Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 6 NOVEMBER 1934

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

QUESTIONS.

ASSISTANCE TO UNEMPLOYMENT RELIEF WORKERS AT CHRISTMAS; REPORT OF DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR AND INDUSTRY.

Mr. KENNY (*Cook*) asked the Secretary for Labour and Industry—

"1. What would be the approximate additional cost entailed in giving two weeks' pay in lieu of intermittent relief work and rations during the forthcoming Christmas season?

"2. In view of the nearness of the termination of the period allowed for discussion of the Estimates, when will the annual report of his department be presented to Parliament?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. F. A. Cooper, *Bremer*), for the SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY (Hon. M. P. Hynes, *Townsville*), replied—

"1. £202,632. To raise this amount would necessitate an increase in the tax of 10.3 per cent.

"2. The report will be presented as soon as possible."

PAYMENTS FOR PURCHASE OF SOLDIER SETTLEMENT RETAIL STORES.

Mr. KENNY (*Cook*) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"Has this year's instalment on the Soldier Settlement Retail Stores yet been paid? If so, what amounts have been apportioned to principal repayment and interest respectively?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. P. Pease, *Herbert*) replied—

"The departmental records with reference to the Soldier Settlement Retail Stores are available for perusal by any hon. member at my office."

PAPERS.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Regulations Nos. 432 to 435 under "The Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Acts, 1926 to 1932."

Amendments of and additions to the Barley Board Hail Insurance Scheme Regulations under "The Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Acts, 1926 to 1932."

VOTE OF CREDIT.

ON ACCOUNT, 1935-36.

Mr. SPEAKER announced the receipt from His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor of a message recommending that provision be made, on account, for the services of the several departments of the public service for the year ending 30th June, 1936, of the following amounts:—

	£
From the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland (exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account) the sum of	1,800,000
From the Trust and Special Funds, the sum of ...	1,000,000
From the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account, the sum of ...	750,000

Message ordered to be referred to Committee of Supply.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1933-34.

Mr. SPEAKER announced the receipt from His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor of a message transmitting the Supplementary Estimates for the year 1933-34.

Estimates ordered to be printed, and referred to Committee of Supply.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS.

PASSAGE OF BILLS THROUGH ALL STAGES IN ONE DAY.

The PREMIER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*): I move—

"That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as would otherwise prevent the receiving of Resolutions from Committees of Supply and Ways and Means on the same day as they shall have passed in those Committees, and the passing of Bills through all their stages in one day."

Question put and passed.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—ESTIMATES—SIXTEENTH ALLOTTED DAY.

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

ESTIMATES IN CHIEF, 1934-35.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE.

CHIEF OFFICE.

Question stated—

"That £21,450 be granted for 'Department of Justice—Chief Office.'"

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*) [10.36 a.m.]: At the outset I wish to say how pleased everyone in this Chamber is to see you again in the chair, Mr. Hanson, quite recovered from your recent illness and enjoying your usual good health again.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. GLEDSON: Dealing with the report of the Friendly Societies, Queensland has been exceptionally fortunate in having men like Mr. Robert Rendle, who was Registrar of Friendly Societies in Queensland for so many years, and Mr. George Porter, who has been the Registrar since his retirement. We have also been fortunate in having the assistance and advice of Mr. Rendle as official valuer for the friendly societies, although he has retired from active participation in the administration of the Registrar-General's office.

The report that has just been issued by the Registrar contains some illuminating

information appertaining to friendly societies. During the past few years the friendly societies, in common with all other societies, have been experiencing very lean times. One fact that impressed me in connection with this report was the statement that had it not been for the investment of the savings that had been accumulated in the past their accounts would not have been in the satisfactory position they are. Quite a considerable loss would have been sustained during the years of the depression had it not been for the interest payments received by the different societies.

The report discloses the fact that the total membership of the friendly societies decreased during the year from 66,135 to 65,220, 55,614 males and 9,606 females, while the financial membership decreased from 61,305 to 61,283, 52,157 males and 9,126 females. Those figures are evidence that a large number of the people in Queensland realise the benefits conferred by friendly societies on their members.

The Registrar, Mr. Porter, has not confined his activities to the city; and I take this opportunity of commending him for his activities in other parts of the State. Wherever he was invited to attend at friendly society meetings he did so; and he thus met the men who are engaged in carrying on the work of the societies, and he was able to give them advice and point out to them the difficulties that would follow if they carried out a certain policy. Both Mr. Rendle and Mr. Porter have often been frowned upon by the societies because the latter were not permitted to do what they considered the proper thing. The good advice tendered to them by Mr. Porter, for instance, has been looked upon as an endeavour to prevent them from spending their own money. Some of the societies were of the opinion they should be able to use the funds in any way they wished. At some of the friendly society conferences, however, the Registrar has been able to point out to them that the department was not endeavouring to prevent them from spending their own money, but that the whole object was to protect the members of the friendly societies and see that the benefits for which the societies were formed were achieved. By personal contact he has been able to show that the advice of the department has been good advice, and this has been followed by good results.

It will be noted from the report that the decrease in membership has been arrested, and the percentage of decrease during the last year has been very low. Whilst the percentage decrease for Queensland was 2.1 per cent., the decrease in New South Wales has been 5.68 per cent. for males and 8.44 for females. These Queensland figures show that the friendly societies have practically stemmed the tide so far as the decrease in membership is concerned.

Another matter upon which the department is to be congratulated is that of the finances of the societies. They have been very hard hit—some of them have just been able to carry on—but it is found that they have been able to overcome their difficulties and during the year there has been a considerable decrease in the amount of arrears of money owing to the societies. Quite a number of men and women have been able to reduce the amount that they were behind and once more make themselves full financial members.

A matter that is very seldom brought to public notice—one hears of it when attending conferences of the societies—is the difficulty and the expense associated with transfers of mortgages. It is a matter that affects every society in Queensland. Some of the branches wish to transfer their mortgages to their head centre, but it is found that this means duplicating registration and fees. This is a matter controlled by the Department of Justice, and I ask the Attorney-General if he would go into it and ascertain whether something could not be done to afford relief. A branch in a district lends money on mortgage to a member. Then, for the purpose of complying with the law and also keeping the branch finances in proper order, it is desired to transfer the mortgage to the head office. This means that the whole procedure has to be duplicated. These societies consider, I think with some justification, that so long as the mortgage was properly completed and the fees paid in the first instance, the branch should not be asked to pay the stamp duties and registration fees for the further mortgage when the transfer to the head office takes place.

Friendly societies have been very hard hit by what I may term "industrial aid clubs." There are certain businesses that provide for their own clubs, the employees contributing so much each week or month, as the case may be, and being then entitled to a certain sum in the event of sickness or death. The principle would be good if these aid societies were bound to the same terms and conditions as friendly societies, but that is not the case. They have practically a free hand, and there is no compulsion on them to keep their funds solvent by having any reserve funds. In some cases they have been subsidised by the firms concerned when they have found themselves unable to meet the demands made upon them, but there is no provision requiring them to have funds to meet payments in bad times. I do not know the exact position, and I should like the Attorney-General to look into the matter and see whether there is anything of importance in the statements that are made to this effect, and whether there is security for the contributors.

The friendly societies and the building societies have, of course, to keep a close grip on benefits, and seeing that no complaints have reached me in connection with this matter from my own district, I take it that things have been working fairly smoothly.

I think the hon. member for Fortitude Valley and other hon. members on this side raised a question that comes under the jurisdiction of the Department of Justice: The collection of postal votes. The suggestion made by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, in my opinion, is a very good one, that is, that the collection of postal votes should be taken out of the hands of individual agents and canvassers for particular candidates and handed over to the Police Department. The latter is independent, and has nothing to gain or lose as has a candidate.

To every adult in Queensland has been given the right to record his or her vote

for the person that he wishes to elect to Parliament. Queensland has the most democratic electoral system of any place in the world. Every person, upon reaching the age of twenty-one years, has no difficulty in being enrolled, retaining his name on the roll, and exercising the franchise. The principle of the secret ballot enables an elector to vote with perfect freedom according to his conscience, but it cannot be claimed that the same secrecy prevails in connection with the system of postal votes. I have had much experience in connection with these matters, and I have a very vivid recollection of what occurred a few years ago when I was a political candidate. The postal votes were not collected and counted on polling-day, but were retained by the returning officer, who took charge of them and counted them possibly three or four days, or even a week, later. The primary votes gave me a lead of eighty-seven and my supporters naturally concluded that there was no chance of my being defeated. But we did not count upon what our opponents were able to do. Without any notification to me, the postal votes were counted three or four days later, and I then found myself twenty-one behind. I went along to ascertain how this had come about and why I had not received a notification to the effect that the postal votes were to be counted. I had been told that some postal votes had come in, but when I asked if those that had been counted were on hand on the previous Saturday night I was told that they had come in since. However, I was twenty-one behind and I could get no satisfaction at all as to how this reverse was brought about. I was able to obtain some satisfaction later on when a man definitely informed me that persons working in the interests of my opponent were able to ascertain the names of those people who had not voted on the previous Saturday, and they then selected the names of persons who were away from the electorate or were dead, obtained someone to sign application forms bearing their names, and in that way cast postal votes in favour of my opponent.

Mr. MAXWELL: I do not believe it.

Mr. GLEDSON: Whether the hon. member believes it or not I definitely assert that I am not in the habit of telling lies. I was told by this individual that that is what they did.

Mr. KENNY: I do not believe you.

Mr. GLEDSON: The facts are there and that is what happened. This man, who was on the committee, told me some time afterwards that that is what occurred.

Mr. KENNY: Who was he? Give us his name and let us have an inquiry right away.

Mr. GLEDSON: My political opponent and this particular man are both gone and they are in another place.

Mr. EDWARDS: You waited until they had gone before you mentioned the matter.

Mr. GLEDSON: They waited until the election was over before they told me what happened. These are facts and they can be verified by anyone who cares to look the matter up. I am satisfied that my statement can be amplified by the Attorney-General himself, who has had some experience in connection with these matters. We have endeavoured to guard against corrupt practices by the institution of the secret ballot, but the ballot cannot be held to be secret whilst the present system of collecting postal votes prevails. Even at subsequent elections political agents filled in applications for postal votes with the exception of signing the names. Then they went along to individuals to sign the application, adding, "We will fix it up." They did not insert the address of the applicant, but they wrote in the address of some other person, and then took along the postal vote certificate for the voter to sign. The body of the form contained the same handwriting as previous forms, but the same individual signed the different forms. I brought this matter before the returning officer on several occasions, but he pointed out that as I had won the elections nothing was to be gained by kicking up a row about it.

Mr. KENNY: Are you referring to Labour plebiscites?

Mr. GLEDSON: When I speak about the plebiscite for the selection of the Nationalist candidate for the Sandgate electorate I shall speak definitely, so that the hon. member for Cook will be able to understand me. I am not raising that question at all just now. The Attorney-General is not charged with the administration of plebiscites in the interests of Nationalist candidates. Therefore, they had nothing whatever to do with this vote.

Mr. MAXWELL: You are a Simon Pure all right.

Mr. GLEDSON: I do not know about any Simon Pures in connection with this matter, but when these things occur it is just as well to let this Committee and the people know what really does occur. If the hon. member for Toowong does not believe me, he can refer to "Hansard" and see that I raised this matter some time ago. The matter was brought before the notice of the returning officer, and his reply was, "We know these things are wrong; but you have won the election, and what is the use of kicking up a row about it now? Let it go." I am not referring to this incident in order that something can be done now, but in support of the proposal that an alteration of the system should be made to prevent postal votes being controlled in this manner. It might be said that the Nationalist Party can always secure more postal votes than the Labour Party, and that is why I want the system altered. We want to give every elector an opportunity of voting in the manner he thinks fit; but it is peculiar that at election times a Labour candidate can obtain a majority of two or three to one on the primary votes, and at the same time have the postal votes cast against him by a similar margin. We must look for the reason. That reason is not that people who desire to exercise the postal vote wish to vote Nationalist as against Labour. It is that the agents of the Nationalist Party use undue influence with people who are sick and are not able to go to the polls or do not care whether they vote or not. In fact, many of them say, "What does it matter to us? We do not care how the vote goes." That is how our opponents get the majority of postal votes. It is necessary to bring this matter and the incidents relating to it to the forefront, and ask that something be done to preserve the secrecy of the ballot in the exercise of postal votes, and,

therefore, to support the request of the hon. member for Fortitude Valley and others that the police, or some persons not connected with either the candidates or the political parties they represent should collect these votes and place them in the hands of the returning officer. That would preserve the secrecy of the ballot on which not only we ourselves, but also the people of Queensland, pride themselves.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Carpentaria*) [10.57 a.m.]: The hon. member for Murilla, who apparently desired to follow the hon. member who has just resumed his seat, has already spoken on this vote.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I said nothing in connection with postal votes.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I, too, have already spoken in reply to a number of statements of various speakers, but it is advisable that I should say something additional at this juncture. My chief reason for rising is to make a few observations on the irresponsible statements made on electoral redistribution by the allegedly responsible Leader of the Opposition on Friday last. Several of his followers also spoke on the question. Naturally, one looks to the leader of the party opposite to give us the policy of the Opposition, and it is to that hon. gentleman's remarks that I propose for a few moments to address myself. His first statement was—

> "This commission will be appointed without any justification. As a matter of fact, the numbers in the various electorates are infinitely better now than when the distribution was made."

That certainly does not speak very well for the distribution to which he refers, or for the knowledge which the Leader of the Opposition possesses of the present position. He went on to say—

> "There is very little difference. There was one seat, Merthyr, which had 11,082 in 1932. To-day the number is only 10,238."

He proceeds—

> "As a matter of fact, how could any commission comply with the Act and provide a more equal redistribution of seats?"

He further states:—

> "The numbers in the various electorates are right to-day in accordance with the Act. Just as the hon. member for West Moreton has pointed out, there cannot be any fair alteration unless the Act is amended. . . . ."

Boiled down, the Leader of the Opposition made four statements:—

1. That the numbers in various electorates are infinitely better than when the redistribution of 1931 was made;

2. That the commission could not comply with the Act and make a more equitable distribution;

3. That the numbers in the various electorates are right to-day in accordance with the Act; and

4. There cannot be any fair alteration unless the Act is amended.

Let us examine the position: A redistribution was carried out in 1931, in accordance with the provisions of the 1931 Act, and slightly over twelve months after the redistribution we find this state of affairs:—

Number on roll	531,779
Quota	8,577
Maximum in accordance with Act	10,292
Minimum in accordance with Act	6,862

Two electorates were above the maximum, while seven were almost so. Five were below the minimum. Thus, slightly over twelve months after the redistribution the total discrepancy in accordance with the Act was seven electorates, which clearly shows that the statements made on Friday last by the Leader of the Opposition were not in accordance with fact. I do not know the source where the Leader of the Opposition got his figures, but the authentic figures were available to him if he desired. I am not blaming the hon. gentleman; probably he was busy and left the matter to his private secretary. At all events, the following are the figures as at 31st December, 1933:—

Number on roll	527,703
Quota	8,511
Maximum in accordance with Act	10,213
Minimum in accordance with Act	6,809

The results in the various electorates are:—

Above the maximum provided:—Seven electorates, including Brisbane, Bulimba, Fortitude Valley, Hamilton, Kelvin Grove, Kurilpa, and Merthyr.

Closely approaching the maximum:—Six electorates, including Ithaca, Maree, Oxley, Sandgate, South Brisbane, and Windsor.

Below the minimum:—Five electorates, including Barcoo, Carpentaria, Gregory, Warrego, and Fassifern.

The Act says that they may be one-fifth below or one-fifth above the prescribed quota. I am not bothering about those which are closely approaching the maximum or minimum. Six electorates closely approached the maximum, and three closely approached the minimum, but I am not bothering about them. The allegedly responsible Leader of the Opposition told this Committee and the country generally on Friday last that the position was better when the figures were compiled than when his redistribution took place, when as a matter of fact on the figures on which he was basing his argument seven electorates were above the maximum.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Tell us how many above.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I shall read the figures, which are—

Brisbane	10,930
Bulimba	10,239
Fortitude Valley	10,623
Hamilton	10,253
Kelvin Grove	10,228
Kurilpa	10,234
Merthyr	10,235

They are all above the maximum.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Those figures do not correspond with the figures of the Leader of the Opposition.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I cannot help that. Those are the official figures

sent to me, and he, too, should have had them.

Mr. BRAND: Did you say the number in Merthyr was 10,235?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Ten thousand two hundred and thirty-five. From the figures I have quoted, it will be seen there were twelve electorates above or below the prescribed margins. Let us now deal with the figures as at 30th June, 1934. These figures also were available to the Leader of the Opposition, and I am surprised that he did not obtain them. As a matter of fact, I understand he rang up the department and inquired if the figures would be made available, and I directed that they be made available immediately; but the hon. gentleman did not call for them. But I have them here.

