mr. GAIR (*South Brisbane*) [5.40 p.m.]: Whilst prisons are necessary as places of punishment for those persons who have violated the laws of society, it must not be overlooked that they should contribute in no small measure to the work of reform. It is useless imprisoning people unless some means of reform is attempted, especially where first offenders are concerned. Last year, when speaking on this vote, I endeavoured to point out the grave danger of corrupting the young first offender by associating him with old-timers and other criminals for whom there was little hope of reformation, and suggested that a better system of classification of prisoners should be evolved. I am pleased that the Home Secretary, who stated on that occasion that he was investigating the system of prison farms, has pursued that idea, and that a prison farm will soon be operating.

I notice that the report on prisons says—

“It is to be regretted there was such a considerable increase in the number of prisoners received during the last three

years under the age of twenty-five, more especially as, under present conditions, juvenile offenders cannot be kept entirely apart from the confirmed criminal class.”

That phase of the report bears out what I have said and confirms the need for the prison farm system which is now being undertaken by the Government. Hon. members can appreciate the feelings of a young man who has erred by committing some minor offence, and who has been convicted and sent to gaol and is forced to associate with hardened criminals. That association must inevitably have a harmful effect on his outlook, and certainly will not have a reformatory influence. Even when he is released he is subject to embarrassment by being accosted by these criminals and having the finger of scorn pointed at him by people for whom prison holds no fear. I feel satisfied that when the prison farm has been established its reformatory effects will be apparent in the case of those young prisoners who have erred in a minor degree. As the hon. member for Logan stated this morning, I trust they will not be subject to embarrassment by the police or any section of the community, and every opportunity of becoming good citizens will be afforded to them.

The present administration is satisfactorily conducted, and I compliment the officers of the various prisons throughout the State, and also the members of the administrative staff on their excellent work.

I desire to raise the question of the amount of wages that are paid to warders of our prisons. For many years I have held the opinion that the warders employed at our prisons have not been receiving as high a wage as they are entitled to, considering the wages that are paid to members of the police force. No doubt it will be argued that the police have the dangerous duty of catching the offenders, and all the warder has to do is to keep them in custody. Whilst I appreciate the risk incurred by the police in carrying out their duties, I would point out that the warders, in their endeavours to discipline and reform prisoners, are in danger every day. This should be taken into consideration in the fixation of their wages. I appreciate the fact that this is a matter for the Industrial Court; but I would suggest that when the application is made by the prison warders for an increase in wages, the department should give consideration to the fact that the present rate of wages is comparatively low. In confirmation of that I will read a comparative statement of the salaries drawn by police officers and salaries drawn by prison warders—

Year.	Police.	Prison Warders.	Allowance in lieu of overtime.		Allowance for holidays worked.	
			Police.	Prison Warders.	Police.	Prison Warders.
	£ s. d.	£	£ s. d.		£ s. d.	
Recruits	182 0 0
First	275 5 5	221	29 8 3	8 9 7		
Second	284 7 11	230	29 8 3	8 16 0		
After twenty years ..	320 17 11	285	33 6 3	10 19 1		
Average, 21 years ..	298 14	261	30 19 10	10 0 4		

I might mention that these figures are subject to the reductions under the Salaries Act.

In addition, the average policeman receives an amount of £36 10s. as an allowance in

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lieu of quarters, an allowance which the prison warden does not enjoy. The difference per annum in favour of the police is, therefore, approximately £95. My contention is that the difference in the duties does not warrant the disparity in salary. I do not wish to be misunderstood in dealing with this matter. I am not asking that the salaries of the police should be reduced. The police officer is entitled to every penny that he is receiving. I am demonstrating that the prison warden is entitled to a larger salary than he is receiving at the present time.

The policeman contributes to the police superannuation fund, which is subsidised from the police reward fund and from consolidated revenue. For the year ended 31st December, 1933, the total of subsidies was £46,192 and of contributions £17,346 13s. 5d. The prison warden contributes to the Public Service Superannuation Fund. For the year ended 30th June, 1933, the total subsidy was £1,447 14s. and the contributions £39,173 1s. 1d. For every £1 of subsidy, the policeman paid 7s. 6d. The public servant (prison warden) paid £61 12s.

Apart from the rank and file, the comparison is as follows:—

Rank.	Police.	Prison Warden.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Acting Sergeant	339 2 11	—
Senior Warden	—	295 0 0
Sergeant	357 7 11	—
Chief Warden (Second Class)	—	310 0 0
Senior Sergeant	375 12 11	—
Chief Warden (First Class)	—	340 0 0

The conditions in respect of housing so far the chief wardens and non-commissioned officers are concerned may not be on all fours with those for warders and constables, but the comparison as between overtime for policemen and holiday pay for warders and in respect of the two schemes of superannuation is sound. I have the figures relating to the salaries paid to sub-inspectors and superintendents of prisons, but I feel that I have indicated sufficient to the Committee to show that this disparity in salaries should not continue. It has existed for many years at the expense of the prison warders, who, not only in Brisbane but also throughout the State are providing a very important service, and I should like the Government to give their support to the contention that the disparity should not be so great. I have previously stated that the matter is primarily one for the industrial court, but the Government could assist through their representative when he appears before the court to answer the claim by the prison warders.

I had proposed to draw attention to this matter last year, but, unfortunately, I did not get the opportunity. I trust that my effort on this occasion to draw attention to what I believe to be inadequate payments to the warders of our prisons for the service they are rendering, and to the disparity between their salaries and the salaries paid to the officers of police will meet with some success, and that the Government will decide that the present disparity is not justified and that there is room for some improvement in the present salaries of warders.

Although the prisoners may be considered the outcasts of society they are human beings, and I am satisfied that the treat-

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ment meted out to them by the present Government is in keeping with their humane policy. The confinees of our prison system are being decently treated by the Government.

Mr. NIMMO (*Oxley*) [5.58 p.m.]: After listening to the speech of the hon. member for South Brisbane one will be forgiven for assuming that there must be a large institution in his electorate where a number of warders are employed. For two and a-half years his Government have had an opportunity to remedy the disparity in the salaries referred to, but no effort has been made in that direction. The prison warders have now been told that they can approach the court for a rectification of their grievances. It is well known that the warders have very onerous and arduous duties to perform, but for two and a-half years—during a period of comparatively high prices for wool, during which the financial position of the State improved very materially—the Government have made no effort at all to improve their condition. Now, right on the eve of an election, we have the speech from the hon. member for South Brisbane urging that higher wages be paid to these public servants. I have always believed that the warders should receive very good pay. They have difficult duties to perform, but they perform them with credit to themselves and to the State. Many first offenders are placed under their care, and upon their treatment of them depends whether these people will emerge from the prison capable of resuming their position in society. Of course, hardened criminals are also incarcerated and placed under their control. For these reasons I believe the warders are deserving of the very best treatment.

Mr. W. J. COPLEY (*Bulimba*) [7 p.m.]: This vote shows an appropriation of £109 for the Comptroller-General of Prisons. I understand that amount is paid to the Under Secretary of this department, Mr. Gall, who acts as Comptroller-General. During the present financial year Mr. Gall will retire. Naturally, he will relinquish the post of Comptroller-General of Prisons. It will then be necessary for the Home Secretary to consider the appointment of a successor. He will have to decide whether he will continue the present practice of making the Under Secretary Comptroller-General of Prisons or whether he will revert to the old system that operated prior to 1928. A great deal will depend on that decision. I personally believe that the position of Under Secretary and Comptroller-General of Prisons should be dissociated. When Mr. Gall was first appointed to this office he had no experience of prison administration, but was fortunate to secure in Sydney the services of Mr. Whitney, who was appointed Chief Warden of Brisbane Gaol. It will be readily acknowledged that Mr. Whitney has proved himself to be a very efficient officer. He has reintroduced that old discipline which should prevail in a prison service. At the present time Mr. Whitney is superintendent of the Brisbane Prison. I believe—not for the sake of the miserable £100 that is paid now to the Under Secretary as Comptroller-General of Prisons and that might thereby be saved but for the sake of the better administration of the prison service—that the time has arrived for the separation of these two offices.

It is interesting to note that this is one of the sections of the public service in which the Public Service Commissioner has delegated the powers vested in him as head of the public service. The delegation of those powers by the Public Service Commissioner to Mr. Gall, as Under Secretary, Home Secretary's Department, has not been in the best interests of the officers of the prison service. I am not criticising the action of Mr. Story in this matter. I know that at the time he believed he was acting for the best. Subsequently, when the Under Secretary was made Comptroller-General of Prisons, the system—if it ever did have any merit—ceased to have any. We are told that in the days of the Roman invasion all Gaul was divided into three parts. Similarly here, we have all Gall acting as Comptroller-General of Prisons, all Gall acting as Under Secretary of the Home Department, and all Gall acting as the officer vested with the powers of the Public Service Commissioner. In every other section of the public service an officer who infringes the regulations is dealt with by his Under Secretary. He then has the right of appeal to the Public Service Commissioner, and if the decision of the Public Service Commissioner is not satisfactory to him then he can appeal to the Public Service Appeal Board which hears his case and makes a recommendation to the Public Service Commissioner. In this particular matter we have this anomaly: Mr. Gall, as Comptroller-General of Prisons, may have an officer of the department on the mat on account of some infringement of the regulations. Mr. Gall, as Comptroller-General of Prisons, suspends and deals with that officer. That officer can exercise his right of appeal to which every public servant is entitled, and in which this Government believe. When he does appeal, Mr. Gall, the Under Secretary, takes himself to one side and considers what he should do with the finding of Mr. Gall as Comptroller-General of Prisons.

Mr. TOZER: This is a slight on the Home Secretary.

Mr. W. J. COPLEY: The Home Secretary is a man big enough to rectify a wrong if a wrong exists. The Home Secretary is not a narrow-minded, pettifogging little individual who is prepared to sit down and Micawber-like accept everything that has gone before, and this is the occasion, when Mr. Gall retires, where an anomaly can be rectified. That is the reason I am raising the question at this stage. It is not a slight on the Comptroller-General of Prisons as suggested by the hon. member for Gympie, although I know that as a member of the Redistribution Commission Mr. Gall did materially assist the hon. member and probably one of the results of his redistribution of electorates was the return of the hon. member for Gympie to Parliament. That is probably the reason why the hon. member for Gympie talks as he does.

Mr. TOZER: Mr. Hanson, I rise to a point of order. I object to the assertion made by the hon. member for Bulimba. I had nothing whatever to do with the Redistribution Commission, two of whose members I did not know at all. Most certainly I knew Mr. Gall, because I followed him at school. I did not speak to Mr. Gall on the subject and to say that I am only in Parliament

because Mr. Gall used his influence is tantamount to a wrong assertion.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member for Bulimba to accept the denial of the hon. member for Gympie.

