

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**FRIDAY, 23 NOVEMBER 1934**

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**FRIDAY, 23 NOVEMBER, 1934.**

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

**SANDALWOOD BILL; CITY OF MACKAY AND OTHER TOWN PLANNING SCHEMES APPROVAL BILL.**

Mr. SPEAKER announced the receipt of messages from His Excellency the Governor, intimating His Excellency's assent to these Bills.

**QUESTIONS.**

**CHILLED MEAT INDUSTRY AND IMPORTATION OF STUD STOCK.**

Mr. SPARKES (*Dalby*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

“In view of the importance of the chilled meat industry to Queensland, the vital necessity of improving the quality of our beef cattle, and the recent statement of the Premier in this House that the success achieved in the Argentine has been due largely to the assistance of the Government in the importation of stud stock, will he state what assistance the Government of Queensland proposes to render with the object of encouraging the importation of stud stock from overseas to this State?”

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, *Barcoo*) replied—

“This matter is at present receiving consideration under the rural rehabilitation scheme, and the hon. member may rest assured that any concrete proposals he may care to make will be fully considered.”

**CONDITION OF NATIVE PASTURES IN WESTERN QUEENSLAND.**

Mr. MAHER (*West Mornton*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

“1. Has his attention been drawn to statements contained in an article in ‘Smith’s Weekly’ of 17th instant, headed ‘Desert encroaches on Western Queensland,’ and having reference to experiments with native grasses conducted by Dr. E. Hirschfeld?”

“2. Is there any evidence to support the contentions of Dr. Hirschfeld, and, in view of the outstanding importance of the matter to Queensland, will he cause an early investigation to be made?”

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, *Barcoo*) replied—

“1. Yes.

“2. Continuous soil analyses for CaO and P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub> content have been conducted by the department over a number of years. The results of these analyses do not definitely disclose a diminution of mineral content. It is probable that continuous overstocking tends to exhaust mineral and nitrogenous content. Suggestions of pasture deterioration have been investigated by the department for some considerable time. Last year Mr. Francis, of the Botanical Branch, made a survey of pastures in the Charleville, Cunnamulla, and Augathella areas, following which the Walter and Eliza Hall

Fellow in Economic Biology, with the co-operation of this department, entered upon a survey of Western Queensland pastures. Departmental officers in all pastoral areas are co-operating in this research work, as are also the agricultural chemist (Mr. Gurney) and other officers of the chemical laboratory staff. Analyses disclose that the lime content is fairly satisfactory, but the phosphatic content is, in many cases, low. However, there does not appear to be any consistent diminution of available phosphatic content gauged over a period from 1911 to the present time. Departmental officers have consistently recommended the use of phosphatic licks to supplement the phosphatic content of the soil."

#### DIVISION OF CITY OF BRISBANE INTO WARDS.

Mr. MAHER (*West Moreton*) asked the Home Secretary—

"1. Who were the members of the board which divided the city of Brisbane into twenty electoral wards?"

"2. What expense was involved?"

"3. Was such expense met by the State Government or the City Council?"

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, *Ithaca*) replied—

"1. Thomas Arthur Ferry, William Michael Ludwig, John Denis Joseph O'Hagan.

"2. £275 15s. 11d.

"3. State Government."

STATE EMPLOYEES, 1932-33 AND 1933-34.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*) asked the Premier—

"Will he kindly supply a statement in the form contained in the last 'ABC of Queensland Statistics' showing the number of persons employed by the State at 30th June, 1933, and 30th June, 1934, and the expenditure on salaries and wages in 1932-33 and 1933-34, respectively?"

The PREMIER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*) replied—

Department.	Number of Officers as at 30th June.		Actual Expenditure on Salaries and Wages from Consolidated Revenue Fund, Trust Funds, and Loan Funds, Financial Year.	
	1933.	1934.	1932-33.	1933-34.
Executive and Legislative .. .. .	40	40	£ 10,230	£ 10,286
Premier and Chief Secretary .. .. .	160	163	48,571	48,801
Home Secretary .. .. .	2,498	2,575	594,367	603,343
Public Works (including Construction Branch Employees)	807	1,224	139,421	199,265
Labour and Industry (including State Enterprises) ..	254	265	78,522	94,958
Justice .. .. .	583	599	166,391	169,625
Treasury .. .. .	1,804	1,798	358,045	367,424
Public Lands (including Wages Hands in various Sub-Departments)	905	1,527	238,509	269,537
Agriculture and Stock .. .. .	563	593	161,086	164,642
Public Instruction .. .. .	5,104	5,156	1,124,886	1,150,110
Mines (including Mining Operations)	566	606	164,564	184,498
Main Roads Commission .. .. .	1,149	1,945	366,982	276,910
Railways (including Refreshment Rooms) .. .. .	15,685	17,385	3,478,453	3,704,863
Total .. .. .	30,118	33,876	£6,930,027	£7,244,262

#### PAPER.

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

Annual report of the Department of Agriculture and Stock for the year 1933-34.

#### BUREAU OF INDUSTRY ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

##### SECOND READING.

The PREMIER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*) [10.35 a.m.]: 1 move—

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

The object of the Bill is to clarify the position of the Bureau of Industry in regard to certain matters associated with the construction of the central bridge across the Brisbane River, which was approved by Parliament last session. The part of the Bill dealing with the bridge is necessary

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in connection with the resumption of wharves and matters appertaining thereto.