According to these figures the position then was:—

Electors on the roll, 541,068.
Quota, 8,726.
Maximum, 10,471.
Minimum, 6,981.

There were ten electorates above the maximum.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: How much above the quota?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: If the hon. member desires, I will read the figures again, rather than have it stated that I am quibbling, although I consider it is wasting the time of the Committee. Above the maximum were—

Brisbane	11,815
Bulimba	10,716
Fortitude Valley	11,180
Hamilton	10,580
Kelvin Grove	10,850
Kurilpa	10,968
Merthyr	10,884
Oxley	10,524
Sandgate	10,747
Windsor	10,481

Electorates below minimum were—

Barcoo	5,923
Carpentaria	6,336
Fassifern	6,846
Gregory	5,764
Warrego	6,453

On the 30th June last the position was that there were ten electorates above and five below the prescribed margin, without taking into consideration those electorates approaching either margin. Those figures indicate that the information that the Leader of the Opposition acted upon was rather unreliable, to say the least of it, when he said the electorates to-day were in a better position than when the 1931 redistribution took place.

According to the statement made the other day by the hon. member for Wynnum, the Federal law prescribes three conditions under which a redistribution of seats may take place. One is whenever the numbers of members in the House of Representatives are altered in the various States, another is when one-quarter of the electorates are above or below the margin prescribed by the Commonwealth Electoral Act, and the third one is whenever the Governor-General in Council thinks fit. The Act passed by the Moore Government in 1931 provides for a complete or partial redistribution when the numbers of electors are so much above or below the margin that, in the opinion of the Governor in Council, it is considered necessary. That which is a virtue in the Moore Government must not be regarded as a vice in the Labour Government. If the Moore Government were justified in having a redistribution in order to equalise the number of electors in the electorates it would be equally justifiable for the Labour Party to do so.

The Leader of the Opposition might have had the courtesy to ask the Government whether we intended to have a redistribution.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I asked you that question.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I am dealing with the Leader of the Opposition now. He got up and spoke on the assumption that a redistribution of seats was to take place.

Mr. MOORE: I read a statement from the press.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The hon. member read out some statement that appeared in the press. I say, in spite of what appeared in the press, that up to the present the Government have not considered the question of a redistribution; if the Government do so, the people of this country will be taken into their confidence immediately. I now come to the shocking statement made by the Leader of the Opposition about falsifying the electoral rolls. I am not at all surprised, Mr. Hanson, at the rumours appearing in the press. On Friday the hon. member for Aubigny quoted such a paragraph, and I do not suppose he can blame me for doing likewise by drawing attention to the remarks that have been appearing in the press as to the necessity for changing the leadership of the Opposition; but I am going to be kind and merciful; I will not pursue that matter. The remarks of the Leader of the Opposition on Friday were a sad commentary on what should be the attitude of responsible men in Parliament. He stated—

> "Just as the hon. member for West Moreton has pointed out there cannot be any fair alteration unless the Act is amended, or unless another course is taken—and I hate to think that hon. members opposite would connive at such a proposal—that is, to place false figures on the electoral rolls so as to make the boundaries suitable, and then afterwards to say that the people must have gone away or that they must have died. There is the suggestion that that can be done, and, in fact, it has been done."

> "The Secretary for Public Instruction: Falsify the rolls?

> "Mr. MOORE: Yes. I make no secret of it; it has been done before. A very fertile imagination has been responsible for the suggestion that people may be placed on the various rolls and then, after the elections, it could be said that they must have gone somewhere else."

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: You know that happened.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That is a shocking statement for the Leader of the

Opposition to make. I can excuse the hon. member for Murilla. I do not mind what the hon. member for Murilla might say on such a matter, but I do deplore the fact that the Leader of the Opposition should make such a statement as that. It is a serious charge against not only the Government but also all the officials associated with the compilation of the electoral rolls. It is a charge against the officials of the Chief Electoral Office. Every Electoral Registrar throughout Queensland, hundreds of policemen and tens of thousands of electors would have to co-operate in the corrupt practice and in the commission of this serious offence. It could not be done without co-operation. How could any Government—if they were really foolish enough to attempt it—pack and stuff the rolls as the Leader of the Opposition suggested without the co-operation of the police, the Chief Electoral Office officials, the Electoral Registrars throughout the State, and the electors themselves? It is shameful, and it is a scandalous misuse of the privileges of Parliament for the Leader of the Opposition to suggest it. Even if the hon. member wanted to do this—certainly we as a Government do not—he would find that neither the electoral officers, nor the police, nor the Electoral Registrars, nor the tens of thousands of decent electors in Queensland would lend themselves to this corrupt and criminal act. Of course, it is the old Tory policy, as old as that party itself, to impugn the honesty of Labour electors and to slander Labour Governments. However, the court records will show that Labour electors are just as honest and just as decent as members of the Opposition or the people who support them. If the Committee required comparisons in this respect, I could quote figures in connection with income tax prosecutions, customs prosecutions, and other things. However, I am not going into such matters to-day. Such an attack on the probity of Labour is quite usual here; it is not unusual anywhere in the ranks of the Tory Party. I remember that twenty-one years ago the late "Andy" Fisher was assailed in the same way after the 1913 election. After the 1913 Commonwealth elections, one of the first statements made in the Commonwealth Parliament by the leaders of the new Government was that Fisher and his party had indulged in impersonation, duplication, roll stuffing, falsification of rolls, and corruption. These statements were made in the Federal Parliament by responsible leaders of the party to which hon. members opposite owe allegiance. Mr. Fisher, in his dignified and honest way, pointed out that every Liberal organisation had made the accusation "That the conduct of the election was immoral and wicked." The suggestion was made that the electors were so corrupt and immoral that they voted more than once at the elections. The press restated that case in scare headlines publicly denouncing the transgressors, and the reports were even cabled to London, where the good name of Australia was defamed by the publication of allegations that the people had been guilty of these practices. Fisher challenged the Government of the day to investigate the accusations, and the Government were cornered. They had to hold the investigation; they dared not refuse. Sir William Irvine, the Commonwealth Attorney-General of the day, had to promulgate a special regulation permitting the breaking of the sealed packets and extracting the whole of the rolls of the Commonwealth. They were all checked, and we have the result in documents in our library. The statements made on that occasion were exactly similar to those made in this Committee on Friday last, and they were conclusively refuted. A select committee was appointed to inquire into the allegations of roll-stuffing and corrupt practices prior to and during the 1913 Commonwealth elections, and it reported—

> "The allegations of roll-stuffing that had been made by a number of responsible newspapers throughout the Commonwealth were effectively disposed of by the evidence given by Mr. R. C. Oldham, Chief Electoral Officer of the Commonwealth, as the following questions and answers will show:—
>
> 'You have heard the statement so frequently made that the number of persons enrolled was in excess of the number of residents in the several States? I have.
>
> 'Does your department make inquiries into matters of that kind? We know that there must always be an excess of enrolment under the Commonwealth electoral law at the date of an election, as, indeed, under the electoral laws of nearly the whole of the States, inasmuch as enrolment is allowed to proceed up to the date of the issue of the writs. At that date there must be a great many incomplete transfers, and there must inevitably be a great many duplications that have not been adjusted. Many objections must be in process of maturation at the time. All these factors go to make up a surplusage of names on the rolls at any given moment. The excess must run into many thousands, and it is absolutely unavoidable under the existing law. If there were no excess, all qualified persons could not be enrolled.
>
> 'Did your investigations support the publicly expressed statement that roll-stuffing was practised before the last general election? I understand 'roll-stuffing' to mean the placing of bogus names on the rolls for the purpose of carrying an election. There is no evidence of such a thing having occurred. We have signed and witnessed claims for nearly the whole of the electors of the Commonwealth. We have never had any evidence of fraud of the kind referred to. We have evidence that electors who have moved from one place to another, and failed to give us information of their previous enrolment, have secured a double enrolment for the time being. We have also evidence that a small percentage of persons who were under age secured enrolment prior to the general election.'"

"There were many sensational statements made that double voting and impersonation had been extensively practised during the last Commonwealth election, but no evidence was given to substantiate them. On the other hand, the evidence of the Chief Electoral Officer goes to prove conclusively that nothing abnormal occurred—

> 'Did you find that any very large number of duplicate votes had been recorded? No. The inquiry disclosed

nothing of an abnormal character. We look forward to something like from decimal 2 to decimal 3 per cent. of errors in the marking of the rolls in connection with a general election. We have 7,441 polling-places, and if we have less than one error in the marking of the rolls in respect of each polling-place we are below the normal average. Nothing abnormal was disclosed by the inquiry, and consequently we did not proceed further with it.

'There was nothing to lead you or your officers to believe that there had been an organised attempt at duplicate voting? No. There might have been individual cases of fraud, but there was no tangible evidence. In my judgment, it is clear, from the inquiries made, that there was no organised attempt at double voting.

'Have you any knowledge of any corrupt voting in connection with the last general election? Has any case been reported to you? We are investigating isolated cases where it would appear on the surface that electors had attempted to vote more than once. In several cases which have been investigated it has transpired that there was no deliberate attempt to secure two votes. It has been found that two declarations were signed as the result of some misunderstanding between the elector and the presiding officers. Several of these cases were still under consideration. But of the whole number of persons who recorded their votes, I will say that there is not half a dozen in respect of whom there is any tangible evidence at present that they voted more than once.'"

Not half a dozen cases in the whole Commonwealth! Then the commission in its findings states—

"Your committee, having made a searching inquiry into the many charges that have been made as to the conduct of the general elections held on the 31st May last, are satisfied that there was no evidence placed before them sufficient to sustain any of such charges.

"No witness was in a position to say that he had any personal information of unlawful practices. Expert evidence went to show that every possible precaution was taken to prevent fraud.

"Recognising the large increase in the number of voters at the elections (the total of which was the highest on record for the Commonwealth) your committee feels satisfied that the evidence discloses remarkably few cases of irregularities in connection therewith.

"Your committee desire to record their appreciation of the efficient and capable manner in which the electoral authorities conducted the election."

That was the result of the wild charges made by the Tory Party! Equally wild were the charges made by members of the Opposition Party on Friday last through their Leader, the hon. member for Aubigny, and I venture to assert that were a commission appointed its report would reveal the same results. The Fisher Government, as a result of the finding of that commission, were vindicted and the good name of Australia was cleared. As proof of the soundness of the findings of that commission we have the results a few months later of a double dissolution of the Federal Houses. The Fisher Government were returned by an overwhelming majority and the opponents of the progress of Australia were hurled into oblivion.

Coming down near home, these Simon Pures of the Tory Opposition had a redistribution of seats in 1931. According to a member of that party the number of seats in this Parliament then proposed was arrived at after a great deal of investigation by the Government and by the caucus of the Tory Party. Why did they have this investigation? Why did they inquire as to what number of members was most suitable—not for Queensland, but for the present Opposition? They had experts analysing the figures back to fifty and up to 100. The experts plainly told the Government of the day that there was only one way in which they could maintain their control of the Government and keep us in perpetual opposition, and that was by reducing the number of members to sixty-two. Why did the experts give that advice?

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Experts are always wrong.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Were hon. members opposite not foolish to take their advice? (Government laughter.) The experts followed that up by this mode of reasoning: "The Labour Party holds many of the mining seats, the pastoral seats, and most of the Northern seats, all of which are remote from the seat of government. These electorates are in the sparsely populated parts of Queensland. Therefore, in the ratio by which you reduce the number of members of Parliament you increase the quota and the numbers of voters required for a given electorate, and to the extent that you increase the quota you reduce the possibility of the Labour Party securing seats." That was the obvious reason for a reduction in the number of members in this Parliament. The result was that Labour seats in the pastoral areas were combined and Labour seats in the mineral areas were also combined. But they reckoned without their host—the indignant electors on election day. They spent days and days on this investigation. Hon. members opposite boasted outside Parliament that, as a result of their investigation and the redistribution which followed, they were entrenched for a generation. They said, "Only a miracle can displace us," and the miracle happened. (Government laughter.) The Leader of the Opposition, who prates about democracy, showed very little regard for it when he was Leader of the Government, because we all know that he agreed to, and in fact was one of the principal urgers in his party, for a wholesale disfranchisement of tens of thousands of electors at the last election. Was it not the Leader of the Opposition who urged the Cabinet and the caucus to make it more difficult for electors to be enrolled? (Opposition dissent.) I say definitely, and I call upon the Leader of the Opposition when he speaks to deny it, that he in Cabinet and in caucus urged that in order to reduce the possibility of the Labour Party securing office again, it must be made three times harder for a man to get his name on the

electoral roll; hence the residential qualifications of three months instead of one month. (Opposition interruption.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MOORE: You must have been listening behind the door! (Opposition laughter.)

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The Leader of the Opposition then knew that we were passing through the worst period of unemployment in the history of Queensland. More seasonal workers—meat, pastoral, and sugar workers—than ever before were travelling "on the boot" from place to place, and it was not possible in those days for tens of thousands of workers to remain three months in any given electorate, so that there was no possibility of their securing votes. Nobody knew that better than the then Leader of the Government, yet nobody urged more strongly in Cabinet and caucus that that should be done. What was the result? Rolls were stacked against Labour by reason of men being disfranchised, and a redistribution was carried out, according to the hon. member for Hamilton, "after a great deal of investigation." In spite of all these things the Labour Party defeated the Government; had the rolls contained the names of all those who should have been enrolled the Labour Party would have annihilated the Tory Party. The hon. member for Toowong knows it is true——

Mr. MAXWELL: It is untrue.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: What is untrue? (Laughter.) I have been in many redistributions. I have lost my seat. As a matter of fact, I think the hon. member for Wynnum will recall the time when I was wiped out for Charters Towers because of an injudicious redistribution of seats. The pretended reason for the redistribution that took place in 1911 was not that it was urgent, but the Government of the day hit upon the ingenious plan that henceforth we should have single electorates in Queensland instead of double electorates. The result was that Labour, holding most of the double electorates, had them divided by law, and in the course of division it was natural that the Tory Party should in some cases be able to secure one of the seats where there was no hope of their securing it in a double electorate. My own seat at Charters Towers was a notable example of that, and Fortitude Valley and Rockhampton were other examples. In fact, I remember that in the redistribution at Rockhampton the Government were so concerned about the community of interest—they wanted apparently to retain North Rockhampton, as it was called—that they crossed the Fitzroy River and put a big slice on the other side of the river into Rockhampton itself so as to obtain that precious "community of interest." That is an example of what Tory Governments have done!

The Tory Party have always been complaining about inflated rolls. The reason given by hon. members opposite is that there is a greater number of electors on the State rolls than on the Commonwealth rolls. It is true that in most cases the State rolls are numerically greater than the Commonwealth rolls. In 1923 there were 27,417 more on the State rolls than the Commonwealth rolls, in 1930 35,490 more, and in 1931 42,070 more. When the Moore Government went to the country there were 13,000 more electors on the State rolls. The reason for that is obvious—we have a better system of enrolment. As evidence of that, I refer to the fact that a canvass of the rolls took place previous to the Federal elections, and the State Government assisted the Commonwealth by instructing the State police to assist. The result is that the present Commonwealth roll is the best in the history of the Commonwealth, and at the same time the State roll was improved. At the present time there is a difference of only about 500 names between the numbers on the two rolls, whereas in recent years the difference was from 30,000 to 50,000. Of the total population 57.77 per cent. are qualified to become electors. Bearing that percentage in mind, it will be found that the numbers on the State rolls have been accurate, and the Commonwealth roll has been inaccurate.

This is the first time an opportunity has been afforded of proving the accuracy of the State roll as against the Commonwealth roll, and we cannot apply a better test than a calculation based on the fact that 57.77 per cent. of the population are entitled to vote. On this basis we get this result—

General Election.	No. of Electors Enrolled.	Estimated Population.	No. of Electors on basis of 57·77 per cent of Population.
1926 ..	478,097	852,000	492,030
1929 ..	509,999	896,000	517,440
1932 ..	525,944	934,000	539,385

So that in those years we could have had 13,933, 7,441, and 13,441 more on the rolls without any warrant for a suggestion of inflation.

The Leader of the Opposition has been continually harping on the question of the inflation of rolls, and roll-stuffing. As far back as 1927 he stated that the State rolls had in May, 1926, 484,212 names on them, and the Commonwealth in April, 1926, had 449,051 which, he said, showed that the State had 35,161 more names on than it should have had. The census is the only reliable means by which these matters can be checked, and what are the facts as represented by those figures? If we take 57.77 per cent. of 867,643—the estimated population at that time—we get the figure for the electoral population of 501,237. At the time the hon. gentleman quoted those figures, in 1927, there were only 484,212 names on the roll, and the census now discloses that there could have been 27,025 more names on the roll.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: What about the number of electors not eligible to vote?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: They are all taken into consideration. The figures I have quoted demonstrate the unreliability of the wild statements that have been made, and an analysis of the facts completely refutes the charges made.