Mr. W. J. COPLEY: I accept the denial of the hon. member for Gympie that he influenced the commission in its findings, but in accordance with my rights as a member of this Parliament I am justified in expressing the belief that the redistribution of electorates favoured the hon. member for Gympie.

I wanted to say, before I was rudely interrupted in this matter, that I did not wish to cast a slight upon the Home Secretary; no slight is intended except in the mind of the hon. member for Gympie. Nor am I endeavouring to cast a slight on the Comptroller-General of Prisons, but I believe that if any slight has been thrown on the position of Comptroller-General of Prisons as it exists at the present time, Mr. Gall has caused it himself. For a number of years after he was appointed Comptroller-General, Mr. Gall, when he left Brisbane, appointed a clerk in his office on £360 per annum as acting Comptroller-General during his absence. At the time I was president of the State Service Union, and I drew the attention of the union to the matter. I observed that the man who did that did it for one of two reasons; either that he had no appreciation of the importance of the job of Comptroller-General of Prisons and did not regard it as an important office, or that he was just a chronic "nark" keeping out some senior officer, either the Assistant Under Secretary or the superintendent of the gaol. I only raise this matter because the hon. member for Gympie endeavours to be smart about a slight upon the Home Secretary. Following those objections, Mr. Gall began to take other action. Even within the past twelve months or so Mr. Gall on one occasion left Brisbane for a considerable period without appointing anyone to act as Comptroller-General of Prisons. The Assistant Under Secretary, following certain protests, does act when the Comptroller-General is away and is appointed Acting Comptroller-General, which I believe makes for the better administration of the Prisons Department.

The principal matter with which I wish to deal in connection with the Prisons Department is the question of the right of appeal, and I hope that when the Home Secretary is considering this matter, following the retirement of the Comptroller-General, he will at least give consideration to the anomaly which at the present time exists—that he will see that the officer who inflicts penalties is not the officer to whom an appeal is made in connection with those penalties, for that is subversive of all principles of justice for which the appeal system was created. I believe that if the anomaly is rectified it will tend towards harmony and more general satisfaction amongst the members of the prison service.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*) [7.12 p.m.]: I am astonished at the speech made by the hon. member for Bulimba, and I believe that, irrespective of the political opinions that the Home Secretary and I may have, the hon. gentleman in charge of this department will not permit one of his principal officers to be attacked in the manner in which

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he has been attacked by the hon. member for Bulimba.

Mr. W. J. COPLEY: When did I attack him? In what way did I attack him?

Mr. MAXWELL: I will make my speech in my own way. The hon. member for Bulimba said that Mr. Gall was divided into three parts. The inference to be drawn from the hon. member's remarks was that Mr. Gall was a man who could only do things in a certain manner. He said that Mr. Gall would first of all suspend a man—

Mr. W. J. COPLEY: That is right.

Mr. MAXWELL: That he would then inflict punishment, and when the man exercised his right of appeal Mr. Gall would consider it.

Mr. W. J. COPLEY: That is the position.

Mr. MAXWELL: The hon. member for Bulimba then said that the Home Secretary is not a narrow-minded pettifogging individual. What does he mean by that? I consider that is a contemptible statement to make. Nobody ever attributed any of those characteristics to any gentleman who occupied that position. It is a malicious statement to make. Let me draw the attention of the Committee to this position.

Mr. W. J. COPLEY: Let me attribute that to you.

Mr. MAXWELL: Let me draw the attention of the Committee to this position: a Nationalist or Country Party member has not always occupied the position of Home Secretary, whilst Mr. Gall has been in that position.

Mr. W. J. COPLEY: Only one Tory Home Secretary was in office since Mr. Gall had control.

Mr. MAXWELL: The hon. member had his say.

Mr. W. J. COPLEY: If the hon. member only had the intelligence to understand it—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MAXWELL: If I had the intelligence of the hon. member I would be like the ostrich—I would put my head in the sand.

Mr. W. J. COPLEY interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member for Bulimba must observe my call to order. He has had his opportunity to speak, and he will have a further opportunity later on.

Mr. MAXWELL: I do not desire to get into hots with the hon. member. I am attempting to refute certain statements that have been made by him. It is not only Nationalist hon. members who have occupied the position of Home Secretary whilst Mr. Gall has been Under Secretary to the Home Department. Mr. McCormack, the ex-Premier, the present Secretary for Mines, and now the present Home Secretary have occupied that position. Hon. members on this side of the Committee do not go about with wool in their ears. We heard what Labour was going to do with Mr. Gall as soon as a Labour Minister was in charge of that department. That was common talk throughout the city. "As soon as we get a man of our own in power, so soon will Mr. Gall be kicked out of office."

The HOME SECRETARY: Rubbish!

[Mr. Maxwell.

Mr. MAXWELL: That was said. Now we find the attack upon Mr. Gall renewed. Mr. Gall must have been a faithful and honourable public servant to have carried out his work to the satisfaction of Mr. McCormack, the Secretary for Mines, and the present Home Secretary. The present Home Secretary has been in charge of the Home Department for practically two and a-half years, and he is familiar with the work done by his officers. Would he allow an officer to dictate to him and carry on in a high-handed manner? I do not object to an hon. member saying, "I object to a man being given two positions"; but when he takes up the attitude adopted by the hon. member for Bulimba, and attempts to besmirch the character of an individual who has been a faithful and honourable public servant in this State it is time he was checked. I speak with the experience of a local authority man during the time the late Mr. W. H. Ryder was Under Secretary and Mr. Gall was also in that department. One characteristic of Mr. Gall was that you did not always get what you wanted. He always watched the interests of the State, and was a faithful and honourable public servant, and it is regrettable that when he has reached the eventide of his public service he is attacked in this manner. The hon. member for Bulimba tells us he does not attack Mr. Gall. He did so by accusing Mr. Gall of rigging the redistribution of seats in order to enable the hon. member for Gympie to occupy a seat in this Chamber. I have heard hon. members on this side of the Chamber say they were badly treated in that redistribution, but they did not cast any reflection on Mr. Gall. That commission worked under an Act, and I believe that its members carried out their duties honourably and faithfully. It is regrettable that an attempt should be made to besmirch the character of a faithful public servant who is nearing the end of his term.

Mr. FOLEY: Who threw any dirt?

Mr. MAXWELL: You must have had your ears closed.

Mr. FOLEY: Rubbish!

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MAXWELL: You may deal in rubbish, but I do not.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MAXWELL: That is how hon. members on the other side always deal with a case. As the Leader of the Opposition said this afternoon, they make statements that have a certain amount of truth in them, but it is the construction that is put upon them that is important. When they are reminded of their attitude they say, "You have an evil mind. We never meant it." It may not be meant, but it is said. I, for one, Mr. Hanson, knowing this man as a public officer, as I do a number of others, and having had experience of him and knowing the good service he has given to the State, do not feel disposed to allow the least stigma to be placed on his character. I take this opportunity of challenging the statement made by the hon. member for Bulimba.

Mr. W. J. COPLEY (*Bulimba*) [7.19 p.m.]: When the hon. member interjected I endeavoured to explain to him and he should understand that I was referring to the position of Comptroller-General of Prisons. I

can only explain, God alone can give him the intelligence to understand. If he could not understand the explanation given then I do not wonder that certain members on the opposite side of the Committee are to be retired at the next election. The explanation given was very clear—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. W. J. COPLEY: The vote under discussion concerns the Comptroller-General of Prisons. The hon. member who has just resumed his seat went back to the time when Mr. McCormack was Home Secretary. If the hon. member had enough intelligence to understand, he would know that Mr. Gall was not Comptroller of Prisons when Mr. McCormack was Home Secretary, nor at any time before. He was Comptroller-General only for a very short period during the term when the present Secretary for Mines occupied the office of Home Secretary. It was during that time and following on an investigation instituted by the present Secretary for Mines that Mr. Whitney, now superintendent of Boggo Road Gaol, was brought from Sydney as chief warder. Any remark I have made with regard to Mr. Gall I will reiterate at any time. The hon. member for Toowong should understand the position, with his long experience of Parliament.

Mr. TOZER (*Gympie*) [7.21 p.m.]: In this vote I notice that there is an increase of £1,025, but that is not very large and presumably represents automatic increases. I should like to say a few words in connection with the Comptroller-General of Prisons. He is a very old servant of the department. I think his service extends back to the eighties. He was then in the office of the Home Secretary, has risen to his present position, and has now arrived at that age when presumably he will be retired in a very short time. The hon. member for Bulimba most certainly made certain statements and certain insinuations in connection with Mr. Gall. He said that that was not an attack. If that were not an attack then I should like to know what is an attack, unless, of course, the hon. member only regards an actual physical assault as an attack. I am quite willing to accept the statement which will appear in "Hansard" to-morrow. After perusing it the reader will be able to arrive at only one conclusion—that it was an attack on the Comptroller-General of Prisons. It was an assertion that he was holding different positions; that he could call a man to order, suspend him, deal with him, practically without any appeal from his decision. I certainly did interject, because it appeared to me that, were the Under Secretary of the Home Department a man like that, naturally the Minister in charge of that department must know it and must take it as a deliberate slight on himself. If the Home Secretary knows of these things and allows them to proceed, and knows the statements are true, then most certainly he is doing wrong. If he does not know, well, it shows that he is not aware of what is going on in his department. I interjected, but that did not warrant the hon. member for Bulimba making the assertion that if it had not been for the redistribution of seats influenced by the Under Secretary I would not be here.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The statement made by the hon. member for Bulimba has been replied to by the hon. member for

Toowong, and now that the incident is closed I trust that it will not be re-opened.

Mr. TOZER: I am quite willing that it should remain closed. I regret that these recriminations take place. I have no desire to speak further in connection with that matter other than to say that so far as my experience over a long period of years goes I have always found Mr. Gall a very capable officer. He has carried out his duties impartially, without fear or favour from either side.