The bureau is also empowered to undertake the construction work in connection with the Brisbane water supply and flood prevention scheme, which is the largest unemployment relief measure submitted by the bureau. For many years past the question of an adequate water supply for the city of Brisbane and flood prevention has engaged the attention of thoughtful people. So far back as 1921, as Secretary for Public Works, I put through an Order in Council retaining the watershed of the Brisbane River and tributaries for this purpose, and much investigation has proceeded since. The present affords an opportunity to undertake the work that was then contemplated as being desirable in the future. Loan money is cheaper to-day than it has been for many years past. In addition, the availability of labour is such that we are justified in utilising that labour and that unemployed capital for a project that

is valuable to the State and will render an essential service to the metropolitan area. A special committee of the bureau was appointed in April, 1933, to investigate the scheme. It consisted of—

Mr. J. R. Kemp, Commissioner of Main Roads.

Mr. D. Fison, Engineer for Harbours and Rivers.

Mr. W. H. Nimmo, Designing Engineer, Main Roads Commission.

Mr. L. C. Morris, Superintendent of Technical Education (who is also a civil engineer).

Mr. M. B. Sajisbury, Officer in Charge, Department of Irrigation and Water Supply.

Mr. J. B. Brigden, Director of the Bureau of Industry, as Chairman.

The committee's terms of reference were of a most comprehensive nature. During its investigation, other eminent authorities, such as Professor Hawken, Professor of Engineering at the Queensland University, were consulted. The committee's report and recommendations have been presented to Parliament, and indicate the exhaustive inquiry the committee carried out. That report has been in the hands of hon. members since June last, and no doubt they have studied it very carefully. The Bill is largely framed on the report and the recommendations contained therein.

The question of flood prevention in and above Brisbane has been the subject of many inquiries and of much controversy over the last forty years, that is to say, since the disastrous floods of 1893. The first official report was made in 1896 by the then Government Hydraulic Engineer of the Water Supply Department, the late Mr. J. B. Henderson. Later a report was made by Colonel J. Pennycook. Not until recent years, however, has the city's water supply assumed a position of urgent importance. In 1928 Mr. A. G. Gutteridge, Commonwealth Director of Public Health Engineering, reported to the Government on this aspect of the present question, recommended the use of the Brisbane and Coomera Rivers for water supply, and outlined a valuable flood prevention scheme in connection with that stream and its tributaries. It will be remembered at that time the Brisbane water supply authorities were proposing to use the Nerang Creek for the purpose of a water supply, and a scheme had been prepared along those lines. It was a subject of much controversy at the time, and, as Acting Premier, I appointed a royal commission in the person of Mr. Gutteridge to investigate the whole proposal. The result of his inquiry indicated that the water supply scheme was unduly costly, and would not give the service that was necessary to justify such an expenditure, but at the conclusion of his investigations he made a valuable report on the waters of the upper Stanley River, and pointed out that if it was required to provide in a few years' time additional water supply for Brisbane the aspect of flood prevention should be considered at the same time. That report is available in the archives of Parliament, and hon. members interested in the subject would be well advised to read Mr. Gutteridge's report in conjunction with the one tabled in June of this year. In 1930 the Engineer for

Water Supply of the Brisbane City Council, Mr. W. E. Bush, reported to the council to the same effect, but no definite action was taken, probably for two reasons, the first being that the recommended schemes were too ambitious, and the second that Brisbane has been fortunate in recent years in escaping both dry seasons and serious floods. The present project is much less costly than any that has previously been suggested by competent authorities. It includes—

(a) A large dam on the Stanley River.

(b) Sundry improvements in the river at Brisbane, which will both mitigate floods and improve the chief port of the State.

Flood prevention is an important aspect of this problem, and it is proposed to deepen and widen the channel of the Brisbane River at certain places. That is necessary not only in the interests of flood prevention but also to provide greater facilities for vessels entering and leaving the port. These are days of larger vessels with deeper draught than previously, and it is highly desirable that ships of maximum tonnage should be able to enter and leave the port at any state of the tide, so that unnecessary costs and delay may be avoided.

The dam will impound water that will be urgently needed in the event of a long dry period, and will safeguard the water supply of Brisbane and Ipswich for many years to come. It will also provide a large margin of capacity for the interception of flood waters, so that the two functions of water storage and flood prevention will be merged in a system that will give a reasonable maximum of service in both respects. Should circumstances in the future warrant the construction of another dam, as was recommended by former advisers, it could be carried out as a supplementary work without lessening the value of the works now to be undertaken. Hon. members will no doubt recollect that two dams were mentioned in the report submitted by the committee of the Bureau of Industry, one at Little Mount Brisbane and the other at Middle Creek. The lesser scheme is the one adopted in the proposal under review, but as Brisbane expands and its needs become greater the other project can be undertaken without lessening in any way the value of the project now being discussed.