I have been administering the electoral office for about twelve years, and I appreciate the great difficulty of keeping people on the roll. The nomadic habits of many people, and the existence in this State of seasonal industries, the workers in which

travel from one centre to another, make it difficult to keep a roll up to date. Hon. members do not realise how difficult it is to keep pace with the changes that take place in many electorates. To give the Committee an idea I will quote the number of additions, deletions, and transfers only that have taken place during a few years. They are—

1926	191,000
1927	123,000
1928	137,000
1929	184,000
1930	131,000
1931	133,000

To add to the difficulties there are the arrivals and departures, perhaps over 50,000 each. In some cases there have been as many as 150,000 arrivals and departures in one year. Before the Commonwealth Electoral Commission that sat in connection with this matter it was shown that with an electoral population for the Commonwealth in 1925 of 3,090,000, there were no fewer than 1,511,000 changes in one year. There was a change in the whole of the electorates of 50 per cent. per annum, and in the metropolitan areas the proportion rose as high as 80 per cent. These figures will give the Committee some idea of the stupendous task confronting the electoral office. The Commonwealth electoral office, as well as our own, has admitted the difficulty. The Chief Electoral Officer for the Commonwealth some time ago stated before a commission that it was impossible to trace 10 per cent. of the migratory population. He admitted that because of the imperfect methods employed these people were not on any roll. I say here, and I have said it before, that a good electoral roll is one that it is easy to get on and hard to get off: and Queensland's is the best example of such a roll in Australia. I know the danger, but can any hon. member show me an alternative that would not result in disenfranchising tens of thousands of people? The Queensland electoral roll is to-day the best in Australia, but I have had insults and slanders hurled across the Chamber year after year while I have been administering this department. All such accusations have been convincingly answered: and in spite of the continued taunts of the Tories as to what should be done they have never been game enough to do it! Time and again I have invited any member of the Opposition, the whole of the Opposition if they wish, to visit the electoral office and inspect its ramifications and the methods employed, and to check up for themselves to see if anything is wrong. Many of them did take advantage of that invitation, but found nothing. After such accusations had been made the Opposition occupied the Government benches for three years. They did nothing, but they now repeat their charges. If the accusations they make now are true they could have been proved and the matter rectified when they were in office. The fact that they took no action shows that there is absolutely nothing in the ridiculous, mischievous, and slanderous statement made by the Leader of the Opposition on Friday last.

If I were looking for inspiration in order to do anything wrong in connection with electoral rolls, I should not seek advice from members on this side of the Committee. It would undoubtedly be to the Opposition benches that I would go. As an example of what happened in the good old days, I will give hon. members a recital of occurrences in the Cook electorate. In 1883 there existed a famous voting place called California Gully. Fourteen electors are said to have recorded their votes thereat, but the returning officers and scrutineers, when counting the votes, gave the number as 379. At Halpin's Creek in the Cook—Cook was a lively place in those days—twenty-five people voted, but when the returning officer and scrutineers counted the votes there were 114. That was in the bad old days prior to the advent of the Labour Party. The Leader of the Opposition on Friday last talked glibly about democracy. Fancy a gentleman who tried to create an irremovable Legislative Council talking about democracy! It certainly is humorous.

I now wish to deal with many other matters raised by other hon. members during the course of the debate. The hon. member for Bulimba, the hon. member for Merthyr, and the hon. member for Ipswich have raised the question of postal voting. I am prepared to consider any proposal to safeguard the rights of unfortunate individuals who have to exercise the franchise by means of the postal vote. I have had a great deal of experience, rather an unfortunate experience in some cases, of how it can be manipulated in an unscrupulous fashion. I remember that on one occasion in my own electorate no fewer than 27.5 per cent. of the whole of the electors, or 2,600 people out of a total enrolment of 9,515, voted by that method. I vividly recall the extraordinary expedients that were employed by the canvassers for the Tory Party. I am sure that the present hon. member for Charters Towers well remembers the time when the mine manager in his district impressed upon the voter how very careful he should be to spell the name of the candidate correctly. The unfortunate elector would then say, "How do you spell the name of Mr. ——?" and so on. Of course, they also employed the scheme of the blotting paper—the elector must not blot the paper! When the blotting paper came back to the office the name was quite visible on it. Why, nearly every mine manager in the Charters Towers district at that time was a Tory canvasser and was specially employed to canvass the wives of the men employed in the mine. They intimidated them, and hinted that the "old man would lose his job" unless he voted for the Tory Party. Every day was a polling day and every house was a polling-booth under the conditions that prevailed in those times. Hon. members may rest assured that any proposal to safeguard the rights of individuals in connection with postal voting will be thoroughly considered. At the same time, I have to be very careful that the cure is not worse than the disease.

The hon. member for Brisbane said that the court vacation was too long and that considerable inconvenience was caused to litigants and solicitors. From inquiries that I have made I know that many of the solicitors are just as keen on the vacation as the judges. The judges work very hard and it must not be thought that they work only when they are on the bench. Very often the hardest part of their work commences when they leave the bench, for they sometimes practically devote the whole of their week-end to the preparation of a judgment to be delivered on the following Monday. At the same time, the vacation does seem a long

one, from 10th December to, say, the first week in February, and, perhaps, it may be possible to compromise in the matter to have a short vacation in midwinter and a vacation in the summer. I shall discuss the matter with the Chief Justice to see if something cannot be arranged. It may be suggested that if the judges were to take their vacation regularly throughout the year instead of all the judges taking their holidays at the one time, it might be necessary to appoint an additional judge, and I want to avoid that if I can. It must not be forgotten that there is always a vacation judge, one who is on duty during the whole of the Christmas holidays to deal with cases in Chambers so as to minimise inconvenience to the people concerned.

The hon. member for Brisbane also referred to the pension paid to Mr. Justice Lukin. His pension paid by the Queensland Government is prescribed by law. He receives a pension of £1,000 per annum less a reduction of 18 per cent., or of £820, less a further reduction by way of payment of unemployment relief tax and a further reduction by the payment of income tax. The present Government do not subscribe to the principle of pensions to judges, and in proof of that I need only remind the Committee that many years ago we abolished pensions to judges, so far as future appointees were concerned.

The hon. member for Kurilpa referred to the delays that occurred in the hearing of industrial cases in the Magistrates Court. That matter was brought under my notice some time ago and I made investigations. I found that much of the delay was caused by litigants and their solicitors, and that some of it was unavoidable. However, I gave instructions that under no circumstances were industrial cases to be delayed, and, if necessary, the courts should sit additional days. That is now being done, and I understand no delay occurs.

I desire now to refer to some other interesting questions raised by the hon. member for Kurilpa in connection with the Money Lenders Act and the Hire-purchase Agreement Act, which he pointed out were being evaded. The hon. member called on me some time ago and gave me the hint that such was the case. My officers have since thoroughly investigated the matter. I am sorry to say that the criticism of the hon. member for Kurilpa was well founded, and some money lenders have evaded the spirit of the Act by charging procuration fees. I also found that there has been an evasion of the spirit of the Hire-purchase Agreement Act through the adoption of what is called the perpetual lease contract system. I intend, with the approval of the Government—I hope time will permit me to do it during the present session—to pass two small amending Bills that will make such evasions impossible.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Don't you believe in the perpetual lease principle?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Under the device that has been adopted a hire-purchaser really does not become the owner of the property, because he is stated only to hold it under a lease in perpetuity unless he pays 1s. on demand of the vendor.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Why do you apply that principle to land tenure?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That is a different thing. We are now dealing with goods and chattels and not with real property.

The hon. member for Kurilpa spoke of the advisability of placing legal knowledge at the disposal of people in necessitous circumstances. We are doing a great deal now in that direction. The Public Curator, who is the official solicitor, gives a great deal of good advice to litigants, while the Public Defender, Mr. Salkeld, frequently appears in court on behalf of impecunious persons and conducts their defence. In many ways we succour people in need of legal advice. A very large sum of money is now being expended in that direction.

The hon. member for Ipswich dealt with the position of friendly societies. I also dealt with them on Friday last. The hon. member for Ipswich referred to Mr. Rendle, and the position of the finances of friendly societies. I am glad he mentioned Mr. Rendle, because that gentleman has done more than any other person associated with friendly societies to bring about their present solvent position. That is because of the policy he adopted throughout many years of insisting on societies conserving their funds. Although Mr. Rendle has retired from the position of Registrar of Friendly Societies, he is still an adviser to that official, and has been paid a retaining fee for years by the various Governments. There is no doubt that had it not been for the savings of friendly societies in past years they would now be in a very bad way. I want here to pay a tribute to the thousands of officers of friendly societies who give their services gratuitously to their organisations, and thus contribute very largely to the success that has been achieved.

The hon. member for Ipswich referred to the visits of the Registrar of Friendly Societies to various parts of the State to meet the representatives of various bodies at their conferences. I rightly concurred in that policy, because I realise it was advantageous to the Registrar and the societies. Discussions on matters concerning the welfare of friendly societies brought about a better understanding.

The hon. member for Ipswich also referred to the question of the transfer of mortgages held by friendly societies. That is an important question with friendly societies, because sometimes they are compelled to transfer properties from branches to the central office. This involves an adjustment of funds and the payment of stamp duty and Titles Office fees. In view of the great work they are doing it would be reasonable to give some consideration to the question of exempting them, and the matter will receive the attention of the Government.

I do not think I have overlooked any matter dealt with by hon. members. However, four or five hours still remain for debate, and probably other matters will be raised on which I shall reply.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN (*Murilla*) [12 noon]: In response to the perfectly straightforward question whether it is the intention of the Government to have a reallocation of seats, the Attorney-General shuffled and did not deal with the matter. The people

of this State, the taxpayers, are entitled to know what will be done.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I have said that the people of the State will get information and will be taken into the confidence of the Government if and when it is to be done.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: The Minister is evidently afraid to take his own party into his confidence. Perhaps he is afraid that dissention will occur in his own party, seeing that individual hon. members opposite will want to know how the reallocation will affect them. At any rate, it is only fair that the electors should know what the position is.

The Attorney-General stated that a certain number of electorates had an excess of the maximum allowed by the Act, but the hon. gentleman did not tell us by how many votes. Certainly the hon. gentleman read out some figures very quickly, but so far as I could gather some of the electorates are in excess of the margin by only twenty or thirty. Does the hon. gentleman remember that as Attorney-General he was responsible for deciding for or against redistribution at a time when the electorate he represented had 2,652 names on the roll, as against the Enoggera electorate with 11,739 names? Does the hon. gentleman think he played the game with the electors of Queensland when he represented the seat of that description? The hon. gentleman indulged in a long rigmarole about roll-stuffing; yet the hon. gentleman was quite prepared as Attorney-General to represent an electorate that had only one-quarter of the voting strength of another electorate. On that matter the hon. gentleman was significantly silent.

So far as the addition of names to the rolls is concerned, we on this side have no complaint against Mr. Cole, the Principal Electoral Officer, who we recognise is a very fine officer, and who has nothing to do with additions to or deletions from electoral rolls. During the regime of a Labour Government, however, it is noticeable that immediately a by-election is announced the number on the electoral roll concerned goes up by over 1,000, as, for example, in the recent Wynnum and East Toowoomba by-elections. If we had an election every week for sixty-two weeks—there are sixty-two electorates—we should probably find that 62,000 additional names were placed on the electoral roll. (Opposition laughter.)

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

Mr. LARCOMBE (*Rockhampton*) [12.5 p.m.]: The Attorney-General has stated the law in regard to Mr. Justice Lukin's pension, and hon. members realise the legal position, but it is a disgraceful thing for a judge to draw a pension and salary in the way that Mr. Justice Lukin is doing. The theory of the pension was never based on the assumption that a judge was going to retire on a pension in Queensland and take up a doubly lucrative position in a Federal Court, and it is regrettable in the extreme that the high and honourable position of judge should be sullied by a judge who resorts to such tactics and is prepared to draw from the State of Queensland a pension in addition to a salary from the Federal Court equal to double its amount.

Mr. R. M. KING: That is the result of your Government's victimisation.

Mr. LARCOMBE: What a ridiculous interjection! What right has a judge to draw on the revenue of Queensland and then draw double that amount from the Federal authorities? It is a disgraceful thing. That judge also sits upon the bench and orders the workers and their families to live on £3 a week.

Mr. R. M. KING: The action of your Government drove him there.

Mr. LARCOMBE: I do not mind his going there; but he should have surrendered the pension payable by Queensland. Let him live up to the dignity and ethics of the legal profession.

The question of the redistribution of seats has been fully and freely discussed. It reminds me of a discussion that took place in this Chamber on the same question many years ago. The late Mr. D. Keogh, member for Rosewood, discussed it. He spoke with a very broad Irish brogue, and he was asked how he spelt the word "redistribution," and he started off "r-e-d-i-s-h" in witty and humorous vein. (Laughter.) Apparently some of the hon. members are afraid the redistribution may be a "redish." (Laughter.) I think we can accept the assurance of the hon. member for Maree and assume that if there is going to be a redistribution it will be a fair one. I think we can do something to remove the fear complex experienced by hon. members opposite on the lines suggested by the hon. member for Maree. The protest of hon. members opposite is not based on political virtue, but on political fear. Fancy the party opposite raising the flag of political virtue—a party that descended to the most despicable tactics the State has ever known! Take their action in reducing the number of members and tampering with the Elections Acts. These were the practices that were resorted to by the party opposite, and it is these that stultify their criticism now.

The Attorney-General was non-committal. Apparently the Cabinet has not yet determined its policy on the matter of a redistribution, but I have no hesitation in expressing my own viewpoint; and that is that I hope a redistribution will be effected, not because I want to "dish" any individual or party, but because I want to see removed some of the regrettable mistakes made during the last Parliament. Consider the action of the Moore Government in cutting out almost all country seats! The party opposite claim to love the man on the land, yet they destroyed many country seats. The action of the Moore Government in regard to country seats was deplorable from the point of view of equality of representation. Further, the majority of the seats eliminated were Labour seats. Was that a coincidence, or was there a relationship of cause and effect? We know there was the latter. We know what was the object of the redistribution—to "dish" Labour, to defeat Labour and to perpetuate the existence of the party opposite.

I make bold to say that the Labour majority at the last election would have been at least 15, but for the redistribution effected by the Moore Government and the reduction in the number of the seats. Let us take as examples the two seats in the Rockhampton district, Fitzroy and Keppel.

What happened in the case of Fitzroy? The industrial portion of Fitzroy was put into the Rockhampton electorate, because Rockhampton was considered already a Labour seat. That seat was made doubly strong for Labour.

At 12.10 p.m.,

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

An OPPOSITION MEMBER interjected.

Mr. LARCOMBE: In 1929 there was a great political swing which affected all parties. The ex-Prime Minister of Australia was defeated for Flinders and his party was defeated, whereas previously he obtained a majority of 20,000 in that electorate, which was never previously held by a Labour representative. In the case of Fitzroy the removal of the industrial portion into Rockhampton, making Rockhampton doubly sure from the Labour viewpoint, weakened Fitzroy from the viewpoint of Labour. That was done deliberately. I suppose that as a consequence of the reduction in the number of members, which necessarily involved a redistribution of seats, there were some unfortunate anomalies. What happened in Keppel? A strong anti-Labour centre such as Iseton Downs and similar places were thrown into the Keppel electorate, which thus was made a strong seat from the anti-Labour viewpoint. Labour was therefore prejudiced. What took place in the electorates of Fitzroy and Keppel took place in other parts of Queensland. We all know that, as a matter of cold fact, the Labour Party was greatly handicapped as the result of the redistribution to which I have referred.

Mr. MOORE: Is that why you want to alter it?

Mr. LARCOMBE: No. I want to alter it, because I say it was a disgraceful redistribution. It was not done on a fair basis, and I desire to have it altered in order that some disgraceful anomalies may be rectified. (Opposition dissent.)

Mr. KENNY: You want to dictate?

Mr. LARCOMBE: I do not desire to dictate at all. I desire that an impartial body should say whether the redistribution was fair or otherwise. I am only expressing my viewpoint that it was an unfair redistribution. I am pointing out what was done, and I leave it to the commission to say what remedy should be applied to every electorate in Queensland. I leave it to the decision of an impartial and independent body. I am not aware of the policy of the Government. I do not know whether there is going to be a redistribution. I say I strongly advocate one, not in order to "dish" any member or party, but because there are some anomalies that require rectification.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: You dictated it in the party room.

Mr. LARCOMBE: The hon. member does not know what I advocated or what happened in the party room, but in any case that does not affect the principle we are discussing.