Mr. RUSSELL (*Hamilton*) [7.24 p.m.]: We have listened to-day to a good deal of adulation of many of our public officers, but when it comes to the Comptroller-General of Prisons, who is shortly to retire from the service, quite a different story is told. I have to admit that in our public service we have men of a very high calibre, but we expect them to do their duty, and I think they are all doing their duty according to their lights. We must be fair and, on the retirement of this officer who occupies a very important post, we should at any rate express our sense of gratitude for the very valuable service he has rendered over a very long period. He has served under successive Ministers, and if, as the hon. member for Bulimba alleges, that he was a chronic "nark," surely to goodness the present Minister would have found that out long ago and would have rectified the anomaly! The mere fact that Mr. Gall has been spoken highly of by every Home Secretary must put the hon. member for Bulimba to shame. They were quite uncalled for. Mr. Gall, by long association with the public service, has risen to one of the most important posts in this State. He has shown a man can, by perseverance and close attention to his duty, rise to the topmost rung of the ladder. Mr. Gall is a man who is highly respected by every section of the community, and I think the present Home Secretary will agree with me that in losing Mr. Gall he is losing a very valuable servant. Of course, the time has come when he must retire according to the regulations, and while we are sorry to part with him still he must bow to the inevitable and make way for another man. If certain anomalies have been allowed to continue, Mr. Gall is not at fault and the blame must be attachable to his superior officer, the Home Secretary himself, if any blame is attributable to anybody. After listening all day long to the fulsome flattery of many of our officers it is our duty to place on record our high appreciation of the very valuable services rendered by Mr. Gall to this State, and trust that the remainder of his life will be pleasant and happy.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, *Uthman*) [7.28 p.m.]: I cannot understand why there should be so much concern about what the hon. member for Bulimba has said. It is quite competent for any hon. member to express the opinion that it is not desirable for an officer of a department to hold a dual position. I did not see anything personal in what the hon. member for Bulimba said. He has always held the opinion, and has frequently expressed it to me, that it was not right that the permanent head of the Home Department should also act in the capacity of one of his staff—in the capacity of the Comptroller-General of Prisons. Other members of Parliament also

Hon. E. M. Hanlon.]

hold that opinion. All that I can say is that during my period at the Home Office I have to thank Mr. Gall for the very competent manner in which he has performed his duties. I found him extremely careful in his desire to be fair and just to everybody in the department. The hon. member for Bulimba holds the opinion that the Comptroller-General of Prisons should be someone other than the Under Secretary, that the Under Secretary should exercise a control over another person acting as Comptroller-General of Prisons, as the position once was. Prior to Mr. Gall's taking over the Comptroller-Generalship the superintendent of prisons was the Comptroller, but as this man did not enjoy the best of health at the time he was not in a position to carry out the duties and they were handed over to Mr. Gall. I must pay Mr. Gall the tribute that whilst I have been in that office he has endeavoured with the utmost care to be just and fair in his treatment, both of the prisoners and the staff. Whether a man makes a mistake or not in his official position in another matter. I suppose every man makes some mistakes in his official position, but in the case of Mr. Gall it has not been done wilfully. The hon. member for Bulimba can rest assured that the matter raised by him will be considered by the Government when the time for the readjustment of the staff arrives.

Item (Prisons) agreed to.

STATE CHILDREN.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, *Ithaca*) [7.30 p.m.]: I move—

“That £200,046 be granted for ‘State Children.’”

It will be noticed that the vote is reduced by £3,604. I do not want hon. members to think that the allowance to State children has been in any way reduced. The position is that the number of State children on our books on the 31st December, 1932, was 7,929, while the number on our books on 31st December, 1933, was 7,506, or a decrease of 423. The admissions for the year increased by 264. That is a very easy feature of the work of this sub-department; but the number of people applying for aid for their children has fallen off markedly during the last twelve months. I asked the Director of State Children for his opinion as to the reasons for the falling off in the number. He furnished me with the following reasons:—

1. Husbands who have deserted have returned home in order to get extra work instead of roaming round on single men's relief.

2. For the same reason those who in other years would have deserted now remain at home in order to get extra work.

3. Parents have discovered that their children are an asset, enabling the father to get extra work, and numbers of them, rather than leave their children on the State, now clamour to have them handed back to them.

4. The births of ex-nuptial children have fallen from 1,100 or 1,200 per annum to between 600 and 700. This lessens the number coming into the hands of the State.

[Hon. E. M. Hanlon.

All these illegitimate children would not previously have been kept by the State Children Department. In many cases the fathers would have been supporting them, but quite a number of illegitimate children do fall on the State Children Department. Those are the reasons why the number has decreased.

The Townsville Orphanage has ceased to function as an orphanage. The number of children in that institution had decreased to such an extent that it was decided to close the institution as an orphanage. That fact was well known in the North. The orphanage has now been converted into a receiving depot, similar to the institution at Rockhampton. It is staffed by two nurses, and State children are kept here until they are boarded out or sent to other institutions. The necessity for that orphanage has disappeared.

It is interesting, in connection with the decrease in the number of applications for allowances to State children, to note that the number of children boarded out with their parents or relatives in the year 1932 was 5,869. The bulk of them were boarded with their mothers. For the year 1933 the number fell to 5,497, a decrease of 372. That means that the fathers of these children have found other means of providing a livelihood for these children instead of receiving the State allowance. That is satisfactory, and hon. members will join with me in expressing the hope that this improvement will continue, and that there will be less necessity for the department to take over the oversight and feeding of these children.

During the year 360 juveniles were brought before the Children's Court, or a decrease of seventy compared with the number in the previous year. That is satisfactory, because it suggests that fewer juveniles are getting into mischief and coming before the courts than in the past.

There is a slight increase in the appropriation for salaries. Although the number of employees has decreased, provision for the automatic increases of the remaining officers makes the vote slightly higher than last year.

Item agreed to.

STEAMER “OTTER.”

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, *Ithaca*) [7.35 p.m.]: I move—

“That £4,049 be granted for ‘Steamer “Otter.””

The vote shows an increase of £52, due to the usual increases in salaries.

Item agreed to.

MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, *Ithaca*) [7.36 p.m.]: I move—

“That £31,150 be granted for ‘Miscellaneous Services.’”

The increase for fire brigades accounts for approximately £1,000, whilst the item “Railway Fares and Freights, Printing, etc.,” shows a reduction of £250. An increase of £200 appears under the heading “Incidental and Miscellaneous Expenses,” whilst £2,500 is provided for the polls under the Liquor Act that are due to take place next year.

Item agreed to.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS.

CHIEF OFFICE.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS
{Hon. H. A. Bruce, *The Tableland*} [7.37
p.m.]: I move—

“ That £20,423 be granted for ‘ Department of Public Works—Chief Office.’ ”

It will be noted that the total amount proposed to be appropriated for the financial year 1934-35 is greater by £2,325 than the corresponding amount appropriated during the financial year 1933-34. The increase of £1,415 in salaries is due partly to salary increases and the appointment of extra staff. A number of additional clerical officers and clerk-typists have been found necessary because of the acceleration of the larger works programme. An additional Assistant Electrical Engineer is also provided for.

Mr. R. M. KING (*Logan*) [7.38 p.m.]: At the outset I desire to congratulate Mr. Colledge on his appointment as Under Secretary of the department. Mr. Colledge has worked himself up from the lowest rung of the ladder and his promotion to the blue riband of this department is well merited. For three years it was my privilege to work with Mr. Colledge so that I have some knowledge of his capability and conscientiousness. I am sure he will give every satisfaction in his new position.

The good work done by Mr. Leven, the Chief Architect and Quantity Surveyor, must not be overlooked. That officer has had the responsibility of preparing plans and specifications for many important undertakings on behalf of the Government, and I think that the excellence of his services would be more appropriately recognised if he were called Government Architect.

I have had the privilege of reading the interesting report of the Department of Public Works and I am pleased to note that the system inaugurated by the Moore Government of erecting additional residences for school teachers is being continued. As the report states—

“ Twenty-two such residences were completed during the year just concluded, and approval was given to the expenditure for four more residences which had not been completed at the close of the year under review. The erection of these residences, as was stressed in the last annual report, lessens the rent allowance payable to head teachers and which would otherwise be a governmental expense, and also provides means of better immediate local supervision of school properties.”

A tribute must also be paid to the excellence of the work of improvements to State school grounds carried out by means of intermittent relief labour under the supervision of the department. As is stressed in the report, many sites have been literally transformed from ugly areas to grounds of utility and beauty, and thus a much more useful, healthy, and interesting environment has been provided for scholars.

I desire to refer to what I may term the peculiar methods of Labour in dealing with the expenditure on buildings. I will quote figures to illustrate how the percentage of appropriation from loan moneys has been increased. It is unwise to have buildings with short lives erected out of loan moneys. I consider they should be erected out of revenue, because otherwise they would not be in existence when the money became repayable. The following table illustrates the expenditure from loan money and revenue from 1913 to the present time:—

Period.	Government.	Revenue.	Loan Money.	Percentage from Loan.
		£	£	Per Cent.
1912-13 to 1914-15 inclusive	Liberal	525,626	193,870	27
1915-16 to 1928-29 inclusive	Labour	1,476,006	2,475,545	62·7
1929-30 to 1931-32	Country National	246,507	387,823	61·2
1932-33	Labour	54,667	238,239	81·4
1933-34	Labour	54,426	355,397	86·7
1934 35 (estimated)	Labour	65,900	512,220	88·6

The moneys expended from loan rose from 27 per cent. in 1912-13 to 88·6 per cent. in 1934-35. Those figures represent an alarming increase, and I do not think it is a wise policy in connection with public building activities in our State.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I would point out to the hon. member that the appropriation under discussion is the vote from Consolidated Revenue for the Chief Office of the department for 1934-35, and that does not justify a general discussion on the appropriation from loan funds.

Mr. R. M. KING: I am following the course pursued in previous years; but if that is your ruling I shall not pursue the matter.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not mind the hon. member's quoting figures for purposes of

comparison, but I do not think I should allow a general discussion.

Mr. R. M. KING: I desire to discuss the policy, too. I say that it is a wrong policy. It affects the Budget to the extent that it creates a fictitious improvement in the budgetary position, and it creates unproductive debt to an unjustifiable extent. It is distinctly against the arrangement made with the Loan Council in 1932. The resolution of the Loan Council in April, 1932—the last in the time of the Moore Government—provided that certain loan moneys should be used for the undertaking of such public and private work of a permanent and reproductive character as would provide employment and increase the national wealth, and should be spent only on the recommendation of an

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independent honorary body, the State Employment Council. On the assumption of office of the present Government the Bureau of Industry took the place of the State Employment Council, but the principle of spending loan moneys on works of a permanent and reproductive nature was affirmed at the first Loan Council meeting after the present Government took office, that is, in July, 1932. If we go back and look at the Budget Speech of 1933 we find that the State Employment Council—a body appointed by the Moore Government and the Federal Government—made certain recommendations for the allocation of those loan moneys. The following allocations were approved:—

	£
Ringbarking, scrubfalling, etc. ...	190,000
Construction of pioneer and developmental roads	74,000
Development road works	200,000
Prospecting for minerals	28,800
Mount Morgan, Limited, developmental work	15,000
Clooney Copper, Limited—Investigating Murdoch process of treating oxidised ores	3,000
Coke ovens, Bowen	30,000
Provision additional wheat storage	31,000
Cotton production—assistance to necessitous farmers, Upper Burnett, Callide, and other areas ...	40,000
Small Farm Settlement—	
Nerang Areas	10,500
North Coast Areas	5,000
Establishment of Farm Boys' School, St. Lucia	2,000
Aircraft landing grounds	12,200
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Total amount allotted	641,500
Balance available for allocation ...	1,500
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Total	£643,000

In these figures one sees a high percentage of work paid for out of loan money that was reproductive, but in the case of wooden buildings probably the structures will be obsolete before the loan is repayable.