The present value of probable flood damage has been moderately estimated at £1,400,000 and the value of water supply storage and other services at £1,000,000. The maximum cost of the works, including the river works—which are a charge on the State—amounts to £2,250,000, that is to say, less than the sum of the figures I have quoted as their value to the community. For the information of hon. members I lay on the table a map showing the proposal regarding the impounding of waters and some very interesting photographs indicating the nature of the flood that took place in Brisbane in 1893. The officers of the bureau and the committee of engineers to which I have referred made a very exhaustive analysis of the effect of the flood of 1893, and having regard to the development that has taken place in the metropolitan area since then have arrived at an estimate of the damage that would result if a similar flood took place to-day. Any hon. member

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who has considered the matter realises that if the flood waters of the Brisbane River and its tributaries meet a high tide on their way to the sea flooding is inevitable and that what occurred in 1893 is quite capable of taking place again. We have been within the danger zone on several occasions in recent years. I remember that on two occasions during my occupancy of the position of Secretary for Agriculture it was necessary to remove all the scientific appliances from the departmental laboratory and all the other material in the department's building below the first floor, because of the liability of the place to flooding. On those two occasions the flood waters came down before the tide had reached its maximum height, and although the waters covered the wharves and rose high under Victoria Bridge, Brisbane, escaped a serious flood, because the flood waters did not meet tidal waters at the highest point of the tide. Engineers point out that the danger of floods is not only an ever-present danger but also a calculable danger, and an estimate of the probable cost of the damage is indicated in the figures I have given. Under the scheme we are placing before Parliament to-day there is a flood prevention project that is sound in itself and constitutes a wise insurance against damage over the metropolitan and adjoining areas. In addition it provides the additional water supply that is required in the growing area under review. At the same time it provides a sound scheme of re-employment of our people in normal works. All the essentials are present, therefore, that are required to justify this undertaking, which is the largest of its kind projected in Australia.

The works will be constructed, as I pointed out earlier, at a lower cost than at any other time, and will be fully reproductive in service to the municipalities concerned and the State. Under any circumstances the State Government would be justified in contributing towards the cost of this scheme. Government buildings of a major character are within this area, and the Government consider the fact that they do not pay local authority rates in respect of the land they used is an adequate reason why they should bear a proportion of the cost.

The Federal Government invited the State Governments to submit developmental projects for their consideration, with a view to giving assistance for the purpose of providing employment for our people. There are adequate reasons why the Commonwealth Government should interest themselves in the employment of the people, and the Queensland Government have submitted this scheme to the Commonwealth for consideration. If it is approved and a contribution is made towards the cost, then the cost of the scheme to the local authorities and the State will be reduced to that extent.

The proposals have been considered by the local authorities that are affected. The Brisbane City Council and the Ipswich City Council have heartily approved of the project, and have agreed to contribute their shares of the cost. Construction costs in the first place are being defrayed by the Treasurer out of moneys from time to time appropriated by Parliament for the purpose. The interest to be charged to the municipalities is to be equivalent to the rate that will be the actual cost to the State of the money raised for the purpose.

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When the works are completed their operation will be vested by Order in Council in a flood board, consisting of the following representatives:—

(a) The engineer of the City of Brisbane for the time being in charge of water supply.

(b) The engineer for the time being of the City of Ipswich.

(c) The engineer for the time being of the Department of Harbours and Marine.

(d) An officer of the Department of Irrigation and Water Supply.

(e) The chairman for the time being of the works board.

(f) The Director of the Bureau of Industry.

The Flood Board, as a Works Board, will, in addition to the ordinary powers it will have under this Bill, be authorised to make a continuous study and observation of the Brisbane River, its tributaries, and catchment areas.

The operating costs of the works, less any revenue earned therefrom, are to be borne by the Treasurer, the Brisbane City Council, and the Ipswich City Council in the ratio of 40 per cent., 57 per cent., and 3 per cent., respectively.

The cost of the Stanley River dam, together with all works associated therewith, are estimated as under—

	£
State ... ..	690,000
Brisbane City Council ...	1,000,000
Ipswich City Council ...	60,000
Total ... ..	£1,750,000

The works in the lower Brisbane River will be an entire charge upon the State. The cost of these is estimated at £500,000. The projects covered by this Bill, therefore, are estimated to cost a total of £2,250,000. The costs in relation to the dam only are being allocated in the proportion of two-fifths to be borne by the State, and three-fifths to be borne by the Brisbane and Ipswich City Councils. A special board, called the Stanley River Works Board, is being constituted under the Bill to carry out the construction work. The intention is to use the personnel of the present Bridge Board, together with the engineers of the Brisbane and Ipswich City Councils; so that the board will comprise Messrs. Kemp, Story, and Bridgen, together with the two engineers from the local authorities concerned.

The Act of last session constituted the Bureau of Industry a corporate body and conferred on it power and authority as such to lease, purchase, sell, exchange and hold lands, goods, chattels, and other property. The amending Bill provides that the bureau, as such corporation, or the Works Board or any other board appointed under this legislation, shall represent and be deemed to represent the Crown. Additional powers that are being given to the bureau as a corporation are necessary to enable it to deal with all assets acquired in connection with works being carried out by it.

Power is being conferred upon the bureau to have and to exercise all the powers, authorities, and jurisdiction of a local authority under the Local Authorities Acts

for carrying out works only. The object is to give authority to resume land, to enter upon land, and to obtain easements through land, all of which may be necessary in the carrying out of the work. For example, as the work proceeds, it will be necessary to build a road from, say, Esk to the site of the dam, and in the area where the dam is to be constructed large numbers of men will be employed for a considerable period. It will be necessary, therefore, for the bureau to have authority to set out the terms and conditions under which people may be camped in the area in the course of the work. Such powers are designed to simplify the process of acquiring the property needed in connection with the works, whilst at the same time amply protecting the owners of such property, and to provide for their proper use.