Hon. members spoke of the gerrymandering of the Labour Party, and how we continued in office as a result. Allow me to quote to the Committee what has been said by anti-Labour authorities as to the causes of the continuance of Labour Governments in Queensland. We find that Mrs. W. S. Anderson, president of the Queensland Women's Electoral League, in 1926, commenting on the election results as published in the "Daily Mail" said, "The type of Opposition candidates did not appeal to the electors generally." There is nothing there about the Labour redistribution. The "Western Champion" said that Labour won because its candidates deserved to win. The "Graziers' Review" stated Labour won because of—

> "The paralysing incompetence and the lack of vision of the Opposition."

I am quoting anti-Labour authorities. There is no suggestion there that the Labour redistribution was responsible for the continuance of Labour administration in Queensland. Labour continued in power during the war and post war periods for fourteen years, probably a world's record, whilst Governments throughout Australia and the world were crashing. Labour continued to rule in Queensland, and something more than redistribution was at work when those Governments throughout Australia and other parts of the world were defeated on their own redistributions, whereas Labour in Queensland continued for that long period of fourteen years in occupancy of the Treasury benches.

"Smith's Weekly" in May, 1926, referred to the same question in these terms—

> "To-day the papers in Brisbane—the 'Courier,' the 'Telegraph,' and the Daily Mail' are no doubt explaining that their candidates were beaten by gerrymandering the electorates. That reason is insufficient. If Labour administration were as bad as the Tory press painted it, the people would have turned it out."

Certainly they would! There we have anti-Labour authorities asserting the opinion that the Opposition defeated themselves at that time and that Labour was not responsible in any way by its administration of the electoral laws for that result. Labour came into power in 1914, when the State was rapidly decaying, when unemployment was very rife, when 17.7 of the unionists were unemployed, when production was decreasing, when wages were falling, and the cost of living was rising. Labour won because Labour was responsible for increasing the wealth production, the number of factories, the volume of employment, and was responsible by sane administration for giving encouragement and impetus to industry that resulted in splendid advantage to Queensland. As a result of the legislation of the Queensland Labour Party, we find that the number of dairymen and number of cultivators of the soil increased, that the men on the land were in a better position, and that Queensland was in 1929 the most prosperous State in the Commonwealth. That is why Labour won in 1926. That is why Labour continued so long in power. The standard of living in Queensland was not only the best in Australia but probably the best in the world, and the Leader of the Opposition knows that.

Mr. MOORE: Don't you think that the proxy vote had something to do with it?

Mr. LARCOMBE: If the Leader of the Opposition contends that the action of the Labour Government in introducing the proxy vote was unethical, then I say "No." The proxy vote was based on sound principles. It came into existence in Queensland because

the then Leader of the Opposition was responsible for discarding and discrediting the old established parliamentary procedure and rule which enabled a sick member of Parliament to obtain a parliamentary pair. On that occasion hon. members opposite were so desperate in their intention to defeat the Government that they refused to recognise that time-honoured practice and the Government were in danger of defeat, not because it was in the minority but because members of the party were sick. An unfair advantage was taken of that illness to try to defeat the Government. Will any hon. member in the Chamber to-day say that that was a fair attitude for any party to assume? A Government should be defeated at the ballot box and not because its members are on sick beds. You, Mr. Gledson, were the member who was very ill on that occasion, and you will remember how your electorate suffered on that occasion because of the tactics of the then Opposition. If the system of proxy voting was unethical and unsound, why did hon. members opposite not repeal it when they were in power? The fact that they did not repeal it shows that their statements, by way of interjection, are unsound and of no weight. If the principle of proxy voting was half as outrageous as hon. members opposite contend it was, then they would have repealed it in their first session of Parliament, but they did not do so. No doubt they were going to use the Act if the necessity arose! However, they have admitted its soundness by allowing it to remain on the statute-book.

Hon. members opposite have spoken about gerrymandering in connection with the electoral laws, but the Attorney-General has dealt effectively with that aspect of their criticism. Just fancy hon. members talking about gerrymandering after what they did in 1911, and after what they did in 1929!

Mr. MOORE: What did they do in 1929?

Mr. LARCOMBE: Their electoral tactics, their parliamentary tactics, their tactics on the hustings, their promise of £2,000,000 for 10,000 jobs, their promise of no interference with arbitration and no reduction in wages managed to land them in power. What did they do in 1929? Is the memory of the Leader of the Opposition failing? Has he forgotten the results of his administration, as revealed by the verdict of the people in 1932? In listening to hon. members opposite a stranger would probably be misled into believing that one was listening to political puritans rather than to political Pecksniffs. Their political tactics clearly indicate that they are merely adopting the defensive measures of the cuttle fish by the exudation of an opaque blue fluid in the hope of thus escaping attacking criticism, and enjoying immunity, but they will not succeed.

I have referred to what they did in 1931 in connection with their redistribution, and I now want to refer to what their party did in 1911. Some hon. members opposite who have taken part in the debate, notably the hon. member for Murilla, were members or supporters of a Government responsible for the 1911 redistribution, to which the present Attorney-General has referred. Under that redistribution the town of North Rockhampton was plucked from its natural habitat, dragged across the river, and thrown into the exotic body of the Rockhampton electorate. That was done in order to try to hold North Rockhampton, afterwards renamed the Keppel electorate, for the Tory Party. That made Labour stronger in Rockhampton, but it made Labour weak in North Rockhampton. However, "the best laid plans o' mice and men gang aft agley," and the Tory Party were unsuccessful. Labour won the Keppel seat, and Labour held it for seventeen years. Under that redistribution the heart of North Rockhampton was plucked out because it was strong for Labour, and North Rockhampton was weakened as a Labour seat as a result. At the elections in 1912 the anti-Labour Party polled 110,000 whilst Labour polled 99,000 votes, but Labour received only twenty-four seats whilst its opponents enjoyed forty-eight seats. On a proportional basis the figures should have been thirty-four for Labour and thirty-eight for our opponents.

Mr. MOORE: Come a little later and tell us about the time when the Opposition recorded more votes than the Labour Party and still had to remain in Opposition.

Mr. LARCOMBE: I am quite prepared to take these steps in their natural sequence, if the Leader of the Opposition will only wait. But let us take 1912. As soon as we endeavour to pin hon. members down to their own political sins, they say, "What about your political sins of some other time?" They tell us about some other time, but we want them to tell us about the time they were in control, and were responsible for gerrymandeering and for a lack of political ethics. Yet hon. members opposite criticise and attack the present Administration because of some foreshadowed legislation and administration. Surely it is time enough to criticise the present Administration when it permits any injustice or any wrong doing! All the criticism of the last two days has been based on the possibility of some misgivings concerning what the Government may do. Surely that is not a reasonable basis upon which to found criticism!

Mr. MOORE: The only basis.

Mr. LARCOMBE: The Leader of the Opposition says that it is the only basis.

Mr. RUSSELL: Your party has the wind up.

Mr. LARCOMBE: The Opposition have the wind up. It is not the wind, but the possible cyclone that they are afraid of. The Leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Hamilton evidently believe in the maxim, "Squeal before you are hurt." They do not know that they are going to be hurt; they are squealing in anticipation. We know quite well, as the hon. member for Maree says, that if there is any redistribution by this Administraton it will be upon a sound, fair, and reasonable basis. The speeches of hon. members opposite, which are filling "Hansard," in their abuse and villification of the Government Party, should not be allowed to go without some reply, and the very fine reply of the Attorney-General this morning pleased me greatly, because in the columns of "Hansard" now we have a very thorough and analytical review of the speeches of hon. members opposite, together with an effective reply thereto. It will be issued in pamphlet form as a reply to hon. members opposite.

Mr. MOORE: Why don't they publish your speeches in pamphlet form? (Laughter.)

Mr. LARCOMBE: I could be unkind by placing in "Hansard" what the "Producers' Review" said of the Leader of the Opposition. That journal said, "What we want in the Opposition ranks is a revolution, not a revolution of blood and fire but a revolution of brains, energies, and ideas. They want it to be reborn again as a new party. If they do that there may be some hope of ousting Labour." That was a declaration by the "Producers' Review," published prior to the elections in 1929. We find there in a non-Labour journal a strong indictment of the party opposite. That is the party that can see no virtue in a Labour Administration. It endeavours to defile the Government at every attempt. There is no spirit of co-operation and no suggestion of any method for, say, overcoming the abuses of the postal vote provisions of the Elections Acts. There was some opportunity for hon. members opposite to offer something constructive, and display a spirit of co-operation with the Attorney-General and Government by closing up the crevices that allow abuse and injustice to creep in. We know there must be constant supervision of their provisions, because notwithstanding all the limitations which exist to-day many abuses still occur in connection with postal voting. Postal voting recalls history. It recalls the great campaign conducted by William Kidston and his party against the abuses which crept in under the Philp Government, an anti-Labour Administration. The Leader of the Kidston Government, with the assistance of the Labour Party, was responsible for restricting the abuses of the postal voting provisions of the Elections Acts. Yet with all that protection, together with the existing provisions, and all our supervision, abuses still occur, and I would commend to the Attorney-General the suggestion made by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley and other hon. members on this side of the Committee, which were made for the purpose of safeguarding the provisions of the Act and carefully analysing the methods adopted in securing postal votes.

I hope there will be a redistribution of seats, and that some of the injustices, anomalies, and abuses of the 1931 redistribution will be remedied.

Mr. BRAND (*Isis*) [12.30 p.m.]: While it may be refreshing to listen to the lecturette on political ethics delivered by the hon. member for Rockhampton, it is well to remember that the hon. member was a Ministerial colleague of the Attorney-General in the 1929 Parliament when the Labour Party was defeated at the polls and when, had the electoral laws been as fair as those that exist to-day, very little of the Labour Party would have been left. The hon. member criticised the actions of the Moore Government at great length, but failed to tell the people of Queensland that during the period that Labour was in power, when the hon. member was Ministerial head of the Railway Department, unemployment increased to a greater extent in Queensland than in any other State in Australia. In 1914, when Labour took office, unemployment was negligible, but in 1929—and in this connection I take the statement that you, Mr. Gledson, made in your capacity as the Secretary for Labour and Industry—the unemployed numbered no fewer than 44,000. The Moore Government came into power at a period when Labour had brought the State of Queensland almost to collapse, and it was due to the Moore Administration in placing Queensland on a sound basis that we have been able to lift it out of the depression as quickly as we have. The present Government are reaping the fruits of wise administration under the Moore Government.

The Attorney-General posed as a paragon of virtue in regard to electoral redistribution. According to his statements, the Government have no intention of holding a redistribution——

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I said nothing of the kind.

Mr. BRAND: The hon. gentleman would not indicate anything definite, although we know perfectly well that for quite a long period the Government and the Attorney-General have known just where the electoral boundaries are going to be. The Leader of the Opposition made a criticism based on an announcement in the public press of this State—and any announcement of that kind must receive some recognition. If the statement had no truth in it the Attorney-General would have been quick to deny the statement: but no denial was forthcoming, and it is common property to-day that three electoral commissioners have been selected in the persons of Mr. Ferry, as chairman; Mr. Cole, the Principal Electoral Officer; and Mr. O'Hagan, of the Minister's own department. As time passes, we shall know whether that is true or not. At all events, the Attorney-General should make some statement on a vote of this nature, so that the people of Queensland may know what is proposed. After all, hon. members are entitled to know in this the last session of this Parliament whether there will be the redistribution that is discussed by the various branches of the Australian Labour Party throughout the country. I confess that I should not like to hold the position that one of these commissioners will hold. They will be selected as commissioners with free and independent minds; yet it is freely stated that they will carry out the redistribution that has already been made.

Mr. LARCOMBE: That is a disgraceful statement.

Mr. BRAND: That is the statement circulated throughout the A.L.P.'s, and it is freely stated by members of the A.L.P.'s that if the statements are true they are going to dump the Labour Party, as they will not have that sort of thing associated with the Labour movement. If a redistribution is to be made we hope it will be a fair and equitable one, as the hon. member for Maree has suggested.

Mr. KENNY: Do you expect it to be?

Mr. BRAND: I do not, because I am aware of the methods adopted by a Labour Government. The Attorney-General tried to make out a case that the present condition of the electorates was such that in ten electorates the maximum number of voters allowed by the Act had been exceeded.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That is not my statement.

Mr. BRAND: The hon. gentleman was making an attempt to reply to the criticism of the Leader of the Opposition.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: And you were listening, and now you are going to misquote!

Mr. BRAND: The hon. gentleman said that in seven electorates the maximum allowed by the Act had been exceeded.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I said ten electorates were above and five below the number prescribed by the Act.

Mr. BRAND: The hon. gentleman was replying to the criticism that seven electorates had voters in excess of the maximum, and later on made a comparison with the position at 30th June last when ten electorates were above and five electorates were below the number prescribed by the Act, and we know that in some of those electorates there were only forty or fifty voters above the maximum.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: And there are a number below the minimum.

Mr. BRAND: The hon. gentleman is endeavouring to find an excuse for reallocating the boundaries on that basis. Let us consider the position that existed in 1929 when Labour held office previously. At that time the condition of the electorates was deplorable. No fewer than thirteen electorates were above the maximum and eighteen below the minimum provided under the Act. The Attorney-General quoted figures this morning with the purpose of having them inserted in "Hansard." I would remind the hon. gentleman of the position in 1929, when the electoral laws were under his jurisdiction—

Electorates, Labour.		Electorates, Country-Nationalist.	
Gregory ..	3 927	Enoggera ..	11 739
Charters Towers	3,821	Logan ..	11,583
Mount Morgan	3,387	Oxley ..	10,024
Flinders ..	2,652	Nundah ..	10,251

That was a distribution of the electorates which the Attorney-General then considered to be fair and equitable; and this morning he endeavoured to establish his contention that the distribution of the electoral boundaries at the present time was not fair and reasonable. I cannot appreciate the hon. gentleman's logic. All I can say is that the redistribution that took place during the Moore Government's term of office was a fair one, and was carried out without interference from political parties. I say that the statement made by some hon. gentleman opposite that the Attorney-General, Mr. Macgroarty, then member for South Brisbane, and Dr. Kerwin, then hon. member for Merthyr, travelled round their respective electorates with members of the commission is not true.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: How do you know?

Mr. BRAND: I made it my business to investigate the matter, and I know it is not true.

Mr. KEOGH: They were seen.

Mr. BRAND: They were not seen. That is not true. The hon. member should bring evidence to support his statement. The redistribution that took place during the Moore Government's term of office was the result of an election promise made by the Leader of our party, that if returned to power his party would cause a redistribution of seats to be made. He gave as a reason for it the fact that the figures showed that seventeen Labour electorates were below the minimum as against only one Nationalist electorate, and three Labour electorates were above the maximum as against ten Nationalist electorates. Our Leader also promised the people that there would be a reduction in the number of members. Both promises were carried out.

At 12.39 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. BRAND: I claim that the Moore Government were justified in carrying out the promise they made to the people in that regard. I consider the alteration of electoral boundaries should be above party politics. The period for a redistribution should be definitely set out, possibly at the taking of the census. To-day we are evidently reaching a condition of affairs when each and every Government will have a redistribution whenever it attains power. There cannot be any valid reason why there should be a redistribution in Queensland at the present time. Therefore, the only motive actuating the Government must be political party gain.

Mr. R. M. KING: There should be a reallocation after every census.

Mr. BRAND: If there were a redistribution after every census and the matter were removed from political control, then there would be no objection. Statements are being made continually throughout the country that the Australian Labour Party's branches are discussing certain boundaries and submitting them to the Government for their attention. That is not good.

Mr. GLEDSON: Who has been pulling your leg?

Mr. BRAND: I would like to tell the hon. member for Ipswich that my informants do not pull anybody's leg. He has been well acquainted with that class of people all his life, and he should know that when they make a statement they do not go back on it. Throughout the country, we have all the Australian Labour Party's branches discussing the boundaries; so far as I am concerned they are quite welcome to do so.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Did you not bid farewell to the electors of Howard prior to the last redistribution?

Mr. BRAND: No, I did not. The hon. gentleman is absolutely wrong.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I know the electors of Howard have something to say, and they are a very fine type of people.

Mr. BRAND: Yes, they are a very fine type of people, and the hon. gentleman should know it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: We know it.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: It may come back this time.

Mr. BRAND: As a matter of fact, it is very common talk that the Labour Party is already determining the changes, and if that is the portion I am to get, I am very grateful to them. It is a very fine centre and I welcome it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: You can repeat your performance by going and welcoming them back.