Mr. W. T. KING: How much did your Government spend out of revenue during your three years of office?

Mr. R. M. KING: Prior to Labour coming into power 27 per cent., and during the fifteen years of Labour regime the percentage increased to 62.7 per cent.

Mr. W. T. KING: That is from loan; I am talking of revenue.

Mr. R. M. KING: We are speaking in percentages, and 27 per cent. from 100 per cent. leaves 73 per cent. It is extremely unfair to leave this debt to be paid out of loan money as a burden on posterity. We are creating a position which will become unbearable to posterity; they will curse their forebears for having left such a legacy of debt behind.

Mr. W. T. KING: So will the present if we do not nourish them.

Mr. R. M. KING: The hon. member knows what the Public Debt was fifteen years ago, and how Labour Governments have spent money during the last two years. Labour can be likened to the farmer who obtains a loan of £1,000. He buys land and erects a comfortable dwelling at a cost of £800, and expends £200 in development. All he is concerned about is the luxury he has for

the time being, his policy being, "Let the future look after itself." That is the policy of the Labour Party—to make the going easy, to go while the going is good, and let posterity look after itself. Hon. members opposite always take credit to themselves for the large amount expended by Labour Governments upon housing schemes. They have pointed out that the Labour Government have always provided houses for the people.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The appropriation for the State Advances Corporation is contained in Trust and Special Funds, and cannot be discussed on this vote.

Mr. R. M. KING: The limited time at our disposal will not allow us to reach the Trust and Special Funds. However, Mr. Hanson, I have no desire to transgress your ruling. I should like to point out that it is a wrong policy to continue to borrow for the construction of buildings or for expenditure on works that are not reproductive. It is a distinct violation of the terms prescribed by the Loan Council, it creates a false budgetary position, and it deceives as to the true position of affairs.

Mr. WATERS (*Kelvin Grove*) [7.56 p.m.]: The hon. member for Logan is obviously sore because the Labour Government have been able to obtain loan funds to carry out a policy of providing this State with permanent structures and assets that will be of lasting and beneficial effect from every point of view. It is a fact that the splendid record of the Government has enabled them to obtain an adequate supply of loan funds, but hon. members opposite were not successful in inducing the Loan Council to grant them the necessary funds to prosecute a public works programme.

Mr. EDWARDS: It is a good job the Moore Government were in power, otherwise you would not be able to make a speech.

Mr. WATERS: That fact does provide us with material, for they got a chance after fifteen years in the political wilderness, and during their three years of office they demonstrated their hopeless incapacity to govern, their barrenness of intellectual capacity, and their bankruptcy of policy. They were unable to obtain a further mandate from the people, partly because they did not prosecute a public works policy.

I desire to compliment the present Minister upon his competent management of the Department of Public Works. There is no doubt that he has pursued a very intensive and progressive policy of building a series of structures throughout the State that will be of permanent benefit to the people. It is all very well for the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to say that these projects are not of a reproductive nature, but if that is not a form of reproductive employment I want to know what is. The public buildings that are being constructed round this city, particularly the school buildings, are a monument to the policy of the Department of Public Works, and I pay a tribute to the employees—from the highest to the lowest—who have been associated with their construction. There are a couple of school buildings under way in my own electorate. One building which has been completed in the adjoining electorate, the Newmarket State School, is a credit to our policy, a credit to the men associated with it, and a credit to the supervision that has

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been exercised over that job. The same applies to other jobs that are under construction. I believe that during the building programme that the present Minister has inaugurated the day labour policy has justified itself to the greatest possible degree. No protest has followed from the Opposition. They realise that they have no major case against it; that despite all they may say against it, this policy of day labour has justified itself. That can easily be checked up by viewing the excellent structures that have been erected and the splendid workmanship that has been executed by that form of labour.

I am pleased to observe on the first page of the report that the Government have appropriated further moneys for the construction of various public buildings throughout the State. I hope that they will pursue that policy. It is in a period of depression that an intensive public works programme is more keenly appreciated. Some economists have advanced the theory that Governments should wait until a depression period before embarking on a vigorous public works policy. Whilst not subscribing altogether to that view, I hold that the present juncture is an admirable time to carry out these works. The Government, by reason of their policy, are earning the support of everyone outside. They are earning the support of the workers and also the support of the business community, who already are feeling the effects of the Government's policy. Despite all that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition may say about the violation of the sanctity of agreements, the fact remains that it is to a public works policy that Governments throughout the world are looking to relieve the position in which civilisation finds itself.

I congratulate the officials of the Works Department upon the very excellent service they are rendering to the State. I hope the Minister will be able to carry on his good work during the coming year.

Mr. MAHER (*West Moreton*) [8.3 p.m.]: With the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I join in congratulating Mr. Colledge on the very excellent way he supervised the record loan programme provided for him by the Government during the past year. There can be no questioning the fact that a great deal of extra work has been imposed on Mr. Colledge and the officers associated with him in the management of the department. I have no doubt that these officers have acquitted themselves very capably in carrying out their part of the work.

I regret very much indeed that the large sum of £400,600 was appropriated last year from loan funds for buildings.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member will not be in order in discussing an appropriation from the Loan Fund Account. He will find this amount covered by another vote. I cannot see anything about £400,600 in this vote.

Mr. MAHER: I find it is dealt with in the report of the department. The whole work of the department is bound up in expenditure of loan funds. It is with great regret that I find we have not been able to construct Government buildings such as court houses, police stations, and State schools from revenue. It would have been a credit to the State if these buildings had been built from revenue instead of loan funds. It is regrettable to see so much loan money being spent by the department in the erection of

luxurious Government buildings. That expenditure will run into hundreds of thousands of pounds.

Mr. W. T. KING: What is wrong with that?

Mr. MAHER: There is this much wrong about it: The producing section of the community now find it difficult to earn a livelihood, a fact that is reflected in the reduced taxable incomes in the past financial year. In such a period as this the Government are proceeding on a spendthrift loan policy and expending thousands of pounds in the erection of luxurious Government offices.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I must point out to the hon. member that there is no vote under this heading for the construction of new Government buildings. There is a vote for repairs to Government buildings, but not the construction of new buildings.

Mr. MAHER: Very good, Mr. Hanson, I shall accept your ruling, but I note with some alarm that eighty-five additional employees have been engaged in this department since the 30th June, 1932. At an average weekly wage of £4, the total weekly wages bill for these employees would represent £340, which has to be met from revenue. The revenue of the State is on the down grade continuously, in sympathy with the position of the people who are earning the wealth of the State, and we have to be particularly careful in times like the present to control expenditure of this kind. I notice that in every instance the Government have increased the number of employees. Despite lower taxable receipts, the Government still pursue a policy of increasing controllable expenditure, and when the State is really in an insolvent condition, depending largely on loan moneys to keep going, it is regrettable that heavy increases in the salaries bill should have to be met by the taxpayers.

Mr. W. T. KING: It is giving employment and will help in the long run.

Mr. MAHER: If the State was in the position to meet the expenditure, such action might be justified; but on the argument of the hon. member for Maree we should be justified at the present time in adding another eighty-five men to the departmental list of employees. That argument, however, will not hold water.

I note from the report that the sum of £47,060 12s. 10d. was expended on improvements to school grounds under the intermittent relief scheme, the Department of Public Works and the Department of Labour and Industry co-operating in this matter. Is this money provided from the loan funds of the State or by the Department of Labour and Industry from the Unemployment Relief Fund, and is the expenditure supervised by officers of the Department of Public Works? The Minister might give some information on those points.

The repairs being effected to State schools afford a worthy way of expending public money, for after sixty or seventy years' service many State schools are much in need of repairs.

Reference is made in the report to the Helidon quarry. Does the Minister intend to continue operating it or is it to be offered for sale?

Mr. GLEDSON: Your Government sold it.

Mr. Maher.]

Mr. MAHER: The plant and quarry were sold for a sum in excess of £4,000, but the purchasers were unable to complete the transaction. I understand the quarry is again under the control of the department, and I should like to know the Government's intentions in the matter. The quarry represents one of the disastrous State enterprises commenced during the previous Labour regime, the accumulated loss to the State approximating £20,000. I should like the Minister to give us some information on this section. In view of your ruling, Mr. Chairman—that we are not entitled to discuss the activities of the department in the expenditure of loan funds—I am considerably cramped in dealing with the vote, because practically the whole of the activities of the department are based on such expenditure. If we are limited to the discussion of the administration of the department only, there is very little to which I can address myself. I think I am keeping within the range of discussion by saying that the money which is being expended by the department is part of a programme agreed upon at the Premiers' Conference held on 5th July, 1932, when, to use the Premier's own word, the operations of the Premiers' Plan was "reviewed" by him. The Premiers agreed to a £15,000,000 recovery loan, and this money was to be divided amongst the States; and a condition laid down was that the money was to be spent on permanent and reproductive work. I think I am within my rights in saying that the money that is being spent on public buildings, State schools, court houses, police stations, and Government buildings in this State cannot be regarded as permanent or reproductive works.

Mr. W. T. KING: Do the buildings rot?

Mr. MAHER: According to my point of view, a building cannot be reproductive unless it is leased and a rental is being received sufficient to cover interest on the capital expended.

Mr. W. T. KING: You apparently do not understand what it means.

Mr. MAHER: I might be old-fashioned. My ideas might be out of date in this modern era. My idea of reproductive works is that they must be works that will return interest on the capital expended. Nobody can convince me that the expenditure of £500,000 a year on the construction of public buildings is reproductive.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MAHER: I regret that so much money is being spent by this department each year from loan funds on unproductive works. I regret that, owing to your ruling, Mr. Chairman, I cannot deal with the matter in the manner in which I desire.

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*) [8.15 p.m.]: The hon. member for West Moreton said that he was cramped in dealing with this vote; but I think most hon. members will find plenty of scope for discussion on this vote.

I desire to express my appreciation of the work of the officers of the Works Department in connection with a number of works in the course of construction throughout my electorate and in different parts of the State.