The resumption of a wharf is specially provided for in the Bill, which also authorises compensation to be paid in connection with the central bridge project. Under the principal Act compensation is payable only to a shipowner in connection with alterations to vessels by construction of the bridge. The Brisbane City Council, I understand, owns certain wharves that will be affected by this construction, and it is necessary to have power to give compensation where it is necessary and just that it should be paid.

The bureau is authorised also to enter unused land without necessarily resuming it. That is similar to the power conferred on the Commissioner of Main Roads. An owner or occupier of such land will be entitled to claim compensation for any damage caused by such entry.

The definition of the term "works," which under the principal Act were defined as in the Industries Assistance Act and in the Public Works Land Resumption Act, is now being enlarged under this Bill to cover any work authorised by the Governor in Council to be undertaken by the bureau.

Power is being taken to constitute the Works Board as a committee of the bureau, and it is provided that such board shall be constituted of such persons as the Governor in Council shall from time to time by Order in Council appoint. The Works Board will probably be the constructing authority for all works for which a specially constituted authority is not provided.

The Bureau of Industry will establish a separate fund in respect of each work authorised under the Act.

That, briefly, sets out the machinery clauses that are necessary to give effect to the major policy now under review. I am satisfied that the Government are taking the right step in putting forward a project of this kind. No matter what conditions may be operating, the need of an additional water supply in Brisbane cannot be gainsaid. In recent years we have had good rains, but we can all remember that the urgency of additional water supplies has made itself manifest during dry spells. The population is increasing, and with the extension of the sewerage system the demand for water is becoming greater. Those factors, together with the necessity of providing insurance against flood damage, in themselves justify this Bill. But the further aspect of giving relief in the matter of unemployment is also important. I hold the view, as do the Government, that a period such as the present

is an appropriate time to undertake works of this national character. They are of such a nature as to provide the maximum of employment. By far the greater proportion of the cost will go in the form of wages for labour employed. So that in the project we combine the purpose of employing labour on reproductive works with that of building up an asset to the State, and we provide for a necessary service for an important part of Queensland.

The work is probably the largest of its kind that has been contemplated in this State for many years, the largest single work under the heading of one scheme. It is also the largest works proposal that is being undertaken in the Commonwealth at the present time, having regard to the policy of all Governments for the re-employment of our people.

I am satisfied that from every sound point of view the Bill will commend itself to members of Parliament and to the general public who are affected thereby.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. RUSSELL (*Hamilton*) [11.1 a.m.]: As the Premier just stated, this is certainly the largest project that has been inaugurated for the relief of unemployment, and it is deserving of a good deal of support on that score, inasmuch as it undoubtedly will be the means of providing a large amount of work for the unemployed, considering that the chief factor in the main scheme is that of wages. As I said on a previous occasion, a scheme like this commends itself more favourably to hon. members on this side of the House than many other schemes of a non-productive character, which could easily be dispensed with for many years or, at any rate, until the conditions of the State were more satisfactory than they are to-day. We hold that in all unemployment schemes the first consideration should be wages, and we cannot see any justification for the sinking of large sums of money in schemes that will not have that factor as their chief recommendation. For instance, we strongly object to the construction of large public buildings that could easily be done without for many years to come, and could be deferred in favour of other projects more urgent, such as the one under discussion. Works like this—water conservation works, sewerage works, electric light works, and so on—that provide labour and are so conditioned that they probably would pay interest and redemption, or, at any rate, a large part of it, are more worthy of consideration than many of the fantastic schemes in which the present Government have indulged.

But there is one feature about the whole business that I think is more unsatisfactory, and that is that at the tail end of the session hon. members are expected to give their attention to one of the largest schemes this State has ever embarked upon. We object to the undue haste that has been displayed in an endeavour to clean up the remaining Bills, and the rushing through of Bills at the end of a session without giving hon. members proper time for considering them. In connection with a scheme like this I think hon. members should have been afforded an opportunity of studying the plans and even inspecting the sites; and it would certainly have been preferable had the whole matter been referred to a Committee of the House in order that every

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detail could be examined. As it is, all we have to go upon is the information furnished by the Premier this morning, which is founded on a report by the Bureau of Industry that was recently tabled. It is but recently, too, that a discussion took place in the Brisbane City Council regarding this matter. Whilst I am not disagreeing with the scheme, I do think that the whole matter should have been discussed and every detail scrutinised by hon. members on both sides so that we would be able to come to the proper conclusion.

We know that the agitation for a larger water scheme for Brisbane and outlying districts has been the subject of discussion for many years. We have had the opinions of noted authorities, and, as is natural with experts, there have been differences of opinion; but I dare say that from the mass of evidence that has been collected it is possible to arrive at a sound scheme that will give the necessary supply of water to Brisbane for many years.

I take it from the Premier's statement that the councils of Brisbane and Ipswich have concurred in the scheme although we have no official intimation to that effect.

The PREMIER: You are not suggesting I would say anything that was not right?

Mr. RUSSELL: I do not intend, for one moment, to say that; but there has been no official notification. There was a conference, but I understood that that was merely between the Premier, the Lord Mayor of Brisbane, and some of the aldermen.