Mr. BRAND: I am not like the hon. gentleman. The whole question of enrolment has been discussed and it has been

claimed this morning that the model electoral roll is one that it is easy to get on, but impossible to get off Undoubtedly that is a fact. Hon. members opposite claimed this morning that the rolls were not inflated. Why, at the last elections for the city of Brisbane council. there were 34,000 more adult voters on the roll than were revealed by the last census taken for Brisbane; and that happens throughout Queensland. A determined effort should be made to keep our rolls as clean as possible. Under the electoral laws of the Commonwealth it is compulsory for every adult who changes his or her electorate to notify the electoral office immediately. The law of Queensland does not contain this compulsory provision, and it is found that men, particularly nomadic workers, get their names on the roll for a particular electorate and then forget that they are there. As a matter of fact, this class of worker does not know what electoral roll is he on. Agents of the party of hon. members opposite lose no time in having such a person's name included in the roll, and in some cases this has been done before the applicant has been a resident in a district for the requisite month. The result is that many of these workers are enrolled whilst they are still on the roll for another electorate, from which they should have been removed. The result is that the rolls are over-burdened with the names of people who are not residents of the electorates for which their names appear. I trust the Government will endeavour to do the fair thing and that we are not to have a retrograde step to the condition of things as they existed in 1929. An effort was then made by the Moore Government to clarify the position and an impartial commission was appointed to redistribute the boundaries on an equitable basis. I hope that the Government, when appointing the commission, will endeavour to keep it as far removed from party politics as possible.

Mr. WIENHOLT (*Fassifern*) [12.48 p.m.]: I am not particularly concerned about the party political point of view, but I am concerned about the serious inference to be drawn from the figures quoted by the Attorney-General. Speaking from memory, I believe that without exception the electorates that have grown beyond the permissible maximum and are showing a considerable increase in voting population are city electorates, whilst without exception—again I am speaking from memory—the electorates that are getting below the permissible minimum are country electorates. "There is something rotten in the State of Denmark" when we see that going on. Exactly the same thing is happening in the Federal sphere—there is a general contracting inwards towards the cities. The Darling Downs electorate has now been extended eastwards until it almost reaches Ipswich, and there is no doubt that when another redistribution takes place the Darling Downs electorate will not be in the Darling Downs district at all. That is a very serious thing, and it should make people think very carefully indeed. Of course, it is just the effect of certain causes, some of which are fairly obvious. I take it to be one result of the disastrous loan policy in Australia, which has now become perhaps our greatest industry. I do not think the Government can be very satisfied with these figures. I believe that they are very unsatisfactory indeed from a Government point of view, and there is not going to be any "turning of the corner" in this country until we see our country electorates getting proportionally above their margin, while city electorates are showing a gradual proportionate fall below their margin. The position, as disclosed by the figures quoted by the Attorney-General, is very unsatisfactory.

Mr. J. G. BAYLEY (*Wynnum*) [12.51 p.m.]: I propose to say just a word or two in connection with any proposal to appoint a commission to redistribute the electoral seats. I am not in favour of the appointment as members of such a committee of any officials who are not actively and closely associated with the Electoral Department itself. Without bringing Mr. Cole in personally, I do not think that the head of the Electoral Office is conversant with conditions that obtain in various constituencies to make him an ideal person for carrying out the work. The only men who know what should be done and how it should be done are the district returning officers themselves, or district electoral officers as they are called in this State. If the Government propose to carry out a redistribution scheme, then they will be well advised to bring these sixty-two men to Brisbane and allow them to meet in conference. They are the men who know where the anomalies exist, and they are the men who know how the principles originally laid down—community of interest, geographical position, etc.—should be recognised. They should be permitted to make suggestions, and those suggestions should be handed over to the Government at the instigation of the Principal Electoral Officer. What does the Attorney-General or any official in the office of, say, the Premier know about the conditions that obtain in the Gregory electorate, for example, or in any of the outlying constituencies in Queensland? These mistakes have been made not only in State politics but also in Federal politics. A Federal redistribution was carried out in this State some time ago by a commission consisting of the Surveyor-General of Queensland, the Chief Federal Electoral Officer of Queensland, and the Deputy Director of Posts and Telegraphs for Queensland. Not one of those men knew Queensland. The Surveyor-General knew Queensland as it appears on a map, the Chief Electoral Officer is for the greater part of his time, in fact, the whole of his time, seated in his office. Neither he nor any other Government official is in a position to know Queensland. I repeat that the only men who are in a position to know what should be done and how it should be done are the electoral officers from constituencies throughout Queensland.

Mr. CLAYTON: The Government know that, but they will not carry out your suggestion.

Mr. J. G. BAYLEY: I am not saying that the present Government is the only offender. Every other Government has offended in the same way, not only in the State but also in the Federal sphere. Immediately I looked at the recommendations by the Federal Redistribution Commission set up in 1931 I realised that the men who had drawn up the proposal did not know what they were talking about. Members were given a certain time within which they could protest, and I did protest, and in a very lengthy manner, too. What was the result? When the redistribution was made last year it was carried out, almost to the street, in accordance with the suggestions I had made. No one knows the old

Federal Oxley division as I knew it. I knew where the community of interest existed.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: You could not have been a good judge of it.

Mr. J. G. BAYLEY: I knew the district——

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: The results did not prove you did.

Mr. J. G. BAYLEY: No one can say that the present subdivision of Oxley does not favour Labour. It certainly does. I could delineate a political Oxley that would result in the return of a Nationalist candidate, but I made no endeavour to do such a thing. I hope that the Premier and those associated with him will give attention to suggestions made by the men who are actively engaged in election work. The returning officers in each electorate should be brought to Brisbane in a body and be left to evolve a scheme of redistribution. Then if the Government like to do so they can appoint a commission, the members of which would accept the recommendations from those experts, and base their report accordingly.

Mr. LARCOMBE: Their suggestions are always sought.

The PREMIER: What is this to do with, anyhow?

Mr. J. G. BAYLEY: The hon. gentleman's lieutenant has told the country, per medium of the press, that a redistribution is to take place.

The PREMIER: Oh, no!

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Who did you say said this?

Mr. J. G. BAYLEY: It came from the Secretary for Public Lands, and no one has denied it.

I join issue with the Attorney-General in his statement that the State rolls are cleaner than the Federal rolls. No such thing obtains. The Federal rolls are the cleanest rolls in this country.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: And they are only made up once in three years!

Mr. J. G. BAYLEY: They are always right up to date, but they are not printed every six months.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Let me put this to you: If the Federal rolls are clean rolls and if our rolls to-day are within 500 of the number they contain, are not our rolls clean, especially when you consider that there are half a million people on the roll?

Mr. J. G. BAYLEY: The Attorney-General told us that for the last Federal elections the police came to the assistance of the Federal authorities. The difference is this: The police have only one thing in mind, and that is to put people on the roll. When they go to a house they say, "Is anyone in this House not on the roll?" They make little or no endeavour to remove the names of people from the roll. In the Federal sphere the work of looking after the rolls is carried out by the postal officials. Each of these men is paid 17s. 6d. per 100 for every notation—that is, for alterations that take place in the roll. They add names to the roll and remove others on account of death or removal from the electorate to some other part of the State or Commonwealth.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: As a matter of fact the police in Queensland get the same price—2d.—for taking electors off as for putting electors on.

Mr. J. G. BAYLEY: And when the police want any information it is the Federal rolls and not the State rolls they use.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That is not true.

Mr. J. G. BAYLEY: Time and again I have been in the office of the district returning officer for Oxley when the police have called to use the roll. The police know that the Federal roll is the cleanest roll. It is the cleaner roll because the postmen are always on the job. They are delivering letters day after day and week after week throughout the entire twelve months, and thus keep in close personal touch with the people. They know when new arrivals come or anyone departs from the district. As a result of that continual supervision by the postal officials the Federal roll is by far the cleaner roll of the two.

Item (Department of Justice—Chief Office) agreed to.

COURTS OF PETTY SESSIONS.

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

"That £83,000 be granted for 'Courts of Petty Sessions.'"

Mr. R. M. KING (*Logan*) [2.1 p.m.]: This is the last opportunity we shall have of speaking in Parliament before the retirement of several officers included in this vote. I refer more particularly to the Chief Police Magistrate, Mr. Archdall, and to Police Magistrate Ferguson, with both of whom I have had a long experience. In the forty years that I have been on the roll of solicitors in Queensland I have had exceptional opportunities of judging these two gentlemen, and I consider I am qualified to pass some opinion on the excellent work of both. When one casts one's mind back to the early days of Queensland, one associates such names as Pinnock, Ranking, Murray, and Moore with responsible magisterial duties in this city, and one can conscientiously say that the high traditions of loyal and faithful service to this State set by these gentlemen have been worthily upheld by their successors.

A matter to which I would draw the Minister's attention concerns judgments obtained in magistrates courts in the country, and the difficulty of enforcing these judgments because in many cases no bailiff is available to execute the warrant. This matter has engaged the attention of the Department of Justice for many years. The reduction in the number of bailiffs was effected solely on the grounds of economy. However, I think the difficulty could be overcome without unduly increasing the expenditure of the department, and I suggest that in country places where no bailiff now exists, the clerk of petty sessions or the clerk in charge might be appointed the bailiff with power to delegate his authority to some respectable member of the community to execute warrants, etc. No additional expense would be involved if this procedure, which, I understand, is the practice in New South Wales, were followed. At the present time the fact that no bailiff is available in some country districts compels litigants to apply to the court for the appointment of a bailiff, and in many instances necessitates sending a bailiff many miles away at a mileage charge, which, of course,

is greater expense to the litigant. If my suggestion were adopted considerable inconvenience will be obviated, and a saving of expense and time effected. After all, persons do not go to law from choice, but rather to uphold their rights. A man who has a just debt owing to him and cannot recover it by any other method seeks the aid of the law, and gets judgment. Provided the machinery is there he will be able to enforce that judgment; but if the machinery is not available it will amount to a barren verdict. In far away country towns the magistrate may visit only once a month or once in two months, and when a judgment is obtained it may remain in abeyance because in some cases it necessitates bringing a bailiff 200 miles in order to enforce it. That would be most expensive. My suggestion is that the clerk of petty sessions at these places or the clerk in charge should be appointed bailiff with the power to delegate authority to a sub-bailiff. That procedure could be followed without any expense to the department.

Mr. TOZER (*Gympie*) [2.9 p.m.]: I should like some information from the Attorney-General in regard to the increase of £5,639 in this vote. There appear to me to be some anomalies in regard to increases that are payable to different sets of offices. For instance, it appears that five clerks in the Clerk of Petty Sessions Office at £320 per annum are to receive an increase of only £4 each, and six clerks in the Chief Office will receive an increase of £22 each. I also notice that three clerks at Bundaberg will receive an increase of £101 between them, and at Blackall two clerks will receive an increase of £4 between them. I should like to have those apparent anomalies explained.

The clerks of petty sessions and magistrates are doing good work throughout the State. I have already referred to the fact that, unfortunately, some of our senior magistrates are retiring owing to the age limit provisions, and their places will be taken by junior men who will be promoted. It appears to me that it is regrettable that men who are enjoying good health and are still in possession of keen intellects should be made to retire on reaching the age of sixty-five.

The only other item I wish to refer to relates to increased fees payable in all the magistrates courts. These fees are said to be for services rendered; but it comes back to the same thing as far as the people who have to pay them are concerned. At one time a fee of 1s. was payable for a defence; that has now been increased to 15s., according to the amount sued for. It appears to me that some of the fees are very high, especially since the Attorney-General has told us that he is anxious to cheapen law. It appears that the way he would cheapen law is by having a shot at the solicitors. He appears to think that the whole of the costs of law go to the solicitors. I would point out to the hon. gentleman that included in the solicitor's bill of costs is counsel's fee, registration fees, and other charges. When people speak of a solicitor's bill of costs it would appear as if the solicitor were making so much profit. The bill of costs is the aggregate of the outlay incurred by the solicitor. If he is practising in the country there will be the town agent's fee for the work done by the latter in Brisbane. There would also be stamp duties and registration fees. Of course, the Attorney-General has already sanctioned the increase of fees, but I am of opinion that if the policy of the Government is to cheapen the cost of law it is a peculiar method of carrying it out.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Carpentaria*) [2.13 p.m.]: The matter raised by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition regarding judgments obtained in the magistrates courts in country districts has been raised on previous occasions. The department, although it may involve the incurring of exceptionally high costs, endeavours always to have execution completed by the appointment of a bailiff, if at all possible. Of course, the hon. member, being learned in the law, knows that the individual concerned has the right to appoint his own bailiff to do this work. Naturally people do not like to take this course, and, in fact, it is found very hard to get the average man to take such a position. The hon. member now makes a suggestion that Queensland should adopt the system obtaining in New South Wales—that clerks of petty sessions be nominally appointed bailiffs.

Mr. R. M. KING: Appoint the clerks in charge of the offices.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The clerk of petty sessions naturally would not personally do the job, and I would not expect that he should do so. Such work is beneath his position. But I understand from the hon. member that he would be bailiff in name only and would delegate the duty to somebody else. I am quite prepared to have the suggestion investigated, and if it is found to be at all practicable, I will favourably consider it.

The hon. member for Gympie has raised the question of certain salaries under the vote which is being considered by the Committee. Provision for increases to salaries has been made according to the length of service of the officer or according to the classification of his position. Many officers are now in receipt of their maximum, and further increases cannot be granted until they are promoted to a position with a higher classification or obtain a higher classification for their existing position. The classification of positions in the public service is fixed by the Public Service Commissioner. The increased cost generally has been explained as being by way of increases in salary, but incidentally the amount includes the cost of transferring officers from one centre to another. Owing to the great number of police magistrates who will be retired the cost this year will be exceptionally large.

Item (Courts of Petty Sessions) agreed to.

ELECTORAL REGISTRATION.

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

> "That £28,688 be granted for 'Electoral Registration.'"

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*) [2.17 p.m.]: The Elections Acts require that an applicant for enrolment in an electorate shall have the qualification of a month's residence in it. I should like to hear from the Attorney-General whether any punishment would be inflicted for a breach of that provision. In

other words, a person who got on an electoral roll immediately on his arrival in a certain electorate could not have complied with the residence qualification, and consequently would be committing a breach of the Acts. It is generally stated that this practice is very prevalent just prior to a general election. However that may be, I have a case in point, which occurred previous to the last election. I had information that seventeen applications had been made for enrolment in the Mirani electorate by people who were not residents of it. As a matter of fact, these people were camped in the Mackay district. They paid periodic visits to the Sarina police station to secure rations. They made application for enrolment on the Mirani roll and they were enrolled. The day prior to polling day I rang the Under Secretary of the department on the trunk telephone line from my place of residence in my electorate, inquiring if anything could be done in the way of lodging an objection. He said, "No." I was very indignant. No one is permitted to secure illegally the right to vote as an elector, and if this practice is to be approved then there is no saying just how far it may go. I feel satisfied that I am within the realms of truth when I say that quite a number got on the roll in this way. These matters came under my notice in Mackay; I drew the attention of the department to the fact, and was told there was no remedy. In view of the approaching general elections I should like to have an intimation from the Government whether, if returned to power again, they would prosecute individuals who have placed their names on the electoral rolls by the adoption of these illegal methods.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Carpentaria*) [2.20 p.m.]: The qualifications of an elector are clearly laid down in the Act—six months' residence in the Commonwealth, three months' residence in Queensland, and one month in the electorate concerned. He must make a declaration to that effect, and any person who makes a false declaration is certainly liable to prosecution. If the hon. member brings under my notice the case of any person making a false declaration I will order a prosecution to be launched.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*) [2.21 p.m.]: I should like to inquire from the Attorney-General as to who would take the necessary action—the department, I suppose?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Undoubtedly!

Mr. SWAYNE: I brought these cases under the notice of the department, but nothing was done. Of course, it is too late now, but I believe the necessary evidence could have been secured.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Was that at the last general elections?

Mr. SWAYNE: Yes.

Mr. KENNY (*Cook*) [2.22 p.m.]: There is much in what the hon. member for Mirani has said, that the provision allowing a residential qualification of one month in an electorate is being abused. Whilst some people may adhere strictly to the Acts there are many undesirable practices in other directions.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: If between now and the next general elections the hon. member can bring under my notice a case or cases of any person or persons being enrolled before they are legally entitled to be so, I shall be prepared to take action.

Mr. KENNY: That is all right, but it is very hard to sheet the charge home. I was advised that in one town in my electorate fifty people were put on the roll within a month, people who came mainly from New South Wales and Victoria passing through the country drawing rations and visiting stations to have their tucker bags filled. Let us assume that some of them engage in prospecting for one month. I was told that fifty were put on the roll inside a month, and when I was in that place twenty-five of them had left the State. They may have had the necessary electoral qualifications when they were enrolled, but they had no permanent place of abode, unless it be New South Wales or Victoria, or some other place. Some individual anxious to secure a party political advantage said in effect, "These chaps have been here about a month." I was told that they were not there a month, although I could not prove that they had not been there a month. They had no permanent residence in the locality, and were not even known there. They were actually strangers, but they were on the roll. A fortnight after they were put on the roll twenty-five of them had left the district likely never to return. That is making a farce of the Elections Act. It is absolutely undesirable that those practices should be allowed.