I should like the Minister to give members some information as to the powers of

[*Mr. Maher.*

the Machinery and Scaffolding Department to ensure proper protection to the public in regard to the condition of brakes on motor cars and utility trucks. Quite a number of accidents during the last twelve months have been attributable to faulty brakes, and it would be interesting to the public to know if some control could be exercised by the department in that regard.

The court house in Ipswich is an old stone building which has been in existence since Queensland was a colony; and I should be glad if the Minister would cause repairs and alterations to be made to that building; in fact, it needs remodelling. Every judge who presides at the court at Ipswich complains about the acoustic properties of that building, and alterations to meet modern requirements would satisfy a long-felt want. The conditions under which the staff there are required to work are not of the best, and an improvement could be made. I would ask that the departmental officers be instructed to investigate the matter with a view to seeing whether something cannot be done. The office of the Labour Bureau is another building which requires some attention; repairs could be affected and an alteration made in partitions, and so on. While the departmental officers were investigating these matters I would ask the Minister to see whether some provision could not be made for providing a shelter for those unemployed men who attend at the bureau for the purpose of taking out their cards. These men at present are exposed to the elements, while standing in their queue and at times are to be seen there even when heavy rain is falling.

I desire to add my meed of praise to the architectural branch of the department. It is doing exceptionally fine work of which an example are the plans supplied for the building of the Ipswich Hospital. They are a credit to the department and the officers concerned.

It is during the debate on this vote that controversy has arisen in the past on the question of day labour and contract labour. The last building constructed in Ipswich by the department was the children's ward at the Hospital for the Insane, at Sandy Gallop. It is a very fine building and everyone who has inspected it recognises the good job that was made of it by the department. Moreover, there was a saving of £375 on the estimated cost of the building.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: Were tenders called?

Mr. GLEDSON: Tenders were not called. The building was constructed under the supervision of the Department of Public Works. The saving of £375 on the estimated cost would not have accrued had tenders been called.

A matter agitating the minds of many persons in my electorate is the question when a decision can be expected from the Electricity Board that was appointed to inquire into the supply at Ipswich. The people are much concerned inasmuch as they are paying at the rate of 8d. a unit for their current and, in addition, the ratepayers have to meet the bill for the street lighting amounting to £4,600. I ask the Minister if he can give us any information as to when the board is likely to make its determination.

The Department of Public Works is also to be commended for the excellent supervision of the work being carried out with the assistance of the Department of Labour and Industry, from relief funds, in providing playgrounds for the children at certain schools. When the schools were originally erected physical culture and sport did not occupy the important place it now takes in the training of children. Consequently schools were not built on sites providing the necessary play grounds and sports grounds, and thus the pupils had often to go some distance from the school to obtain the requisite space. The officers of the Department of Public Works, in conjunction with the officers of the Department of Labour and Industry, are doing a very fine work in converting these grounds, practically from rocky hills, into level playgrounds for the children, and I have to thank them for their very valuable assistance, which will be of material benefit to the Ipswich scholars.

Mr. NIMMO (*Oxley*) [8.24 p.m.]: I also want to congratulate Mr. Colledge on the excellent manner in which he has conducted this department. I feel that every officer of the department is performing a very excellent service; in fact, very little criticism can be levelled at the department. I should like to know from the Premier when we are to have an opportunity to discuss the Estimates of the Department of Labour and Industry and the Railway Department. The Estimates of those departments are of very vital concern to the country. We are thoroughly in accord with the Estimates of this department, and I suspect that the Government are trying to sidestep hon. members on this side by preventing our reaching the Estimates of the departments I have specified. With the exception of the Estimates for the Treasury Department, all the Estimates that have been considered up to date have received the unanimous approval of hon. members, and I strongly protest against the action of the Government in endeavouring to sidetrack a discussion on some of the more vital departments.

The hon. member for Kelvin Grove said that the hon. member for Logan was sore because the Moore Government were not able to obtain loan funds to provide buildings and assets throughout the State. Can these buildings that are being erected be regarded as assets? In many cases they are a liability to the State. It is true that increased employment is being provided by their construction, but the work will cease when the loan money has been expended, and there will be further unemployment. The loan policy of the Government is wrong. The Moore Government were unable to obtain loan funds because the Labour Government were in power in the Federal Parliament and also because we were passing through a crisis. Had hon. members opposite been in power at that time they would not have been able to secure loan money either. Their criticism of the Moore Government for their failure to obtain loan funds is purely political humbug. I protest against any hon. member levelling such criticism at this party. For fifteen years the Labour Party carried out an extravagant policy of borrowing, yet, with a full realisation of the fact that the financial crisis was more severe in this State by reason of their extravagant borrowing policy, they are prepared once more to

launch out on these foolish lines. They complain that we did not prosecute a public works policy. It is true that the Moore Government were unable to prosecute a public works policy, because loan funds were not available.

Mr. FOLEY: The Moore Government loaned the money to the other States.

Mr. NIMMO: The policy of the Moore Government was followed by the Labour Government immediately they were returned to office. So soon as the loans matured they were used for ordinary governmental purposes. Hon. members should not forget that the Loan Council refused to make any further allocations whilst Governments had certain funds in hand. If the Labour Government had not squandered loan funds, the money would have been available for expenditure by the Moore Government.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: You are in deep water.

Mr. NIMMO: I am not in deep water. I very definitely state that the Moore Government had certain funds in hand, and because of that fact the Loan Council would not allocate any additional sum to this State. The first new loan money available to the Moore Government was made available just prior to the 1932 election, and from then on loan money simply flowed into this State.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have already intimated that a discussion on the loan policy of the Government will not be in order at this stage. I ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to the vote under discussion.

Mr. NIMMO: Thank you, Mr. Hanson. I pursued that line of discussion because the hon. member for Ipswich referred to the building of a court house at Ipswich. That would be constructed out of loan money, and as he was allowed to pursue that line of argument I naturally concluded I also would be entitled to do so. A considerable amount of the money expended by the department is furnished from loan funds. The report of the department refers to the buildings which have been erected from loan funds, and also to the work which has been carried out by the Main Roads Commission. I understood that in discussing the Chief Office vote we could criticise those matters which appeared in the annual report of the department, or any of its sub-departments. Am I to conclude from your ruling that I am prevented on this vote from dealing with work carried out by the Main Roads Commission?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Mr. NIMMO: I protest against the Brisbane City Council not being more closely supervised in connection with the wires used in conveying electric energy to private houses. Many of these installations were carried out years ago, and atmospheric exposure has caused the insulation on the wires to become worn. Many are bare of insulation. I have received several complaints in my district and I ask the Minister to look into the matter.

I congratulate the Minister for not pursuing a policy of day labour in constructing Government buildings in the country. Naturally he is forced to adopt that policy in the city, but we know the day-labour policy is not being adopted in the country.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That is not correct.

Mr. Nimmo.]

Mr. NIMMO: That is the reason why many of the public works in the country have been carried out at a reasonable cost. I should like to see more teachers' residences erected in connection with our outlying schools. The expenditure of that money would be a very valuable investment to the State. I understand that a charge is made against every teacher for house rent, but it is an advantage both to the department and to the teachers that teachers' residences should be erected in close proximity to schools in the outlying districts.

I also congratulate the Minister on his administration of the Gas Act. We heard a great deal of talk about the high price charged for gas in the Brisbane area, but after a full and complete investigation the price fixed was practically the same as previously existed. The officers administering the Acts deserve very great credit not only for protecting the interests of the community in this connection but also because of the quality of gas supplied. Because of that high quality, little if any complaint is made by the consumers.

I am sorry that our criticisms of the operations of this department has been somewhat restricted. I hope that the Government will do the decent thing and allow us to get to those Estimates which so seriously need review and criticism. The action of the Government in bringing on the Estimates of the Home Office, Department of Public Works and Department of Public Instruction and not giving an opportunity to criticise the departments we desire to discuss is beyond my comprehension.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*) [8.34 p.m.]: I have been amused to hear the experts in the building trade airing their views on the estimating of the cost of public works, and claiming that the fact the officers of the department estimated the cost of certain public works at such and such a figure and the actual costs were less, was a tribute to day labour. That is merely begging the question. We had a Minister saying "There you are, our principle of day labour is the proper thing. We have a body of officers who understand what they are doing, and I do not in any way blame them for carrying out the policy of the Government. They estimated the work to cost a certain amount, but we have found that it has cost us less. Therefore, the taxpayers should be perfectly satisfied, because the officers of the department have saved you that much money."

I want to pay a tribute to the officers of the department. We, as a party, have cause to be very proud of the officers of this department. I congratulate the Minister on being able to secure the service of Mr. Colledge as Under Secretary. I know that gentleman's qualifications and his competency to carry out the work entrusted to him. Mr. Leven, the Chief Architect and Chief Quantity Surveyor, is another competent official. As you, Mr. Hanson, know as a competent man, if it were not for the competency of these officers it would be a case of "God help the Labour Party." (Laughter.)

On reading the report of the department I find that it is stated that the Bunyaville State school additions were estimated to cost £1,246, whereas the completed cost was £1,186. On the publication of that fact hon. members opposite throw up their hats in the air and say, "There you are, we saved

you that amount of money." The report also gives particulars of the additions to the infants' block of the Buranda State school, which were estimated to cost £4,643, whereas the completed cost was a little more—£4,856. In the case of the Central Technical College, Brisbane, alterations and additions to chemistry and commercial blocks were estimated to cost £4,070, and the completed cost was £3,642. To the uninitiated that would appear to denote that a saving has been effected, but no one knows better than the Premier that the only way to ascertain the true cost is to call for tenders and to allow the departmental officers to submit a tender in competition with outsiders. That, however, is barred, because the policy of the Labour Party stands firm for day labour; costs are no concern of hon. members opposite.

Mr. FOLEY: You know that is not correct.

Mr. MAXWELL: I know this business from A to Z and if the hon. member will permit me to proceed I shall show him. I know of instances during the Moore Government's regime where the then Secretary for Public Works, the hon. member for Logan, allowed the departmental officers to submit a tender for certain work in competition with outsiders. When the tenders came to be considered it was found that the departmental figure was the lowest and when the Minister said that the only thing to do in those circumstances was to permit the department to do the work, the departmental official said, "We only submitted an estimate as a guide." I do not believe in departmental officers wasting time and money in that way, and if hon. members opposite spoke sincerely they would endorse my opinion, because with two or three exceptions hon. members opposite have work of their own done by contract.

The hon. member for Ipswich dilated on the beautiful structure that had been erected at Ipswich under the day-labour system. I do not dispute the fact that the building is beautiful, but I can point to other beautiful structures that have been erected under the contract system, where employment was given to men at award rates of pay and under conditions prescribed by the Industrial Court. Do not forget that many of the employees who previously worked for private employers are now working for a Socialist Government. We seem to be creating a "Russianised" system, where everything is to be done under Governmental control and where private enterprise is to be effaced. Where will the Government get funds to carry on essential work if they build up such a community? Take some of our beautiful structures; take the Treasury Building!