The PREMIER: You are wrong again. The conference was not held with the Premier; it was with the Home Secretary.

Mr. RUSSELL: I stand corrected. If the Brisbane City Council has concurred in the scheme, and likewise the Ipswich City Council, I am quite satisfied. All projects of this nature that touch the daily life of these two municipalities should be considered by the people, whose concurrence should be sought. I am very jealous of the rights of the citizens, and I do not want Parliament to over-ride in any shape or form their undoubted privileges. If these two municipalities have concurred in the scheme, there is no objection on that score.

We have had the benefit of the opinions of the various authorities cited by the Premier, and there is no doubt that the Bureau of Industry has been helped to a great extent by the researches of eminent authorities. They should therefore be able to present in a concrete form a proposal dealing with water storage and flood prevention. The Premier stated that it had been decided to accept the Stanley River scheme, I presume, as being the cheaper proposition of the two. In his report of 1928 Mr. Gutteridge, in dealing with the two sites at the Stanley River and Middle Creek, and also with the then existing facilities at Mount Crosby and Lake Manchester, stated that if the city of Brisbane really desired that there should be further water storage, he would recommend the linking up of Lake Manchester with Mount Crosby by a pipe line. That would avoid the enormous losses by way of evaporation and seepage that take place to-day when the water from Lake Manchester is conveyed to Mount Crosby. He, further, recommended that the Coomera River scheme

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should be gone on with, probably owing to the fact that the water there could be conveyed to the city mostly by gravitation; but he stated that if the council desired to combine water supply with flood prevention, the only feasible scheme was the damming of the Brisbane River at Middle Creek and the Stanley River at Little Mount Brisbane. His recommendation, which I will read, is very edifying in the light of the investigations that have taken place since his report. As a preliminary to his report, he made this statement—

“The two measures by which the purposes of flood prevention and water supply can be combined are those of storage and diversion. In works of storage, the capacity provided must be such that portion of it can be permanently reserved for water supply use and the remainder only for the retention of flood water. In works of diversion this capacity need be sufficient for purposes of supply only, all flood water being discharged to without the catchment. Storage works may be located on either the Brisbane River at Middle Creek or the Stanley River at Little Mount Brisbane, while diversion works can be constructed only on the Stanley River at Peachester.”

Of course, the Peachester scheme has not received very much support, and the bureau itself condemns any idea of creating diversion works there. We are therefore confined to two alternative schemes—the Little Mount Brisbane and the Stanley River dams. It will be admitted that the time is ripe for the inauguration of some scheme that will place us beyond any fear of water famine for many years to come. Whilst Mr. Gutteridge's figures are not exactly borne out to-day, because population has not increased as he expected, still we can see by the census that Brisbane is growing rapidly—in fact, more rapidly than most cities of the Commonwealth.

On two occasions in recent years dry spells have been experienced, and a water famine anticipated. Although some members of the Brisbane City Council still think that we have an ample reserve at Lake Manchester the position became so acute in the past that we cannot afford to take any risks. The essential feature of a community like Brisbane is an adequate water supply. It is well known that in many of the high levels in Brisbane to-day the supply is very poor and the pressure very low, and it is almost impossible to obtain any redress by using supplies from present sources. Taking that fact into consideration and also the enormous growth of the sewerage service, which will make very heavy exactions on the water supply, it is absolutely essential for our own comfort that some scheme should be inaugurated at once. There is no time like the present, as the Premier points out, when plenty of labour is available and evidently large sums of money can be procured. The main fact is that we can employ quite a number of men for a long period on wages, and that being so there can be no objection to some such scheme being proceeded with. I have read the report by the bureau, in which two schemes were submitted, but evidently, from motives of economy, the cheaper scheme has been selected. Mr. Gutteridge was rather inclined to favour the Middle Creek scheme, and the information that he has given at

pages 67 and 68 of his report is very illuminating at the present juncture, inasmuch as the question of flood prevention has occupied the minds of the members of the bureau and many other people who were consulted prior to the advent of its report. Some people seem to think that it is a luxury that we can afford to do without on account of the enormous expense, but if we can devise a scheme that will serve the dual purpose of giving us an adequate supply of water and at the same time affording some protection against floods then we should go on with it. In investigating the situation both as regards the water storage and flood prevention Mr. Gutteridge had this to say:—

“Two sites within the Brisbane River catchment suitable for the storage of large quantities of water have already been described. These are on the Brisbane River itself at Middle Creek, and on the Stanley River at Little Mount Brisbane. In the case of the former of these sites the storage requirements for the full development of the river as a source of supply have been placed at 87,000,000,000 gallons. If to this be added the storage volume of 184,000,000,000 gallons needed for the prevention of disastrous floods, the total storage demanded for the dual purpose will be 271,000,000,000 gallons. From information submitted the maximum storage available at the site is 255,000,000,000 gallons. This available volume is obviously insufficient to permit the attainment of both purposes, though it is sufficient to afford complete control of floods during the earlier years of the development of the stream as a source of supply, and, later, a very material mitigation.”