Some amendment of the Acts is desirable making provision whereby an applicant for a vote must have residential qualifications for the locality. A traveller such as I have mentioned is not eligible for enrolment for such a locality, because he has no interest or residential qualifications in it. He may give a false name. He is simply a traveller passing through, although he may have resided there for a month. What record is there to show that these men had the legal qualifications of a voter? It shows how the present qualifications can be abused if in a little country centre fifty men can be enrolled, and within a fortnight of enrolment twenty-five of them cannot be found.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: Possibly they will be up one of those gullies back of Cooktown.

Mr. KENNY: There are a lot of good men fossicking in gullies in my electorate. My remarks would not hold water if those men went prospecting, and were there for twelve months or so, but they simply drew rations, filled their tucker bags at the police station, got on the roll, and a fortnight afterwards left the district again. You cannot get clean rolls if such men cannot be traced and are not removed from the rolls.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*) [2.26 p.m.]: As the hon. member for Cook stated, it is very difficult to obtain evidence in a particular case, but in the case I brought under the notice of the department evidence could have been obtained, yet nothing was done. It is desirable that it should be known that in the event of any repetition of the offence in the future the offender will be punished. It should go forth that such offences will be noted for action.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Carpentaria*) [2.27 p.m.]: I do not remember the complaint of the hon. member for Mirani, but the Principal Electoral Officer informs me that the hon. member

made it. Inquiry was made by him, and also by the police, but the men concerned could not be traced. I will look into the matter further.

In connection with the statement of the hon. member for Cook, I desire to say again that I personally want to see no one get on the roll unless he or she possesses the necessary qualifications according to law, but there is nothing unusual in the facts related by the hon. member for Cook that a number of people got on the roll—he said fifty in a small town. As the hon. member knows, there is generally a canvass before the election. Both parties like to get their friends on the roll, and everyone who is qualified likes to get on the roll to exercise his or her political rights. There is usually more enrolment two or three months before an election than in a similar period previously. Because of that activity the case quoted by the hon. member for Cook is not unusual.

Mr. KENNY (*Cook*) [2.29 p.m.]: The reply of the hon. gentleman is not strictly to the point. The case I quoted was one where certain travellers spent a month in the electorate, and then moved away. They appear on the roll for all time as voters simply because of the activity of a would-be politician. As the hon. gentleman said, prior to an election people are active in placing voters on the roll. When the Attorney-General was amending the Elections Act he said that as a result of the amendments he proposed it would be easy to get people on the roll but harder to get them off. He stands on that principle to-day. That is the point I am trying to drive home. If these travellers I have mentioned —without any interest or residential qualifications in the district—can get on to rolls so easily, they must remain on the roll for that locality for all time because, as the hon. gentleman himself states, it is much more difficult to have those names erased than it is to get them on.

Cases are definitely coming under notice where names appear on the roll of persons who cannot be traced. The Attorney-General knows that before a name can be removed from the roll proof must be forthcoming that the person concerned is dead, has gone from the State, or that his name has been transferred to another roll in the State. If the person concerned has gone to New South Wales, the Attorney-General will appreciate how difficult it is to prove that he has left Queensland and that the name appearing on the New South Wales roll is that of the erstwhile Queensland elector. My point is that so long as the person gets on the roll he is indexed as a good voter for election purposes. We know that you do get individuals who are quite prepared to vote in another man's name, especially when it is known that the other men cannot turn up. That is the position I am referring to.

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*) [2.31 p.m.]: I hope nothing will be done along the lines suggested by the hon. member for Cook. Because a man happens to be unfortunate enough to have no fixed place of abode but is compelled to be a nomadic worker is no reason why he should be disfranchised. The electoral law provides that any person over the age of twenty-one years may make a claim for enrolment. The claim card is clear and specific, and calls for a declaration that the claimant has been at least a month in the electorate for which he claims enrolment. That man may not have been a month in a particular town, but he may have come from another town in the same electorate, but so long as he has a month's residential qualification for the electorate he is entitled to enrolment. To do as the hon. member for Cook suggests would be to disfranchise thousands of our people. Apparently the hon. members wants that.

Why all this anxiety to disfranchise the workers of Queensland? Are they not entitled to exercise their right to vote? Surely there must be some reason behind this suggestion of the Leader of the Opposition and his party that because a man has no fixed place of abode, because he has not a palatial residence in which to live, he should not be allowed to exercise his rights of citizenship! The line of argument of hon. members opposite might not have been so out of place sixty years ago, but one wonders where one is when such a suggestion is put forward in these advanced days. Every adult person has a right to enrolment for electoral purposes if he possesses a residential qualification of one month in the electorate and three months in Queensland. To make it more difficult to become enrolled would be to do wrong, for it is essential—and I agree with the remarks of the Attorney-General—that our object should be to make it easy for people to claim their citizenship rights and difficult for people to have their names removed unjustly from the electoral roll. In the old days it was easy for people to raise some objection to the presence of a name on the roll, in which event a notification was sent to the elector concerned that his name had been removed because objection had been raised. The fact was that nobody could ascertain who objected. Fortunately, that state of affairs does not operate to-day. Reasons must be advanced with any objection taken to the presence of a name on an electoral roll. If evidence is given to the electoral authorities that persons have removed to other electorates or outside the State, then action is taken to correct the anomaly. We have made it easy for people to become enrolled and hard for them to be unjustly removed.

Item (Electoral Registration) agreed to.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Carpentaria*) [2.36 p.m.]: I move—

"That £1,574 be granted for 'Friendly Societies.'"

Two discussions have already taken place on this vote. For the information of the hon. member for Gympie, I take this opportunity of saying that the decrease in this vote is explained by the fact that the quinquennial valuation was completed last year and consequently no expenditure will be incurred in that regard this year.

Item agreed to.

REGISTRAR-GENERAL.

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

"That £11,141 be granted for 'Registrar-General.'"

Item agreed to.

SHERIFF AND SUPREME COURT.

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

"That £26,529 be granted for 'Sheriff and Supreme Court.'"

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*) [2.39 p.m.]: I notice there is an increase in this vote of £1,680.

In my opinion the expenditure in connection with our Supreme Courts could be lessened, and thousands of pounds would be saved annually by litigants if conciliation courts were functioning under the Act passed by Sir Samuel Griffith, and later on brought up to date.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Don't be modest—and amended by you.

Mr. SWAYNE: I had the honour of putting through that amendment, with the support of both sides of the House, including the present Premier. It was stated by Sir Samuel Griffith during his second-reading speech that according to information obtained by him from European countries where conciliation courts were operating about half the cases were settled by that system. I sought information on the subject from other European countries and my information was to the effect that fully half the cases in Denmark were settled by conciliation, thus obviating the great expense entailed in approaching the expensive higher courts. Anyone who has a knowledge of human nature will realise that it is at the inception of a dispute, before bitterness has been engendered, that an effort should be made to bring the parties together. A person who possesses tact and a keen knowledge of human nature as a result of being versed in the ways of business would be successful in settling very many cases before the parties incurred heavy expenditure. I have a cutting from the "Courier-Mail" of this month where reference is made to a partnership dispute which was settled after considerable expense had been involved. Many cases come before the Supreme Court in which the judge suggests a settlement and which are settled; but by the time they come to that court the costs amounts to hundreds of pounds. I know in one case after the taking of evidence for two days the judge said the case should never have come before the court, and he advised the parties to settle, which they did.

I think I am quite within the mark when I say that £700 or £800 had been spent by the plaintiff. On the settlement each party had to pay his own costs, but quite a considerable amount had been incurred prior to that stage. I am quite sure that if the right type of conciliation justice had got these two men together before the initiation of legal proceedings the dispute would have been settled there and then. I know that solicitors as a body are a most honourable section of the legal profession, and that a good solicitor will do his utmost to settle an action as soon as he possibly can, and before too many costs have been incurred. In the case I have just referred to an absurd claim for £1,100 was included, apparently on the advice of one of the solicitors to prevent settlement; when it came before the court it was immediately withdrawn as illegal, but it served its purpose in that it kept the parties from settling for the twelve months the case was pending. Unfortunately, however, there is another class of solicitor who leads his client to imagine that he, his client, will eventually obtain a much higher sum from the court if he refuses to settle for the amount that may be offered. In the case I have referred to the trial judge advised the parties to reach a settlement after he had heard the case of the plaintiff. It will be recognised that many such disputes could be settled, and there is already on the statute-book machinery enabling this to be done. Provision has been made for the appointment of conciliation justices, and the present Attorney-General has informed me that he views the system with a friendly eye and is quite prepared to make a recommendation that such appointments should be made. When a dispute arose between two parties one party could apply to the conciliation justice asking that official to summon the other party before him. If the second party did not respond he would then be liable to a fine of £10. The conciliation justices would use every endeavour to bring the disputants together, and the whole matter could be settled at a cost of approximately £5. The whole case would perhaps take no longer than one day. Many men are well qualified to act in the position of conciliation justices, and the cost of appearing before them would be very little, if anything, more than the amount I have stated. It is a well-known fact that even before that amount is incurred at the present time even before the case comes for trial in a magistrates court, and where the case is one that must be tried in a higher court the costs run into hundreds of pounds before the case comes on for trial.

This is a suitable opportunity of drawing public attention to the fact that we have on the statute-book of Queensland provision for enabling disputes to be settled in this manner. I might make the suggestion to the Chambers of Commerce, who are very interested in avoiding high legal costs in commercial disputes, that they should recommend to the Attorney-General men of their own number whom they consider qualified to act in this capacity in trade disputes. In fact, there could be a panel of such persons, and seeing that the disputes would embrace many industries the panel should include the names of men qualified to act in various industries. For instance, a farmer would adjudicate on matters appertaining to farms. Information from other parts of the world where such a system is in operation has revealed the fact that half the number of disputes coming before the conciliation court have been settled without further recourse to the machinery of the law.

Item (Sheriff and Supreme Court) agreed to.

TITLES OFFICES.

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

"That £17,280 be granted for 'Titles Offices.'"

Item agreed to.

DEPARTMENT OF MINES.

CHIEF OFFICE.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. J. Stopford, *Maryborough*) [2.48 p.m.]: I move—

"That £17,193 be granted for 'Department of Mines—Chief Office.'"

The appropriation for this year is slightly less than the appropriation for last year.

During the past year a policy of intensive prospecting has been pursued, and I can safely claim that the results have justified the expenditure. The department does not claim any credit for the enhanced value of gold in the world to-day, but the department certainly does claim credit for the increased quantity of gold won from the earth in Queensland. We have endeavoured to take advantage of the high prices ruling throughout the world for the precious metal, and the results have justified our endeavours. We intend to pursue a similar policy during the ensuing financial year, and up to date the returns show the same gratifying figures. It is the policy of the department to encourage prospectors and mining men generally to engage in this work in an intensive manner whilst high prices prevail, and to foster the mining industry so far as possible.

Mr. MOORE: Are you securing satisfactory returns from the prospectors?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I think we can claim that the returns are sufficient to cover the amount of money expended in the assistance to prospectors. In the Clermont district an amount in the vicinity of £6,000 has been expended in assisting prospectors, whereas the gold return is more than sufficient to cover that amount. From my association with prospectors I know that a certain amount expended in this direction can never be recovered. My remarks concerning the desire of the department to encourage the mining industry apply with equal force to tin and other metals realising something like normal values. Of course, the return for copper is too low to justify an immediate return in that direction, but in a State like Queensland, with its vast copper deposits, it behoves us to encourage prospecting for these base metals so that the State will be efficiently provided with practical miners to cope with any demand that may follow a general rise in the price for copper and will not suffer by any apathy in this connection.

Mr. TOZER (*Gympie*) [2.52 p.m.]: The total appropriation from consolidated revenue for the Department of Mines this year is £323 less than the appropriation for 1933-34. If that were to be the total amount to be appropriated for mining activities in this State I should be very disappointed, because I regard it as totally insufficient in all the circumstances. On turning to the Loan Fund Account Estimates, however, one sees that an amount of £2,500 is to be made available for mining machinery advances. It is absurd to contend that a sum of £2,500 is sufficient to provide machinery in a mine of any importance. It may be argued that applications have not been received in the past for advances for mining machinery, but if there is to be a mining revival in this State considerably more than £2,500 will be required for this purpose. One company in which I am interested has spent over £10,000 in mining machinery, and £17,000 by another company. I am informed that the dredging machines that will be required for a dredging proposition that at present is on the cards for Gympie will cost £90,000. Therefore, we can see that the provision for loans under "The Mining Machinery Advances Act of 1906"—they are not gifts or subsidies, but advances to be repaid on the security of machinery—cannot be responsible for any great impetus in this direction.

Provision is also made in the Estimates of expenditure from the Loan Fund Account for mining undertakings—namely, the State coalmines, Bowen and Styx, of £10,000. I do not know that it should be necessary to make this provision. I should naturally expect that they would be self-supporting, and it would not be necessary for the department to ask for this sum.

Then we have a vote in aid of mining, amounting to £30,000. Certainly that amount is not a very large amount for prospecting. It is advisable at the present time that as many men as possible should be encouraged to go prospecting, particularly owing to the high price of gold. Almost any return that prospectors get in the way of gold is a payable proposition, although if the price of gold were to fall, possibly it would not be payable. It is advisable to get the men out, not only because of the actual value of the gold but because they are then employed and off the list of unemployed.

A new vote appears on the Estimates this year, amounting to £15,000, for the aerial survey of Northern Australia. When I went into that matter at first I could not see where we could obtain a very satisfactory service from an aerial survey. I have been up in an aeroplane, and most certainly one could not see very much with the naked eye. I found, however, that the survey is not made with the naked eye, but with a camera. It is the camera that does the work. Thus one can understand what good work can be accomplished by an aerial survey. When one gets the graph, it is only the size of a postage stamp, but when it is enlarged the geologists are able to examine the potentialities of a district minutely.

When we proceed to examine the Estimates further we find provision made for £200,000 for the Chillagoe smelters. I should like some information from the Minister on that item, because it seems to me to be a very big amount. I should have thought the State smelters would be self-supporting. If those smelters require anything like £200,000 in order to keep them going, there must be something behind it to justify that expenditure. Then we have an amount of £10,000 set aside for the State Treatment Works at Irvinebank. The same argument applies there. I should think that the charges made by State batteries, which are very high at the present time, would be sufficient to make them self-supporting. Provision is also made for £150,284 for State coalmines. The remarks I made in reference to the smelters also apply to this vote. This also seems to be a very large amount.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I would point out to the hon. member that he is dealing with the Estimates of expenditure from Trust and Special Funds.

Mr. TOZER: I was only referring to these votes in passing, not discussing them.

A consideration of the value of gold won in this State since the commencement of mining operations shows that the industry is of the utmost importance. The total value of gold won in this State from 1860 to 1933 is £96,071,129, while the value of other minerals won is £70,636,081, making a total of £156,707,210. Up to the present we have only scratched the surface of Queensland, and it is probable that when we reach greater depths richer and more wonderful values will be found.

In South Africa the Robinson Deep Transvaal was working at 8,000 feet, and in India the Champion Reef at Kolar at nearly 8,000 feet. Coming to Australia we find that the Victoria Quartz at Bendigo went down to 5,400 feet, and nearer home, in Queensland, the West of Scotland mine at Gympie was down to 3,138 feet. From the bottom of that drills were put down to a distance of 800 feet. The West of Scotland mine may recommence. If that is done a big chance exists to prove gold at a depth. That is one of the main essentials in Queensland. Most of the shows are really only surface shows. Mount Coolon is only working practically on the surface, but a shaft might prove the extent to which the reefs go down. I remember that in the early days Gympie was said to be only a surface show; yet we know the depth at which gold was recovered. Similarly at Bendigo.

The value of the gold yield in Queensland for 1933 was £390,779, and the figures for 1934 will probably exceed that; and Cracow will probably give a bigger return than any other place, but I really think that before long Gympie will again be on the payable list, and will be producing gold in good quantities.

The tin ouput for the year 1933 was valued at £123,620, that of copper £105,031, and silver-lead £527,696. In connection with silver-lead the proposition at Mount Isa is so big that an increase in the price of lead and silver ore would mean a very much greater return from mining operations in this State. No one can definitely say that the market will not improve again for silver-lead.

The total quantity of coal raised in Queensland during 1933 was 375,567 tons, valued at £693,383. If gold mining operations continue to expand, then probably more coal will be required, for really coal is of greater benefit for fuel purposes than, say, wood, from which sufficient steam power cannot be obtained. Further, we have wealth in the sapphires which were won last year. Thus, in every way the Department of Mines is going ahead, and I can see the possibility of better returns for Queensland in the mining industry. The Gold Mines of Australia Limited is contemplating favourable consideration of propositions at Charters Towers and other places, and I understand that Gympie also is being considered.