The Executive Building is a beautiful one and was built under the contract system. The Taxation Building on the opposite corner was also built under the contract system. The pioneers of this country did not build up this wonderful community by the day-labour system. Why? Because they realised the ridiculousness of such a system. They realised that the best in a man is brought out by healthy rivalry and competition. Under the present system there is no incentive to the individual. The Treasury block of buildings, with the exception of one portion, was built by contract. When it was proposed to erect the remaining portion of that building I was curious enough to ask for information as to the estimated cost, and I was informed that the cost would be

[*Mr. Nimmo.*]

£230,000. I was of the opinion that whoever estimated for the job had fallen into error. I compared the proposed building with the Executive Building and the State Insurance Building (now the Taxation Building), and I measured each of those buildings. When that Treasury block was completed the actual cost of the last portion was £137,817. According to the argument of hon. members opposite, over £100,000 was saved because the Government had estimated that it would cost £230,000! In effect they say to the electors, "Ladies and Gentlemen, this building was estimated to cost £230,000 and we have saved over £100,000." The Labour Party say that the contractors were nothing more nor less than burglars. I desired further information on the matter and I asked the then Secretary for Public Works, Mr. Kirwan, as to the reason for the difference between the estimated and the actual cost. He said, "You know, you had something to do with the erection of the town hall. It was intended by the department to build a tower on that building and that tower was estimated to cost £90,000." I went to the Department of Public Works and got the plan and found no tower was provided for at all. I returned to this House and informed the Committee to that effect, and said I wanted some explanation. My friend, Mr. Kirwan, simply waved his hand. Instead of improving the conditions of the community hon. members opposite are building up a system that will be detrimental to the interests of the whole of the community. They are increasing the cost of government and increasing the public service. Hon. members say that the cost of government should be reduced. We all agree that it should be reduced. That reduction will not be brought about by engaging in work of this description.

I do not want to enter into a controversy on the respective merits and demerits of the contract and day labour systems. I appreciate the position of hon. members on the other side of this Committee. The day labour system is part of their policy, and nothing we have been able to say in pointing out how wrong the principle is will make them depart from their policy. The expenditure of such a large amount of money is a serious matter; were it not so the expressions of opinion of hon. members opposite would be extremely humorous. A striking example is the unfinished railway station at Ipswich. Ask a policeman where the new railway station is. He cannot tell you, and I venture the opinion that neither can the officials of the railway department. This building, still unfinished, was estimated to cost a certain amount of money, and I believe that it has already cost three times the amount anticipated, and where is the station? Up in the clouds! I trust the Minister will play the game with the supposed taxpayers. I say "supposed taxpayers," because they are not taxpayers now. The department is pushing ahead with a tremendous amount of work for which quite a considerable portion of the finance is being found from loan funds. However, I do not wish to pursue that matter further, or I shall be ruled out of order by you, Mr. Hanson. The Government are creating an enormous burden, which will eventually prove a detriment to the State, and it is time they woke up to the ultimate effect of their actions.

I congratulate the Minister upon his very capable officers, and thank the department for the wonderful improvements that have been effected in the various schools in my electorate. Quarries and gullies have been turned into beautiful playgrounds.

Mr. W. T. KING: Hear, hear!

Mr. MAXWELL: The credit is not due to the hon. member for Maree, but to the Secretary for Public Works in the Moore Government. It was he who commenced work of this nature, and it stands to the credit of the present occupant of that office that he continued the good work. What originally were rubbish dumps have been turned into playgrounds for the children. The department is ever ready to consider any suggestion, and I cannot allow the opportunity to pass without thanking the officers for the courtesy and consideration they have shown at all times.

At 8.50 p.m.,

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

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR (*Enoggera*) [8.50 p.m.]: I want to add my measure of praise to the department for the manner in which it is assisting in alleviating distress among the unemployed tradesmen of Brisbane and the State of Queensland during this period of depression. The Department of Public Works is to be congratulated for pursuing its present policy, which has resulted in extra labour being employed. The Minister is also to be congratulated on the manner in which the department has handled that extra labour, and on the control of the relief labour employed on the grounds of State schools and other public buildings. From the point of view of unionism the position to-day is much better than it was during the regime of the Moore Government, and the policy of the department in prescribing full award rates and conditions and in applying the system of preference to unionists to the men engaged in the department has created a measure of confidence within the ranks of the trade unionists, a feeling that had been almost completely destroyed during the reign of the late Government.

I also wish to congratulate the department on the extension of its operations at the Ipswich-road workshops. There is no doubt that the work that is carried out there can compare more than favourably with the work carried out by the contractors who provided the furniture and office equipment for schools and public buildings during the regime of the late Government. The building programme of the department to-day is one of progress that has done much to restore confidence to the people in the city of Brisbane and in the other large centres of the State. There is no doubt that the building programme of the department is heavier to-day than it has been for years; but the department is carrying out a splendid public duty in providing an opportunity to all workers to exercise their rights of citizenship. The work that has been carried out in my electorate is a credit to the department and its staff and to the workers engaged upon it. The schools have been built with due regard to efficiency, and they offer to the rising generation some measure of comfort during their scholastic careers. During the coming year the department will

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be called upon to give effect to a more intensive building programme, and upon the completion of the work it will have done much to restore confidence to the workers engaged in the building trade. The policy of the department in placing relief work carried out under award conditions under the supervision of the district foreman of the department has been responsible for the extensive improvements carried out at the Wilston, Newmarket, Oakleigh, and Enoggera State schools. The sports grounds which have been constructed are a credit to the State from a town-planning point of view, and will also be of material assistance to the scholars.

Mr. P. K. COPLEY (*Kurilpa*) [9 p.m.]: One pleasant feature of the operations of this department is the number of apprentices to whom it is now giving employment. The figures are very illuminating. From 1923, when the regulations were made on which the apprenticeship is based, until June, 1929, the department took 136 apprentices into its employment.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I remind the hon. member that apprenticeship matters cannot be discussed under this vote.

Mr. P. K. COPLEY: I am going to connect my remarks up with this vote by saying at the present time the department, under the apprenticeship scheme, is employing thirty-two apprentices, whereas under the regime of the Moore Government only one was employed. It is pleasing to note that under the public works policy of the Government a large amount of work is being provided for tradesmen, which in turn has enabled a large number of lads to earn a living under our scheme of apprenticeship.

I also commend the decision of the Minister in connection with the West End School, in the Kurilpa electorate. That building was constructed fifty-five years ago, and it is only quite recently that it was agreed to improve it. The main portion of the building is to be demolished and a modern building and conveniences erected. I was also pleased to see that certain arrangements were made whereby the grounds of the State schools, not only in the Kurilpa electorate but also in other electorates, have been improved and beautified.

I listened with a great deal of amusement to the remarks of hon. members opposite concerning the policy of the Government in providing employment by a vigorous building policy. A very cursory glance at the figures contained in the report will show that in the past financial year the present Government spent an amount which was equivalent to the total expenditure on public buildings and schools during the three years the Moore Government administered the affairs of State. The department is to be congratulated on its initiative and enterprise. There is no question that whilst money is being spent on the erection of public buildings workers are being put back into employment. It is generally conceded that the building trade is the best trade to concentrate upon to bring about a revival, because in it the greatest proportion of the money expended is paid out in wages and immediately put into circulation among all sections of the community.

I again congratulate the Minister and the members of his staff upon engaging on such

a fine public works policy, which is materially assisting to lift Queensland out of the throes of the depression.

Mr. KEOGH (*Merthyr*) [9.3 p.m.]: I also wish to congratulate the Minister and the officers of his department on the good work they are doing. I was rather surprised at the remarks of hon. members opposite, particularly the hon. members for Oxley and Toowong. They commended the good work of the officials, but at a later stage of their speeches said that they could not carry out the work of the department under the day-labour system. In so doing they cast a slur on officers who are efficiently carrying out a very fine public works policy. We know that the same type of tradesmen and assistants are engaged in carrying out that policy as are working for private contractors, and they will give the same amount of work to the department as they give to a contractor. It does not matter to a tradesman whether he is working for the Government or a contractor, so long as his wages are paid. I am satisfied that we have as good and efficient a set of officers in the department as can be found on the staff of private contractors. In talking about contracting work I would bring the city hall under the notice of the hon. member for Toowong. That building, which cost £1,000,000, was constructed by contract, yet whenever it rains water finds its way into the building. I would also refer him to another building which was erected at a cost of many thousands of pounds by a private contractor for Messrs. McWhirters Limited. We know that during a recent rain storm water found its way into that building also. We do not have that happening in public buildings constructed by day labour. On that account we appreciate the good work carried out by the department, especially in the erection of schools, police stations, court houses, and other public buildings.

The way the Moore Government allowed public buildings to get into a state of disrepair was a disgrace. Schools and police stations were allowed to fall into such a state as to interfere with the comfort and health of their occupants. Two police stations in my electorate were almost tumbling down on the heads of the people living in them. In fact, one building was in such a dilapidated state that I do not know how a police sergeant, his wife, and family continued to live in it. It is pleasing to know that the Government are doing something as regards the upkeep of public buildings and that this work is giving a vast amount of work to tradesmen and their assistants. After all is said and done, it is the friends of the hon. members opposite—the business people—who gain the benefit of money spent on public buildings. Surely these hon. members do not wish the public to believe that money spent on public buildings is wasted! Are not the buildings an asset to the country, and have not the Government to rent buildings if public buildings are not available?

I agree with the remarks of the hon. member for Oxley in regard to the insulation of wires conveying electricity from the street poles to residences, and I trust the Minister will instruct his officers to inquire into the work not only of the Electricity Department of the Brisbane City Council, but also of the City Electric Light Company, Limited, and other companies. The hon. member for Oxley

[*Mr. G. C. Taylor.*]

endeavoured to have a crack at the Brisbane City Council, but private companies are the greatest offenders. The provision that the wires must be insulated for a distance of fifteen feet from the house is not sufficient, because in stormy weather the wires may be broken down and fall across the roadway, creating a source of extreme danger to people in the vicinity. Electricians have complained to me that the Act does not compel the complete insulation of the wires from the house to the poles from which the current is drawn, and I trust that the Minister will look into this matter.