To my way of thinking the scheme placed before us by the Bureau of Industry is totally inadequate to deal even with a moderate flood, in view of the evidence collected by Mr. Gutteridge and his observations on the whole situation. He went on to say—

“The remaining measure by which the purposes of water supply and flood control may be combined is that of the provision of a storage in which water for supply would be retained and from which all water in excess of that required for this purpose would be diverted to without the catchment. This measure is applicable in the Brisbane River catchment only in the case of that reservoir on the Stanley River at Peachester, described in Appendix VI.”

This was discarded by the bureau for obvious reasons. He goes on to say that if a tunnel were constructed through the D'Aguiar Range the water would be diverted into Moreton Bay without coming down the river at all. That seems to be too expensive a proposal and, consequently, had to be set aside. He further said—

“The additional prime costs involved in the development of this scheme over those for water supply purposes alone comprise those of the provision of means for the conduct of the diverted water to the ocean. The estimated cost of these provisions is £85,000, when the additional annual costs, including maintenance and running, would be £7,360.”

The additional annual costs, including maintenance and running costs, amounts to £7,360. He said—

“It is evident, in the light of this discussion, that no one scheme will permit complete control of all floods in the Brisbane River to be obtained in association with the full development of that stream as a source of supply, though these two purposes can be achieved by the construction of an immense reservoir upon the Brisbane River at Middle Creek, and the later addition of further storage on the Stanley River at Little Mount Brisbane.”

Therefore, Mr. Gutteridge was inclined to the belief that the first dam should be built at Middle Creek, and that later on, as funds permitted and the scheme developed, another dam should be built on the Stanley River. He said—

“In view of the very serious losses which would accompany the recurrence of major floods in the Brisbane River, the provision of measures for their control is urgently required. These measures can most advantageously be undertaken in association with the development of a water supply from that river.”

I am inclined to think that while £1,750,000 may be adequate in the meantime for the provision of further water storage, it will be totally inadequate to deal with floods that may occur from time to time. It is just probable it may have some mitigating effect in regard to minor floods. If we get a flood like those of 1893 there does not seem much guarantee, even with the expenditure of this £1,750,000, that we can mitigate its severity.

Another question to be considered relates to the cost of these schemes. Mr. Gutteridge went into this question very fully. He pointed out that in addition to the prime cost of these dams, plus the cost of reclamation, we must take into consideration the extra cost that must occur in the enlargement of the supply and treatment works at Mount Crosby, and the construction of the necessary mains to the city. These figures are enormous, and I cannot see how at the present juncture the city of Brisbane can make provision for the enormous amount that would have to be set aside from year to year to cover the extra costs to be incurred in the enlargement of the treatment works and laying the mains to the metropolis. So far as I can see, this Bill provides for the construction of a dam and nothing more. That is not sufficient. We are bound at some time or other to enlarge our water supply, in view of the great extension of sewerage services, which naturally entails an enormous increase in the demand on our water supply. To my way of thinking, no provision has been made in regard to that.

It is interesting to analyse Mr. Gutteridge's figures. Take the Stanley River dam at Middle Creek. He shows how his costs are worked out. His estimate of the prime cost of the Stanley River dam is £1,015,000, plus resumption of land £58,000, alterations to roads and railways £79,000, and engineering costs, which, estimated at 5 per cent. on the whole scheme, would run into about £240,000. Mr. Gutteridge sets the cost of carrying out that scheme in its entirety—the building of the dam on the Stanley

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River and the extra expense to be incurred in the supply and treatment works, at £3,355,000. His total estimate of the whole cost of this dam, plus the necessary works required to deliver the water to Brisbane, would be over £5,000,000. We have not made provision for that. It is all very well to build the dam and say we have done a good thing for the city of Brisbane. So we have, because the city will be able to get this huge reservoir built by the Government at a very big saving, as the Government are subsidising the cost to the extent of 40 per cent., but although the city will have made a good bargain it will have to make provision for expenditure after the dam has been built. What provision is being made to deal with this enormous expenditure that will occur afterwards?

In regard to flood prevention, the Government have stated that they will assume responsibility for the expenditure of £500,000 to straighten some of the bends of the river and afford a freer flow of flood waters to the bay. Probably they find that the Kangaroo Point Bridge will have the effect of blocking navigation in the upper reaches and that compensation will have to be paid to some of the wharfowners for putting them out of business. The Brisbane City Council is largely interested in the wharves in the two upper reaches, and I understand that the total amount of capital invested in the wharves of the council and of private owners approximates £2,000,000. If the bridge has the effect of preventing overseas shipping from coming to these two reaches, it seems that a large amount of compensation will have to be paid. It is questionable whether the £500,000 set aside will be sufficient to meet that compensation and provide for the cost of improving the stream by cutting off the bends and deepening the channels. We know that in the past the effect of cutting off these bends has been that flood waters have certainly reached the bay more quickly than formerly. In that regard a good deal of success has been achieved.