In the northern end of the field we have an unknown proposition, similar to that in the southern part of the field, where we have the Sovereign crosscourse and the Inglewood. There is a wedge of country going from west to east. On the western side the slate is of a better quality, and at a shallower level. The northern end has never had a fair trial. The Government put down a bore for testing purposes. The whole of that block of country was reserved, and was not open for mining purposes. It has since been declared open for mining purposes, and the department has received a considerable amount of money by way of fees in connection with goldmining leases, and two companies have actually put up plants and are working, and a third company has a shaft in close proximity to the bore, and should benefit by the information gained as a result of that bore. In that northern end there is a very fair possibility of a big goldmining revival in Gympie. There is also a feeling that the southern part of the field should have a further trial. The area between the Sovereign crosscourse and Inglewood offers big possibilities. A syndicate working the Southern Inglewood discovered the gold-bearing quartz 150 ft. from the surface, but unfortunately they were driven out by water. That block of country has been taken up, and one man in particular has worked the proposition out to his own satisfaction and been able to satisfy a very influential financial syndicate that it is a good one, and the result is that a bore is being put down there to prove it. If that bore does prove his contention is right a large company will be formed. That is a very big proposition, and if it is successful it should increase the gold production of Queensland to a great extent. There is no reason why it should not be as big as the Gympie Scottish which employed up to 400 or 500 men. It is situated in close proximity to the Scottish, and it is only a question of proving it. South of the Inglewood we have proof that there is a possibility of getting gold. Syndicates have been formed and taken up big blocks of ground comprising many of the gold-bearing mines that were abandoned owing to the low prices and the extra cost of mining, and the fact that the dewatering costs were very heavy, especially when one company after another pulled out and the whole cost of bailing was placed on the remaining companies.

Hon. members opposite have asked for some constructive suggestions. I think it would be in the interests of the Government if they undertook the dewatering of the Gympie goldmines. There are many shafts there, which were working and showing good results, and if they were dewatered the miners would be able to go straight on to the gold. I do not say they would get the results obtained previously, but there are any amount of reefs there that would be payable propositions.

This is more especially true when one hears talk about yields of 8 or 10 dwt. being payable propositions. A number of mines in that field will give that return, and the Government could take advantage of the opportunity. The dewatering of the mines on that field would be a very big proposition, benefiting not only the Government but also others, the winding plants we erected on the field would be capable of holding the water. The question, of course, would be the cost, but even though it cost the Government £100,000, what would that amount be to the Government if they obtained a big proposition and placed 1,000 men back in employment? It is quite on the cards that they would get this number back to work. A thousand men were working on the field previously, and when Gympie was first discovered it gave support to 30,000 men. Of course, I do not say that anything like that would happen at the present time, but I give 1,000 as a conservative estimate. As to the cost: it would take £2,500 to erect a plant for the dewatering of the area, and four such plants would be required—two on the eastern side and two on the western side, in the northern and southern areas of the goldfield. The total capital cost would, therefore, be £10,000. The cost of bailing would run into a certain amount. The Government have their own coal mines and the transport of the coal from the North to Gympie would mean increased revenue to the Railway Department. When Mr. Jones was

Secretary for Mines coal was carried by the Railway Department from the North to the Scottish mine. That gentleman made a contract with the manager, Colonel Reid, to that effect. This could be done again, and in addition to bringing freight to the railways would mean increased work for the coalminers. In addition, a number of subsidiary trades dependent on mining operations would benefit, and thus there would be an increase in the employment. The Government must realise that if they do not take advantage of the existing opportunities some person or company will do so. The chance is there now, waiting to be grasped. Between the Sovereign and the Inglewood crosscourses there is quite a large block of country from which the Government could obtain revenue by way of lease rents, exemption, and other fees, and miners' rights. I think that the proposition should appeal to the Government, and I submit, with all respect, that it receive consideration.

At 3.16 p.m.,

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

Mr. TOZER: The increase in the gold yield is satisfactory to a certain extent, the figures being as follow:—

> Gold yield, fine ozs.—1930, 7,821; 1932, 23,263; 1933, 91,997. Value—1932, £98,815; 1933, £390,729.

So far as my knowledge goes of Cracow, Mount Coolon, and Mount Morgan, the returns for 1934 will show a considerable increase over those for 1933. The Government, of course, have given as the reason for the latter the development of Mount Coolon, the reopening of Mount Morgan, the assistance given to prospecting, and the low rates of interest on capital, and also confidence in Australia. I most certainly agree with those grounds. I think they are a fair and reasonable statement of the causes of the prosperity of 1933.

I should like to point out to the Committee that some people view gold mining as more or less a speculation and in the light of a gamble. To a certain extent, or in some instances, it is, but it should be looked upon as being more of an investment than a gamble. Certainly I do not approve of the formation of companies where a large proportion of the issued capital is not called up and shares are issued as paid-up to a certain amount. Lately we had in Gympie a certain company which put 80,000 contributing 4s. shares on the market, but issued 60,000 as paid-up.

If that amount of £12,000 had been called up for the benefit of the mine there could have been no complaint against it, but it is not in the interests of mining generally to have mining enterprises conducted by companies that issue a tremendous amount of paid-up capital. It would soon be found that these practices gave the State a very bad name. I do not know whether anything can be done to guard against them, but I do know that the Stock Exchanges look with an unfavourable eye on companies that issue large volumes of paid-up capital.

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

Mr. FOLEY (*Normanby*) [3.19 p.m.]: It is pleasing to note the important development that has taken place in the mining industry throughout Queensland, particularly in gold production. There is no doubt that much credit is due to the department for the financial assistance that it has provided for small prospectors in pursuance of a policy that has been in operation for some time. Of course, it must be admitted that a good deal of this development has been prompted by what is termed the present high price for gold following upon the depreciation of currencies in this and in overseas countries. The value of the purchasing power represented by the currency in which the miner or prospector is paid enables him to make a better livelihood than he could possibly obtain in most other industries, but unfortunately much more remains to be done in the way of assistance in very deserving cases. It is the policy to-day to assist small prospectors and small mining companies, but much more could be done in many of our mining districts by the provision of further crushing facilities. If they were provided many shows would be opened up and developed, and in particular many low-grade propositions could be worked by small parties of miners. I have in mind the Clermont district. Although I have made representations to the department from time to time on this very question, I have ascertained that the conservatism of the department causes it to insist that the ore shall be won and stacked and that then the miners shall definitely prove to the department that there are so many hundreds of tons of ore at grass with a prospect of more before any move will be made in the direction of providing the necessary crushing facilities. It is a wrong attitude to adopt in view of the present price for gold. Many propositions were abandoned in that district years ago, some of them recently taken up by syndicates and not worked to any extent, but many of them could be worked by small parties if the conservatism of the department did not stand in the way of a progressive policy. The department hesitates to indulge in what might be termed a little gamble in providing crushing facilities. It is regrettable that the department will not provide crushing facilities for the convenience of small parties of miners in some of the mining districts until they can show so many hundred or so many thousand tons of ore at grass. That is a ridiculous attitude to adopt. I do not advocate that gigantic crushing facilities should be provided, but that small portable batteries, perhaps, a little larger than those that are now being purchased by the department, should be made available for miners in the different districts. If the gamble failed the portable batteries would still be an asset, and they could be removed from point to point as occasion required. I hope that this regrettable conservatism on the part of the department will cease. We should have a different outlook if better facilities were afforded to small parties of miners who are unable to equip themselves through lack of capital.

Transport is hampering many prospectors in country districts. A considerable time ago I placed before the Minister an appeal from the Miners' Association at Clermont asking him to endeavour to make provision whereby miners prospecting on leasehold and other lands should have the privilege of

taking a certain number of horses with them to assist in thoroughly prospecting the country. Unfortunately, the Minister cannot yet make a decision on the matter. I do not know whether he considers that the granting of the privilege would eat out the poor grazier, but the inability to do so is one of those things that are hampering prospecting in some country districts. I know that this privilege was abused in the early stages of the rush at Cracow, but the extraordinary conditions that applied there do not apply to some of the settled mining fields throughout the State. One can understand that if a big rush set in to a particular district very little notice would be taken of such restrictions. The men for whom I made the request would respect any conditions which might be attached to the granting of their application, and it would facilitate more thorough prospecting.

I compliment the Minister upon co-operating with the Commonwealth authorities in securing a geological aerial survey of Queensland. Doubtless some adherents of the old methods would consider this expenditure a waste of money and contend that in the final analysis the pick and shovel, drill and explosives would locate the minerals, but from what I have seen of the photographs made by the party comprised in the recent survey I am satisfied that definite structures can be determined in many parts of the State that will be of considerable assistance to field geologists when they go out with parties at a later date.

I appeal to the Government for assistance to enable some of the old alluvial fields to be more effectively prospected. I have in mind the Clermont field, but, no doubt, there are other fields to which my remarks might appropriately be applied. The method adopted in the Clermont district to-day is that a party of miners work out a theory, select a site, and after very hard work in sinking and bottoming a shaft, covering many weeks, perhaps months, they find that much driving remains to be done. Probably some of that driving is blind driving, and after driving many feet in the direction of the dip payable dirt is not located. That shaft is then abandoned and another shaft is sunk in order to locate the wash. Representations have already been made by me to the department on behalf of the progress association, the members of which interviewed me at Clermont some time ago, to have one of the Department's boring plants made available to them. The department has several, and if one of them were placed under the control of a field geologist the ground could be fully tested in order to determine definitely what is known as the Wild Cat lead.

I might mention for the information of the Committee that the Wild Cat lead was worked many years ago for 2½ miles at one stage, carrying quite a big party of miners, who extracted a great deal of gold from it until they "hit the water" in the deeper portions of the lead, to use mining parlance. From that time onwards no work has been done except that a few parties of miners have carried on, and met with the same result—namely, the caving in of their shafts immediately they got into the water area near the bottom. It is possible, without a great expenditure of money, to bore systematically and trace the continuation of that lead, then sink a shaft off the lead, and eventually drive and tap the water, and with proper pumping facilities drain a half mile or so of country known to be gold-bearing.

Mr. MOORE: How deep is it?

Mr. FOLEY: One hundred and fifty to 180 feet. That extent of country which is known to be gold-bearing could carry up to 500 miners on good payable gold. Small parties of miners cannot undertake such a project, but if the boring were done, and a chart drawn by a surveyor and geologist to give some idea of where the definite gutters were in that lead, parties of miners on the field probably would themselves take up the job of pumping the area with a view to working it effectively.

The same applies to Black Ridge, although the water there can be effectively dealt with by the miner. The great difficulty there is that sometimes 200 feet or more of difficult country has to be sunk through by blind stabbing, resulting only in bottoming a duffer. If the requests of the Prospectors' Association were acceded to by the department, no doubt it would mean an expenditure of a few thousand pounds, but I am confident—and the older miners in the district are of the same opinion—it would be of very valuable assistance to parties of miners by giving them something definite on which to proceed before carrying out work lasting perhaps several months in an endeavour to bottom upon payable gold. I trust the Minister will give every consideration to these requests. The hon. gentleman has not done so up to date. I do not know why. I have not even received definite replies to my requests. I am hoping, however, that in the near future the hon. gentleman may be induced to visit the Clermont field, when no doubt he will be in a much better position to judge for himself whether a fair expenditure of money would be justified in that district.

I am also looking forward to a visit from the Minister to the Cracow goldfield. It seems remarkable that a field which shows such promise—one mine is at the dividend-paying stage and another has developed a large area of payable ore and is held up temporarily for want of capital and machinery—should not yet have had a visit from the Minister, although it has been open for some considerable time. Those two areas in the district I represent are deserving of more consideration than they have received in the past. It is quite true that great assistance has been rendered by what is known as the prospecting vote, with which I cannot deal now. I have mentioned that the assistance that has been rendered in that respect is returned £1 for £1 to the State—for every £1 given by way of assistance £1 worth of gold has been procured by the miners who have received that assistance. Some have fared worse than others. Some have done exceptionally well. In one case a party of miners who had been working one day a week in the coalmines decided, as a result of the slump in that trade, to sink on what is known as the Old Cumberland lead. Those men have, up to date, received well over £1,000 each over a period of twelve months from that particular lease.

When a greater measure of assistance is rendered by a proper boring survey, I feel sure very good results will accrue to Queensland as a whole.

Mr. KENNY (*Cook*) [3.39 p.m.]: I have listened with interest to the remarks of the hon. member who has just resumed his seat, and I am satisfied he has brought forward a matter well worthy of consideration by the Department of Mines—that is, boring on old leads in different localities in Queensland. There are many prospectors who are desirous of testing the possibilities of mining fields and who have not the necessary capital to do so. If a boring plant was provided these old leads could be tested and much benefit would accure to the mining industry as a whole.

There are a few points I desire to raise on this vote, because I am of the opinion that there is great scope in the mining industry in this State. The development which is taking place owing to the high price of gold is bringing fresh capital to this State, and the taxation concessions in regard to goldmining have induced many people to put their savings into the industry. I understand that the Income Tax Commissioners of the different States are to meet with a view to arriving at a common basis in regard to taxation, and it is suggested in mining circles that the concessions granted to the mining industry are likely to be abolished. Hundreds of thousands of pounds have been invested in the mining industry owing to the concessions that have been granted, and if such action is taken by the different Governments numbers of people will withdraw their money from this industry, and that will impede the progress of mining in this State. I strongly advise the Minister to oppose their removal with all the vigour at his command.

The development of mining is being impeded by the fact that certain leases have been granted in many localities. I cannot altogether blame the present Minister, because leases or concessions were granted by the Moore Government. A number of these leases are being worked, but on many the holders are not spending money on development, whilst doing sufficient to fulfil the terms of their agreement. They are thus preventing a large number of genuine prospectors from operating in cases where, perhaps, a definite lead could be worked for miles.

These places are miles away from where the concessionnaires are likely to operate when they do come in, but because of the existence of the concessions the miners I have in mind cannot operate. I think that the Secretary for Mines should make these agreements elastic enough to allow genuine prospectors to operate on certain definite areas that they consider will prove auriferous. I know that my suggestion would mean that the present agreements that have been made with many of these people would require alteration, but when such people are not actually operating they have no right to hold up the genuine prospector, who has been there over a very long period. I would ask the Minister to consider the question from that point of view, and thus allow prospectors who have come on a definite lead, or who have an old claim which is not being exploited, to go on and prove that lead or claim. After they have been working on the lead or claim and have struck gold, then the people who hold the leases could come to some arrangement with the prospector and pay him for the work done and the gold found.

Throughout the State to-day quite a large number of miners do not know how they stand in regard to the pegging of claims. We had quite a lot of trouble in connection with Mount Coolon some time ago, and it is not desirable that similar trouble should occur in other parts of the State. It may be that a certain law of practice operates in the mining industry to-day with regard to the pegging of claims. The Mining Acts and the regulations thereunder lay down definitely the conditions under which a claim shall be pegged, but because of decisions of wardens a number of miners do not know exactly where they stand. The law is quite definite. Regulations 13 and 14 under the Mining Acts deal with the pegging of claims generally. Regulation 14 deals with the marking of ground, and reads—

> "A holder of a miner's right who marks off more ground than he is entitled to shall be liable to have the surplus ground pegged off at either end or side of the claim, at the option of a holder of a miner's right who applies to the warden for such surplus."

At 3.45 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. KENNY: There is nothing definite there as to how these claims shall be pegged and from the decisions that have been given a number of miners are of the opinion that the department or the wardens hold the view that all claims should be pegged in a rectangular formation. I have been unable to find anything in the Mining Acts or regulations thereunder that lays it down definitely that all pegging of claims shall be in a rectangular formation. Regulation 32 deals with ordinary reef claims, and does not in any way specify rectangular formation. Regulation 38 deals with alluvial claims, river and creek gold claims, puddling claims, and auriferous sand claims. Regulation 38 does deal with pegging from the point of view of formation. It states—

> "The extent allowed for ordinary alluvial claims, taken up for the purpose of mining for gold, shall be as follows, viz.:— . . . and so on, in the same proportion, for any number of holders of miners' rights, not exceeding ten, without restriction as to the shape of the claim:
>
> "Provided that the claim of each party shall, as nearly as circumstances will permit, be a rectangular block, no side of which shall be less than 50 feet if such width is available."