I am not satisfied with the action of the department as regards gas and electricity charges. Last year we were promised that electric light charges would be reduced but with the exception that the meter rent and the minimum charge for electricity have been abolished, no relief has been given to consumers. I trust the Minister will see what can be done. When the hon. member for Oxley, who is a shareholder in a gas company, congratulates the Secretary for Public Works on the action he has taken in regard to gas charges, then I can only say that it is not any great recommendation for a Labour Minister. As a representative of the consumers, I am not satisfied with the way in which the Minister has handled the matter. Prices should be reduced. The companies can afford to make reductions, because their balance-sheets show that huge dividends continue to be paid. Why, the Gympie Gas Company made a virtue of a necessity and reduced their charges for gas by 4s. per 1,000 cubic feet, because they were afraid that legislation would be introduced to deal with the matter. To what extent had they been robbing the public before? I am sure that even after they made that reduction they left themselves a fair profit. When the Minister goes into the matter he will find that much more help can be given to the consumers under the legislation already passed. I am a consumer of both electricity and gas and no great reduction has been brought about in the costs of either. I trust the Minister will inquire into the matter and take action.

I express my appreciation of the good work done by the department in the building of furniture, etc., for schools. The public generally have a high appreciation of that good work, which I hope will be continued.

Mr. ANNAND (*East Toowoomba*) [9.11 p.m.]: I cannot congratulate the department on any work constructed in Toowoomba in the past twelve months, for, although many promises have been made, no public works have been constructed! However, I appreciate the work which has been done in improving school playgrounds by means of the intermittent relief scheme.

In stating that his Government had made it possible for apprentices to obtain more work and that the increased building programme would still further assist in that direction, the hon. member for Kurilpa made an assertion which I wish to challenge. Very many tradesmen in the city of Toowoomba, portion of which I have the honour to represent, are debarred from working at any of the new public works under construction there, owing to the fact that they cannot afford to take out the necessary ticket to entitle them to that work.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: That is not correct.

Mr. ANNAND: I purposely drew that remark from the hon. member. I say my

statement is definitely correct, and I go so far as to say that the Builders' Labourers Union in Toowoomba has definitely closed its books.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member will not be in order in discussing the question of the closing of books by a union. He will be able to deal with that matter on another vote. The hon. member would be in order in discussing the employment of apprentices by the Department of Public Works.

Mr. ANNAND: The activities of the department should be an example to other people. There was a small hay stack which required covering at the Willowburn Asylum, and a hay shed has been built by the department which cost, according to my information, over £600, and the hay contained in it is worth about £20 or £30. I was wondering whether the department designed that building as an example of the type of construction that should be erected by farmers. The extravagance in that case is a source of amusement to the farmers. If it is true that it cost £600 then I say £450 of public money has been thrown away.

Mr. BRASSINGTON (*Fortitude Valley*) [9.16 p.m.]: In the course of a few brief remarks the hon. member for East Toowoomba made reference to men being forced to take union tickets before engaging on public works. I know what your ruling is, Mr. Gledson, but I feel it is necessary for me to say a few words in order to clear away any wrong impression that may have been created by the remarks of that hon. member. For the information of that hon. member I desire to say that the award governing buildings lays it down that any person can secure employment providing he gives an undertaking to become a member of the union within fourteen days after being employed; and consequently—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member will not be in order in discussing that matter.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: I appreciate the activities of the department during the past twelve months in the electorate which I represent. I desire to place on record my appreciation of the fact that the department is now proceeding with the construction of a Women's Hospital adjacent to the Brisbane General Hospital. The building which is now under construction is a credit to the department; and I am sure that if hon. members opposite inspected that building in the course of construction they would realise the good work that is being carried out there and would be tardy in the future in criticising the principle of day labour and the activities of the Department of Public Works.

There is also the question of the various improvements effected to the schools and other buildings throughout my division. I appreciate the efforts of the department in that respect, particularly in regard to the vast improvements effected at the Central Practising School in Leichhardt street, Fortitude Valley. That school was not the best of buildings until the department undertook the task of improving it. Whilst I recognise and give credit for the vast improvements effected, I still think that there is only one solution to the problem of the buildings of the Central Practising

Mr. Brassington.]

School—the erection of an up-to-date building in keeping with the importance of the institution. So far as the Department of Public Instruction is concerned, the Central Practising School is, perhaps, one of the best schools in the State, and I, for one, should like to see a fine, up-to-date building erected in keeping with the standard of education imparted there, as laid down by the Department of Public Instruction. I appreciate, also, the fact that the department will shortly be undertaking the painting of the Boys' State School in Fortitude Valley. This is a job that is somewhat overdue.

Even in the course of a few brief remarks I cannot but recall the utterances of hon. members opposite and drawing their attention to the fact that they have adopted a most remarkable attitude. They argue that expenditure should not be undertaken in connection with public works, and that if the Government continue with their policy disaster will eventually overtake the State. Hon. members should be pinned down to one or two facts. Do hon. members opposite believe in the policy of improving State buildings and the erection of new buildings where they are necessary in the interests of the people? They may argue against this, but they cannot sweep away the fact that a number of the buildings to which we refer have served their purpose and can now very well make way for newer and more up-to-date buildings, so that not only the people who now make use of them, but also the people who will use them in years to come may reap the benefit. I, personally, stand for a policy of progress. I desire to see this policy continued, so that future citizens of this State will enjoy the benefit. Hon. members opposite could very well state their policy towards the provision of these necessary public utilities for future generations. We might join issue with them upon the question whether or not such buildings in the course of construction are in any way materially assisting to re-employ tradesmen and labourers who are at present out of work. It is very necessary to point out here that were it not for the policy of the present Government in that direction, or, to put it in another way, if the policy of hon. members opposite when in power were continued—a policy of stagnation and no result—then, instead of the position of the unemployed being considerably relieved, as we find it to-day, their numbers would have been considerably increased.

At 9.21 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: Hon. members opposite may talk about the expenditure of loan money. They put forward the same old arguments time and again; but I should like them to explain away the claims put forward by members on this side of the Committee that the erection and the improvement of public buildings are very necessary for two important reasons—first, the necessity of providing up-to-date buildings in keeping with the standard of the State; secondly, the necessity of employing as many persons as possible at a time when so many are unemployed. I commend the Government for their policy in that direction, and I sincerely trust it will be continued for many years to come.

In common with the hon. member for Merthyr, I must confess I am not altogether

[Mr. Brassington,

pleased with the operations of the amendment of the Gas Act passed during the last session. Whilst I recognise that—thanks to the passing of that Act—the quality of gas throughout the Greater Brisbane area is certainly much better than heretofore, still I would like to see this problem more thoroughly investigated, in order to ascertain whether the price of gas to the consumers in the area cannot be reduced to the lowest possible level.

I am interested to see what effect the legislation passed during last session will have upon the prices charged to the consumers in Brisbane for their electric current. I sincerely hope that it will mean a substantial reduction in price and that it will confer a benefit on the people of Brisbane. I conclude my remarks by again thanking the Minister and the officers of his department for the attention, courtesy, and consideration that they have extended to me on all occasions that I have made representations to them.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. A. Bruce, *The Tableland*) [9.25 p.m.]: I enthusiastically endorse the remarks of the hon. member for Logan concerning the excellent service performed by the officers of my department. They are working at the highest possible speed, and I venture the opinion that no private company with a similar staff could do the amount of work that is being done by the department to-day.

In dealing with the question of day labour and contract I do not propose to follow the usual practice of violently attacking contractors, but I do wish to point out that contractors who cut down on their expenses here and there can make a little more profit than otherwise they would, and that there is a tendency amongst some of the contractors to go so far as to do shoddy work. Even private enterprise itself has to employ a private architect on a percentage basis to see that a contractor faithfully carries out his work. I do not say that that applies to all the contractors. Some of the contractors do excellent work, and probably would do it without supervision, but there are some who fail to carry out their work faithfully and well. In the department, where the work is carried out under the day labour system, we have our inspectors to see that the work is properly done. I am quite satisfied from the figures in my possession that the bricklayers, painters, carpenters, and other tradesmen are giving excellent service to the State. In the cyclone area in North Queensland the buildings constructed under the day labour system by the Department of Public Works have withstood the force of the gales whilst buildings constructed by private enterprise have been blown away. We have had comparisons made between buildings constructed under the day labour system and buildings constructed under the contract system. The State Insurance Building, one unit in the layout of Anzac Square, was constructed under the contract system during the Moore-Barnes regime, and when the other unit is completed we shall have an opportunity of comparing construction costs. Although certain advocates may be genuine in their support of the contract system it is absolutely absurd to say that excellent work cannot be carried out at a reasonable cost under the day labour system. I

frankly admit that during the regime of previous Labour Governments the cost of the day labour system was increased because men were sent long distances to carry out small jobs, and railway fares and living-away-from-home allowances had to be paid. I have been congratulated because I have carried out certain work outside the metropolitan area under the contract system. I am quite prepared to allow small jobs to be carried out under the contract system in places where there are, perhaps, one or two carpenters capable of carrying out the work; otherwise the tradesmen living in those small towns would not be able to participate in the work provided by the Department of Public Works.

This policy also saves the cost of travelling fares to and from the job. When I go out of office I want the fact established that works constructed by day labour have been done better than similar buildings constructed by contract, and so far as prices are concerned that they can be executed on a competitive basis with similar buildings erected under the contract system. It has been my aim to eliminate excessive costs in building. Take the Cairns public buildings, for example. These buildings, while not being quite so large as some of the public buildings in Brisbane, are of equal beauty from an architectural point of view and the workmanship is just as efficient. They are being constructed by day labour. Whenever reasonable opportunity occurs, public works are being carried out by day labour, which is borne out by the fact that buildings being erected at the present time in Cairns, Rockhampton, Gladstone, Roma, and other towns of a reasonable size are being built by day labour.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition discussed the relative merits of constructing public buildings out of loan funds and revenue. The Auditor-General carefully scrutinises the expenditure of loan money with a view to discovering whether it has been spent in the direction which it is intended, and whether it has been properly spent. He also makes similar inquiries in regard to works carried out from revenue. That hon. member criticised our Government for constructing a number of wooden buildings out of loan money, which he said was uneconomical because of their short life. Just previously he had congratulated the Government on building teachers' residences and endeavoured to show that we have expended money profitably by constructing those buildings out of loan money instead of permitting the Department of Public Instruction to erect them out of its consolidated revenue vote. Thus he contradicted himself. Since I have been in charge of the department a greater number of buildings have been constructed, in both brick and concrete, out of loan money because those materials have a longer life than wood. When I assumed office I found a large number of school residences had been recommended for construction by the previous Government. Had the previous Government been returned to power they undoubtedly would have been erected out of loan money. I built every residence recommended by my predecessor out of loan money. In short, I carried out the contractual obligation bequeathed to me by my predecessor. Yet this hon. member has criticised this Government for not carrying out a sound works policy by erecting wooden buildings from loan money. That policy is similar to the policy pursued for many years past by pre-

vious Secretaries for Public Works, including the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

The increased loan expenditure during the last two years has been incurred in the construction of more permanent brick or concrete buildings. One hon. member said that the Moore Government were unable to secure large sums of loan money. That was true, but the fact remains that what loan money they did expend was largely expended on the erection of wooden buildings. That is in striking contrast to the expenditure of loan money to-day on a permanent type of building in brick or concrete.