It is interesting to note the remarkable growth of this wonderful Bureau of Industry, which is the creation of the Premier and was instituted in 1932, being superimposed upon the Moore Government's Bureau of Economics and Statistics. In the first instance it was incorporated by an Act that set out to amend the Industries Assistance Act, which was passed by the Moore Government for the purpose of encouraging the growth of secondary industries. In the Act passed by the present Government the definitions of "industry" and "works" were altered from their original intention. During the Moore regime the intention was to encourage the growth of secondary industries, but to-day under the new definitions of "industry" and "works" the bureau is competent to deal with all classes of governmental works, and, as pointed out by the Premier, is now a corporate body endowed with enormous powers and empowered to carry out vast constructional schemes. In 1932 the Premier introduced this infant of his and beguiled the House into agreeing with him that probably his idea was better than that of the hon. gentleman who is now Leader of the Opposition, inasmuch as this new bureau would have power to co-opt responsible citizens who were prepared to give their advice on matters of public works, relief of

unemployment, and kindred subjects. Consequently, according to the wording of the principal Act, the bureau was—

"Empowered and authorised to hold any inquiry that may be necessary into any of the matters hereinbefore mentioned and in particular as to—

(a) The income and productivity of Queensland year by year, and the estimated production of any year;

(b) The probable economic effects of any existing regulation of labour conditions, and of any variation in those conditions, whether of wages, hours, or other matters, including the probable economic effects upon any one industry or occupation or group of industries;

(c) The relations between real wages and productivity, and any methods whereby it may be practicable to adjust wages to productivity; and

(d) Such other matters of an economic nature as, in the opinion of the bureau, may be of assistance in the administration of this Act."

These objectives were very laudable. We are all anxious to combat unemployment, and it was a laudable desire to co-opt responsible citizens who could make suggestions to the bureau as to how unemployment could be combated; but to-day we have the bureau constituted as a new department of State with enormous powers, a corporate body that can sue and be sued, and is competent to hold or lease land and carry on vast undertakings. Under the powers that it now possesses it is quite competent for the bureau to carry on this large scheme of water supply and flood prevention. All along I have voiced my objection to the enormous growth of this institution, which to-day exists as one of the most important bodies carrying out Government policy. I can see no necessity whatsoever for the creation of this new department, for in the Department of Public Works we have a body quite competent to carry on this class of work without the intervention of a new body. The creation of this bureau means more expense, and I deduce from its objective that it stands between the will of the people and Parliament itself, inasmuch as the Government may in some obscure fashion that can be adopted with Estimates set aside a sum of money, get the bureau to bring in a report on a given project, and without any other authority order that the project be proceeded with.

I said on the introduction of this Bill that the Government were to be commended for having brought in a separate Bill dealing with the water supply of Brisbane. To my surprise the Bill we are discussing to-day is practically a replica of that Bill in which brief reference was made to the Kangaroo Point Bridge. I contend that if the Government desire to endow the bureau with great powers, all that is necessary is to bring in a separate Bill and constitute the bureau in the way they want without cumbering it up with other proposals. Hon. members remember the hotch-potch of a Bill the Government brought in in 1932, which incorporated in one measure the Industries Assistance Act Amendment Bill, a Bureau of Industry Bill, and an amendment of the Audit Act. Surely the Government are not so short of paper that they cannot draft

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Bills? Surely they have competent parliamentary draftsmen who could set out these matters concisely in separate Bills? Why is not the House treated with greater courtesy by having the whole Stanley River dam and flood prevention scheme incorporated in a single Bill, so that they may thoroughly examine it and be in the best position to form an opinion as to the merits or demerits of the project? This Bill contains practically one paragraph, referring to an enormous project entailing an expenditure of £1,750,000 at the least. No one knows what the actual expenditure will be. This is only an estimate, and our experience of estimates has led us to believe that we can multiply it by two, and that the result would probably be nearer the cost. The Leader of the Opposition reminds me of what happened in regard to the old Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board. We know what a fiasco that was. I object to giving anybody a blank cheque such as is set out in this Bill. I know the Government are opposed to the contract system, and probably in this case, because unemployed labour will be utilised, there may be some force in their objection; but I do say that a rigorous investigation should be made. There must be a full examination of the work, and, at any rate, some limit should be set so that we will know exactly to what extent the country may be committed. This £1,750,000 is only an estimate. The cost may be £2,750,000. It is already asserted outside Parliament that the cost of the Kangaroo Point Bridge, instead of being £1,600,000, will probably be £3,000,000 when it is finished. Despite the fact that the Government are of the opinion that this dam can be built for £1,750,000, no provision is made for the expenditure that is bound to occur in regard to the treatment and supply works and the conveying of the water to Brisbane. With that extra expenditure the total cost of this scheme will probably run into £5,000,000. It has been asserted generally that a water supply and flood prevention scheme for Brisbane could not be provided under about £7,000,000. We are practically committing the State to a very large expenditure, for once we start this scheme we must go on with it until it is completed. With the enormous growth of the sewerage service, and the growth in population, it will be necessary to provide for the expenditure I have enumerated. Probably in order to carry into effect an efficient flood prevention scheme it will be found that one dam will not be sufficient, and the other dam at Middle Creek will have to be constructed. That was Mr. Gutteridge's scheme in 1923. He favoured the construction of two dams—at Middle Creek and the Stanley River. This proposal, involving expenditure of £1,750,000, is not sufficient to deal effectively with the floods in the Brisbane River.