This is the only regulation I can find dealing with the pegging of claims in rectangular formation, and it definitely states that it can be pegged without restriction as to the shape of the claim but that the claim shall as nearly as circumstances will permit be a rectangular block. That does not definitely lay it down that it shall be so in all cases, and I take it that in law if a thing is not specifically stated it cannot be enforced. Therefore, I can find nothing to show definitely that the pegging shall be of rectangular formation. I would ask the Minister to clarify this point when he replies. It is of vital importance to every mining field in the State because a doubt does arise.

I should like the Minister to tell me, and incidentally the miners, what regulation or what section of the Acts lay it down that

there shall be rectangular pegging. According to my reading of the Acts a miner has the right to peg his claim in any possible formation, but that it is desirable that it be pegged in rectangular formation as far as possible. What are the rights of the miner, and what is the ruling by the department in such cases where it is impossible to peg the claim in rectangular formation? I want a definite decision as to the ruling of the department on this point. If the department insists that the pegging shall be done in rectangular formation, then I should like the Minister to advise us as to what section or what regulation gives the department that power. If it is not contained in the statute law, then is it a rule of practice adopted by the department in the administration of the mining laws?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. J. Stopford, *Maryborough*) [3.50 p.m.]: I shall deal first with the point raised by the hon. member for Cook, because it is probably the most important. The mining laws as embodied in the statute are based upon practice, a practice that dates back as far as the Californian gold mining days, when men had to decide matters not so much upon legal technicalities as upon justice. Although statutory laws are laid down to determine principles, quite a lot of mining practice has come down throughout the ages of mining which has been codified for the guidance of miners and others in this and in other countries. In a well-ordered community statute law is easily enforceable, but it must be recognised that on the occasion of a gold rush, where people hastily assemble together, there must be a simple code for the solution of problems rather than lengthy litigation. That is why, following the great confusion that existed at the commencement of Mount Isa—when everyone was allowed to peg a claim of a certain area—Mr. W. H. Corbould realised that there would be considerable overlapping. He desired to obtain options, but with his knowledge of mining he realised that, no matter how people desired to conform with the law, there would be this overlapping, and that in an endeavour to bring order out of confusion many men who believed they had claims or leases would find that they had none. He took an option from everybody who had pegged out a claim so as to avoid the confusion that would follow. The Miner's Guide that I caused to be prepared after that time contained practical explanations of the law of pegging. The Mining Acts lay it down that the man who insists upon a legal interpretation of his rights can call a lawyer to his aid, but the ordinary miner would go bandy-legged dragging the unconsolidated Acts round the country. The Miner's Guide, which costs only 1s., sets out in simple language the rules relating to the methods of pegging, and is intended as a protection against the man who has no knowledge of the legal complications of the problem. It sets out that the old practice relating to pegging shall obtain. Whether the pegging be rectangular or not, if a dispute arises, the warden does not sit as a court, but goes out on to a log and lights his pipe. I was at the Dee River rush when very important questions had to be decided by the warden, Mr. J. C. Linedale. First of all a miner's dish would be secured and sounded, and the miners who were parties to the disputes would assemble round the warden. If it was a question of jumping a claim, Mr. Linedale would give his decision, not as a warden, but merely as an arbitrator. I could not decide a dispute relating to a lease in my capacity as Secretary for Mines. A properly qualified surveyor may adjust boundaries, and he may afterwards come to me for a final determination.

In all matters affecting claims the warden has the opportunity of deciding disputes in the first instance. He decides them in a common sense manner on the relative merits of the disputants. If either of the disputants is dissatisfied with the decision of the warden he has the right of appeal to the Supreme Court. We have many "cigarette" miners to-day who know nothing about our mining laws, but rush out to a field all with pegs of different sizes and stick them in wherever they think fit, not knowing east from west or north from south. They dig their feet in and then think that the Minister should in some magic way decide their disputes. The old law or practice for settling disputes, which preserved order in many pioneering fields, cannot be overridden by any statute law that we may make here. As I have said, I have seen many disputes decided by the warden. Usually the statement of the warden to the two disputants is something like this: "You claim this ground—You claim it too. Well, half of it is yours, and half of it is yours." Then everyone goes back to work. I do not think the legal rights of the disputants end. They have a right of appeal to the Supreme Court or some other court. But I have always found that the decision of the warden was accepted without cavil.

The hon. member for Gympie remarked on the inadequacy of the vote for loans under the Mining Machinery Advances Act. I have subscribed to that view myself. I am the best spender in this Committee. If you give me the money then I am the greatest optimist in the country. (Laughter.) If this vote is not adequate then any claim for assistance to purchase mining machinery to test a new field will receive the fullest consideration. To-day we have many men who stand on their own feet through assistance granted by the department.

My friend the hon. member for Normanby made an appeal for the establishment of more batteries. If I looked for places where I could put batteries I should have more batteries than horses I have backed in the Melbourne Cup. (Laughter.) But it is a cardinal principle in mining that the first step you must take is to see what body of ore reserves there is in a given show, and then look for a battery. Some of the difficulties we have to encounter overseas in connection with mining ventures, not only in Queensland and Western Australia, but also in other States, arise from the fact that men have gone down a few feet, obtained a fine looking specimen, and then decided it was time to promote a company. Their ideas of promoting the sale of their shares was to put a lot of machinery on top of the claim and then go looking for the ore. I have been most generous to any person who has come to me and made a definite statement, backed by my own officials, that he has conducted prospecting operations to disclose a body of ore sufficient to maintain a battery. I have always helped such an application and have always

said that a battery would be forthcoming if that information was obtainable, but some people think first of a battery and then look for the ore. If God is good to them they will find it, but what about my battery if they do not?

The hon. member for Normanby introduced matters affecting his electorate. His electorate has been very generously treated but has responded by winning for the State an amount of metal equivalent in value to the assistance obtained. Naturally, I cannot subscribe to a policy of placing batteries indiscriminately everywhere. I did initiate a scheme of purchasing three-stamp batteries, which I foolishly believed could be used for prospecting purposes, but when I located these batteries I found that they became permanent batteries, and that to remove them I should require a body of police. (Laughter.) They are doing good work nevertheless, not as prospecting batteries, but in helping the owners of small shows to eke out a decent living.

The hon. member also asked that prospectors be allowed to take horses on to leasehold properties, and probably freehold properties. When such a right was conceded in certain cases it was never dreamed that Wirth's circus would be taken on to these shows. In actual practice men have availed themselves of the opportunity of going on to the property of a selector or grazier, accompanied by a number of horses altogether out of proportion to their personal requirements. The result is that they eat the selector out of grass and use his water. No man with a sense of fairness would permit such a thing to happen.

The aerial survey is an experiment—up in the air, as it were—(laughter)—but I believe it may have good results. At least we have the gratification of knowing that Queensland has been the first State to receive the attention of such experts. I am hopeful that, if it does not bring any great direct benefit by discoveries in Queensland, the work done in the Northern Territory will prove conclusively that the outlet from the Northern Territory is rightly through Queensland, and that we shall be recompensed in that direction.

The hon. member for Gympie seems to be astray in regard to the Chillagoe smelters. The hon. member would have us believe that we have lost approximately £200,000, but that amount represents the allocation from Trust Fund for the purchase of ores. When the blister copper is realised the money is repaid, and the difference unfortunately constitutes a loss. The continuation of Chillagoe is necessary, because I believe it is performing an indirect benefit to the State in keeping a certain number of men at work in the far north of Queensland, and keeping men ready to carry on if perchance any rehabilitation of the prices of lead and copper should take place.

I do not know that any other matter mentioned by any hon. member has not been replied to. I assure the Committee that the policy pursued by the department of giving assistance independently of the electorate and of the company concerned will be continued. We are hopeful that Gold Mines of Australia, Limited, will be able to do something in Charters Towers. Naturally, when one gives a concession over a large area, one is assailed by a certain amount of criticism, for although country may lie idle for forty years and no one wants it, immediately a concerted effort is made by a large company and a concession is granted, everybody in the district feels he could do the work, although he has had that opportunity for probably forty years. I believe that Charters Towers, Gympie, and other fields supposedly worked out are not really finished. With the present price of gold and modern methods of treatment and transport, we can look forward to something being done, and if a company is formed, not with the object of gambling on the stock exchange but with a view to proving or disproving the value of those fields, then at least some work will be done. The ex-Secretary for Mines gave the Mount Isa Company a concession at Lawn Hill, on which £30,000 was spent. The company threw up the proposition because it was not big enough, but we have now in our possession data that might later on make it worth while for a smaller company to look at it, so that the granting of that concession was a wise one. All these concessions are granted subject to a provision that all data—investigation, results, assays, etc.—must finally come to the Department of Mines, where they are available at any time for anyone who desires later on to carry on the work.

Mr. BRAND (*Isis*) [4.5 p.m.]: Undoubtedly Queensland abounds in mineral wealth. Her deposits of coal have possibly no equal in Australia, or indeed in the world. The Department of Mines is, therefore, a very important department, requiring administrative heads with dynamic force to encourage the greatest productivity possible. During the whole history of Queensland the mining industry of Queensland has had wonderful possibilities.

In the past gold mining has certainly been a great factor in the settlement of our country. It has now been revived and operations are being carried on in every portion of the State, and that is solely due to the fact that values have increased enormously. I was glad to hear the Secretary for Mines say that he recognised the possibility of a revival of activities on the old mineral fields of Gympie, Mount Morgan, and Charters Towers, where large populations were employed in this industry some years ago. I should like to know if the Minister is giving careful attention to every avenue in which this industry may be further developed.

In 1929, when the Moore Government took charge of the affairs of Queensland, mining was at the lowest ebb it had ever reached in the history of the State. There was practically no movement in any of the mining fields. The Government, demonstrating their business ability, commenced activities which led to the development that is evident today. It must be remembered that before the industry could be revived much cleaning up had to be done by the Moore Government, and the whole matter was put on a sound basis. They disposed of those propositions controlled by the department which did not pay and which, from an economic point of view, were of no value to the State. There were one or two mining ventures which returned a loss but represented a net economic value, and the Government thought it would be in the interests of the people of Queensland to continue to work them

and endeavour to stimulate their production capacity. A notable example was the Chillagoe State Smelters, which the previous Labour Government had closed down. The Moore Government restarted those works and they have continued working ever since.

In an endeavour to encourage the coal mining industry, particularly in the Bowen district, an effort was made to set up the manufacture of coke. In this connection reports were received from officers of the Department of Mines which indicated that it was possible to carbonise 65 tons of coke from 100 tons of coal. Events have proved that we are carbonising less than 60 tons from that amount of coal. From those figures it would appear that either the coal at that centre has deteriorated or the reports were based on a misconception. It appears that at the present time the cost of production of each ton of coke is £2 2s. 8.22d., and it is being sold at from 33s. to 35s. a ton, whilst 33s. a ton is received from the practically sheltered preserve of Mount Isa. The Department of Mines should remember that it is not desirable that we should continue any white elephants in the mining industry. There is something radically wrong when reports indicate that works should be established in order to help the mining industry, and after the Government have spent much money on the establishment of the undertaking losses are found to be taking place. The loss in the year before last was over £2,000, and last year the loss was approximately £9,000. If this state of affairs is to continue, where will it lead the State?

Mr. FOLEY: What about indirect benefit?

Mr. BRAND: I will point out to the hon. member for Normanby, who possesses an intimate knowledge of this matter, that the reports indicated that the undertaking would show a profit; and, in view of the fact that we have a sheltered market at Mount Isa, it should have shown a profit. Something has happened in regard to these returns, and we in this Parliament are entitled to know what has gone wrong. I tell the Committee again that the reports indicated a carbonisation of 65 tons of coke from 100 tons of coal, and it has turned out to be less than 60 tons. There is something wrong. I hope the Minister will give to the members of this Committee an indication of what is really happening.

After all, it should be our business to take a great interest in the activities of the department. We have men who understand the mining industry, and they should possess enough business acumen to enable these concerns to be profitable undertakings. We have the Chillagoe smelting works showing heavy losses, whereas under the policy of the late Government the loss was very small. We as a Committee desire to have these matters investigated. The Minister, understanding the mining industry, should be a dynamic force in guiding the activities of this industry.

Only last year the Coal Production Regulation Act was passed with a view to endeavouring to establish an export trade in coal. That measure contained features which commended themselves to the coalmining industry, and it enabled those concerned to get together for the purpose of extending the trade in order that more miners could be employed in the industry. So far as I am aware no results have been obtained up to the present, and this afternoon the Minister may be able to inform us as to the possibility of extending our markets. This is a very big industry, and were the deposits existing in Queensland to be found in any other country we should find that that country was doing a very large coal trade. It is the duty of the Minister in charge of this department and his officers to use every means at their disposal for the development of this industry in order that the large number of people usually dependent on it may be placed in permanent work. I trust that the Secretary for Mines is not going to follow his predecessor in the previous Labour Government and build up record losses in State enterprises or what have been termed "White elephants." I trust he will lay the foundation for a successful industry.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It was your Government that initiated the coke ovens.

Mr. BRAND: Of course we initiated them, but on the basis of proving a profitable concern. There is no reason why they should not be a profitable undertaking. I say that the reports at least indicate to the Government that certain things are happening. I desire that the Minister should check up on the matter. I am not raising the point with any hostility, but merely with a view of being helpful. The Minister has been a miner, and understands the industry. He should check up on the statements that have been made, and see what is happening, and why large losses continue. There has been a loss of approximately £9,000 on a turnover of £30,000! That would not suit any private enterprise: why should it suit the State? After all, if the State is an ideal employer, as it generally is, we are entitled to expect from it the best of service in order that these industries may be a success, and shall not continue to pile up losses, thus ultimately increasing the debt that will have to be met by the people by taxation. We know that the terrific losses that occurred in the past are a burden on the whole of the people, and have to be met by burdensome taxation.

I hope that the Minister will recognise the need for the development of our gold mining industry, and particularly give attention to the matter raised by the hon. member for Gympie, and that the Government will lend some assistance in the dewatering of the Gympie field. If we can re-establish those mines and get them back to something approximating their former greatness, which on the present price of gold should be possible, we shall be helping in the development and in the reconstruction of our State. This is badly needed.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You should place the blame for the loss on these coke ovens at the door of your own Government. Do not try to place them at my doorstep.

Mr. BRAND: The hon. gentleman is in charge of the Department of Mines to-day. If the Moore Government were in power they would check up on the statements that have been made.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The Moore Government passed a law prohibiting the establishment of State enterprises in the future, but they immediately proceeded illegally to set up another State enterprise

in the form of coke ovens, and the hon. member for Isis is now endeavouring to place the blame for the losses in connection with this enterprise on my shoulders. They also entered into a rotten agreement.

Mr. BRAND: I do not think that the Minister is giving the attention that he should give to the coke ovens. There should not be these losses.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Your Government should have attended to that matter before they made the agreement with Mount Isa.

Mr. BRAND: It is quite possible to make a success of many mining undertakings in Queensland. It only needs a thorough investigation to bring them to a point of efficiency. I was endeavouring to explain to the Committee that there were certain possibilities in connection with the coke-making industry. I pointed out that it was anticipated that there would be a return of 65 tons out of 100 tons of coal carbonised.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: We are getting 67 tons.

Mr. BRAND: You are getting less than 60 tons.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You are talking through your neck.

Mr. BRAND: If I am talking through my neck then the Auditor-General is also talking through his neck.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That is up to June.

Mr. BRAND: We are entitled to rely on a statement made by the Auditor-General.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Up to the end of June.

Mr. BRAND: He reported on the undertaking for the last financial year. If the Minister has an effective reply then I should like to hear it.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Then why not sit down and give me a chance?

Mr. BRAND: The Minister has spoken on the vote, and I am only entitled to twenty-five minutes, which I have not yet exhausted.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I cannot speak while you are speaking.

Mr. BRAND: I will resume my seat in order that the Minister may reply. I hope he will take the matter in hand and that he will check up on the statements that have been made.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I will deal with you and your Government.

Item (Department of Mines—Chief Office) agreed to.

At 4.20 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN: By agreement I shall now proceed to put the questions for the balance remaining unvoted.

VOTES PASSED UNDER OPERATION OF STANDING ORDER 307 AND SESSIONAL ORDER.

Under the provisions of Standing Order 307 and the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 29th August last, the questions for the following votes were put by the Chairman and agreed to:—

Department of Mines—Balance of Vote, £42,472.

Department of Labour and Industry, £100,186.

Department of Railways, £4,625.000.

Trust and Special Funds Estimates, £6,344,673.

Loan Fund Account Estimates, £4,350,000.

Supplementary Estimates, 1933-34—

	£	s.	d.
Revenue	83.709	5	4
Trust Funds	444,216	15	9
Loan Fund Account ...	314,216	8	2

Vote of Credit, on account, 1935-36, £3,550,000.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to certain resolutions, and asked leave to sit again.

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

RECEPTION OF RESOLUTIONS.

The TREASURER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*): I move—

"That the resolutions be received to-morrow."

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at 4.27 p.m.