The hon. member for West Moreton sought information concerning the Helidon quarry. This matter will claim very early attention from the Government. However, the time is not ripe to disclose their intentions. There is every prospect in the future of a large building programme which will provide a basis for consideration in regard to the future of the quarry.

Some of the buildings which we have built in either brick or concrete are—

Cairns public offices;
Dalby court house and police station;
Ipswich North State school;
Mackay intermediate school;
Goodna Mental Asylum, nurses' quarters;
Gympie Hospital;
Gladstone Hospital;
Innisfail Hospital;
Ipswich Mental Hospital;
Rockhampton Police court.

These are brick buildings, in contradistinction to the wood buildings which the previous Government built largely out of loan moneys.

With reference to the criticism of hon. members opposite concerning the public buildings now being constructed, I would point out that these are being built on the recommendation of the Public Service Commissioner for the housing of Government departments. In many cases private persons have been receiving rentals for housing Government departments, but that expenditure will no longer be necessary when public buildings are available. When the hon. member for West Moreton stated that he always understood that a work was reproductive when it earned interest, he should also have stated that a work is reproductive if it saves outgoings. Private firms renting premises construct their own building accommodation so soon as funds are available. The policy I have been able to carry out with the money placed at my disposal by the Treasurer is influenced by two considerations: First, to save money by building reproductive works, and, secondly, to give logical and reasonable employment to persons who previously had none.

The hon. member for Ipswich referred to the Ipswich court house, which is a subject on which a special report has been obtained. The matter is receiving consideration. The remarks of the hon. member concerning the Labour Bureau building have also been noted. I would point out to hon. members generally that my greatest difficulty to-day is the tremendous pressure at which my officers are working. Particularly in the drafting section an enormous amount of work has been entailed in carrying out the policy

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of the Government. It is my intention to pursue that policy and to expend all money made available to me by the Treasurer.

The hon. member for Ipswich also referred to the inspection of brakes on private motor cars and trucks. The matter does not concern my department, there being no power under the Inspection of Machinery and Scaffolding Acts, but the matter has been referred to the State Transport Board.

A request for information in regard to electricity charges was also made by the hon. member for Ipswich. Hon. members will note the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill to amend the Electric Light and Power Acts. A distinct saving to consumers resulted from the legislation passed last year because meter rents were abolished. I also appointed a board in accordance with the provisions of the amended Act for the purpose of making inquiries into the price and methods of charge of electric authorities, and the amending legislation of which notice has been given will enable that board to finalise its activities in the manner desired by the hon. member.

Reference was made by the hon. member for Oxley to the fact that in some cases the insulation has worn off electric light wires conveying electricity to residences, and the hon. member endeavoured to single out the Electricity Department of the Brisbane City Council in this respect. I can tell the hon. member definitely that so far as the Brisbane

City Council is concerned—and, although I cannot say definitely, I presume the same position obtains in respect of the City Electric Light Company, Limited, and other private companies—a notification by the occupier of any house where the wires are deficient in insulation will result in immediate attention being given. The real trouble that my officers have is in connection with flexes, the careless use of which by householders is a source of great danger. The need for attention to this danger cannot be too strongly emphasised. At all events, the hon. member for Oxley will find that any complaint he has in regard to insulation will be removed if notification is given to the electricity authorities concerned.

Reference was made by the hon. member for Merthyr to the price of gas. He stated that the Gympie Gas Company had been making enormous profits. For the information of that hon. member I may state that the Gympie Gas Company paid a dividend of 3 per cent. this year and has paid lower dividends previously. That hon. member also said that the public had not got the consideration they should under the Gas Act Amendment Act passed during last session. The following table will afford useful information to the hon. member for Merthyr and other hon. members of this Committee in regard to the savings to the people through the introduction of that amending Act:

Company.	Price fixed under Gas Act of 1916.		Price fixed under Gas Act Amendment Act of 1933.				Average reduction in price per 1,000 cubic feet.
	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	
Brisbane	8	1	7	9	5	11	0 6 (six pence)
South Brisbane	8	9	8	7	5	6	0 5 (five pence)
Bundaberg	11	7	11	4	9	1	0 10 (ten pence)
Cairns	13	6	12	6	8	4	1 11 (one shilling and eleven pence)
Gympie	15	2	12	6	8	4	4 6 (four shillings and six pence)
Ipswich	9	1	8	11	7	1	0 4 (four pence)
Mackay	13	0	12	6	8	4	2 2 (two shillings and two pence)
Mount Morgan	14	8	14	8			nil.
Rockhampton	10	6	10	0	8	4	0 7 (seven pence)
Toowoomba	10	3	10	3	7	6	1 3 (one shilling and three pence)
Townsville	13	4	12	6	10	5	0 10 (ten pence)
Warwick	10	4	10	0	9	2	1 1 (one shilling and one penny)
Sandgate	9	0	8	9	7	1	0 4 (four pence)
Wynum	11	1	10	0	7	1	1 1 (one shilling and one penny)

The total savings to consumers as a result of the alteration in prices from those previously fixed represents over £23,000. I think that is sufficient refutation of the allegation that the amending Act did not carry out the purpose which was intended.

The hon. member for Toowoomba made a statement that was absolutely incorrect. He said that men could not get work in the department unless they held union tickets. Numbers of men have been employed by the department who did not have union tickets. They were allowed one month after securing work in which to purchase them. One of my first acts as Secretary for Public Works was to make that provision. My argument was that men who were good unionists, good tradesmen, and artisans had tried to make themselves independent and remove themselves from the labour market,

but had not succeeded owing to the depression, and there was no reason why these men should not be afforded an opportunity of rejoining their respective unions.

Mr. ANNAND: I have the letter downstairs in regard to that complaint.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The hon. member stated that the books of the Builders Labourers' Union were closed. If a man who had been a member of the Australian Workers' Union or any other union secured a position as builder's labourer under the department, the Builders' Labourers' Union would have to admit him. It would be necessary for him to join the Builders' Labourers' Union because he had undertaken builders' labourers' work. I do not know whether any special case has arisen in Toowoomba.

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but the Builders Labourers' Union in the metropolitan area has accepted every man who has made application for admission.

One or two matters were raised by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley in reference to repairs to certain buildings. Hon. members who have been interested in the matter of government know the urgent necessity for nursing revenue money. All the improvements made in Parliament House have been paid for out of revenue. The question raised by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley is one that has received careful consideration by my department. There are a number of places that require minor repairs and painting, but the amount of money necessary to affect those repairs would be very large, and those jobs are being done from time to time as funds permit. I say quite frankly that probably no matter causes so much concern to the officers of my department as this question.

The bulk of the work undertaken by the department is reproductive. The only work that can be criticised is that concerning State school buildings and other educational facilities, yet the time has long passed when any hon. member would have the temerity to contend that buildings designed to afford educational facilities are not highly reproductive. Many hon. members on the Opposition and many prominent members of the public, together with hon. members of the Government, consider that something should be done in the erection of a University building. That would be the continuation of the work the department is doing so far as public instruction is concerned. I do not think, therefore, that there should be any criticism in that direction. The building being erected at Cairns will house numerous departments that were scattered all over the town in buildings for which the Government were paying rent to private firms. That building will be reproductive. The homes erected for school teachers will save the Government the payment of allowances. Many of these residences were recommended by the previous Government, who intended to proceed with their construction had they been returned to power in 1932. I have endeavoured to see that as far as possible the department constructs buildings which will give a return to the Government.

As regards the day labour system, I know there have been discrepancies in the arguments that have been advanced at different times. It has, for instance, been said that the estimate was so and so, and the work was completed under the estimate. That is no criterion at all. The criterion is the amount of work that is done, and the departmental officers exercise a high degree of supervision in this respect. We have our own inspectors, and it is thus guaranteed that the work is 100 per cent. efficient. Nothing is slummed. One need only look round the Parliamentary buildings and watch the painters who are at present at work to be convinced of that. These are men selected from the Labour Bureau. Nobody can suggest that these painters are not doing their work as efficiently and as fast as they would for any private contractor. Is anybody game enough to suggest that the work has been slummed? And the work being done around this building is an example of the work being done in all the buildings under the supervision of the

department. The handicap under which the day labour system was used during previous Governments—Labour Governments included—was the fact that away-from-home allowances and travelling allowances were paid. Many men would not accept work from private contractors, but sat down until they could get a day labour job; then, of course, they did not work as efficiently as they are doing to-day. When a man is not capable, or is not doing his work properly and efficiently, my officers have the right to dispense with that man's services immediately. That is the only way in which efficiency can be achieved. In spite of what may have happened in the past, we are to-day getting efficiency and first-class work.

Mr. W. J. COPLEY (*Bulimba*) [9.52 p.m.]: In common with other hon. members I desire to express my satisfaction with the administration of the Department of Public Works since the Government assumed control and the present Minister took charge of the department. Increased activities in that department were anticipated from the very day that the Labour Party was successful at the polls, and the Premier, who allots the portfolios decided to alter the system adopted by the Moore Government of combining the portfolios of the Department of Public Instruction and the Department of Public Works under one ministerial head. When the late Premier combined the two Ministerial positions it was quite apparent that he had definitely made up his mind that there was not to be a general policy of progress in the Department of Public Works and that he was not going to continue the policy of the Labour Department in that office, but it is pleasing now to note that as a result of the judicious expenditure of public money fine useful buildings are being constructed, and above all that work and wages are being provided by the department for a number of artisans and unskilled workers who otherwise would be unemployed.

I desire particularly to congratulate the Minister on the success of the building revival scheme. When that scheme was first inaugurated a sum of £100,000 was made available in an endeavour to accelerate employment in the building industry, and I believe that the efforts of the Minister in that direction have met with a good deal of success.

Quite a number of small contractors and people out of work have received a considerable degree of employment that would not have been available to them had the building revival scheme not been launched.

I have no desire to work the parish pump, but I do want to bring under the notice of the Minister the position at the Bulimba State school.

At 9.55 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN: Under the provisions of the Sessional Orders agreed to by the House on 29th August and 3rd October, I shall now leave the chair and make my report to the House.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported progress and asked leave to sit again.

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

The House adjourned at 9.56 p.m.

Mr. W. J. Copley.]