Therefore, I suggest that the whole matter should be reviewed; that it should be referred to a Committee of the House to analyse the whole situation. I take it we are all in accord with the inauguration of a sensible scheme of water supply and flood prevention for Brisbane and outlying districts. In that regard the Government can expect the support of the Opposition; but we do say, before the Bill is passed and put into effect, hon. members should be afforded an opportunity of thoroughly examining the scheme in order to ensure that it will be

commenced on the right track and not prove to be the huge mistake that many a scheme of the past turned out to be. It behoves us to do the right thing, because the people of Brisbane are being committed to a large expenditure, and any expenditure incurred by mistakes will be reflected in the greater rates that will be inflicted on them. Goodness knows, they are heavy enough to-day! Considering the miserable water supply we get in some of our areas and the enormous amount of rates we pay, I think it is time the people of Brisbane woke up. We have an iniquitous system of charging a man water rates on the unimproved value of his property, whereas, a man living on a 16-perch allotment will probably use twice as much water as a man who has an acre on the top of the hill. The whole system is wrong in principle. We charge rates based on consumption for such facilities as gas and electric light, and there is no reason why water should not be charged for on the same basis. We have arrived at a stage when we must make provision for the future, and I am therefore anxious that whatever scheme we adopt to-day should be the right one, so that future generations, instead of cursing us, will bless us.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR (*Enoggera*) [11.37 a.m.]: I commend the Government for bringing forward this scheme which will provide work for our unemployed and be of direct benefit to them at a time when labour costs are at a minimum. The Bureau of Industry and the Government are indeed to be congratulated. The two essential questions to be discussed are: Whether the scheme is necessary and whether the work is being done at a time when it is necessary to provide employment. The evidence of the past few years—the agitation amongst the people, the meetings that have been held, the conferences between the city fathers, and the reports made to the various authorities by engineers and other experts—shows that it is necessary to provide the city of Brisbane with a more adequate water supply than is available and also to mitigate the flood menace that at various times confronts the city. During the floods of 1927 and 1928 the suburbs of Brisbane were practically isolated from the central portion of the city. On one occasion we were unable for five or six hours to cross the Bowen Bridge and also the concrete bridge over Breakfast Creek in Kelvin Grove. The flooding of the Brisbane River had its effect on Breakfast Creek and the suburbs of Swan Hill and Herston. There is no doubt about that, as those persons know who pass through these suburbs on their way to their homes.

The Government are aware that the scheme now being reviewed by this House does not provide for the reticulation of water to the whole of the city of Brisbane. After all, it is not the function of the Government to do that. It is the work of the Government, under the circumstances and with the assistance of the local authorities concerned, to provide for the construction of the Stanley River dam and to take whatever action is necessary for the alteration of the contour of the river in order to mitigate floods. The scheme will undoubtedly have to be enlarged upon in a few years' time.

The question arises as to whether the reports of Mr. Bush and Mr. Gutteridge

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should be given effect to because of the fact that their estimates provided for giving the city of Brisbane an adequate water supply delivered to the householder. To provide this facility, they estimated, would cost approximately £5,000,000. There is no doubt that the taxpayers of the metropolitan and Ipswich areas could not be burdened at the present time with the cost of the completed scheme, but what can be done, and what is proposed to be done, is the preliminary scheme of flood prevention and water supply. We are commencing something that has agitated the minds of the people of the city of Brisbane for the last thirty-five years. It is only during the last three or four years that residents on the higher levels of the city, for instance, in the suburb of Newmarket, where I reside, could obtain water in the summer time during the day. Previously it was practically an impossibility to get a supply until ten o'clock at night. There was very little pressure in the mains during the day, and particularly in the evening, certainly not sufficient in the case of a fire. This scheme will not be the complete scheme considered by our civic fathers and many engineers, but it will be an acceptable nucleus of what we hope in twenty or thirty years will be one of the finest flood prevention and water conservation schemes to be found in the Southern hemisphere.

Undoubtedly there is an urgent desire on the part of the people to consider the burden that will be imposed on the taxpayers by a scheme such as this, but whilst that is an important phase of the matter we must also consider what damage might be inflicted on this city by another flood similar to those of 1893. We all know the serious damage caused to the property of Swan Hill residents by a comparatively minor flood a few years ago. Even as far as the Newmarket road, Wilston, people lost their furniture on the Darrima estate, which was said to be beyond the limits of a flood of any dimension—I know of one instance where a family lost £280 worth of good furniture in that flood—so we shall have to decide whether it will be better to incur the expense of this scheme or run the risk of serious damage by another flood. For that reason, and for the main reason that it will offer means of employment to the working class in this city and the southern districts of Queensland, the scheme is a very acceptable one.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*) [11.45 a.m.]: The Bill is a very interesting one. If it dealt only with a scheme on the Stanley River at Little Mount Brisbane I should feel a great deal more confidence in discussing it; but the flood prevention and water supply scheme proposed to-day is only a preliminary to the whole undertaking that is contemplated. The Bill proposes to place enormous powers in the hands, not of this Parliament, but of an authority outside of Parliament, and to confer those powers through the Governor in Council. It is a great mistake that a Bill of this nature should be introduced during the last few days of the session, when hon. members will not have sufficient time to consider its implications. When you were reading prayers this morning, Mr. Speaker, and when you asked the Almighty to "direct and prosper all our consultations," it occurred to me that the Almighty might consider that we would be justified in seek-

ing a greater measure of co-operation, and that we should not rely entirely upon Providence—or luck, if you prefer it that way—in embarking upon a scheme without a proper appreciation of the cost involved, with the prospect of consoling ourselves afterwards by saying, "Well, we did our best." I do not agree that we are doing our best, because sufficient time will not be available for the proper discussion and appreciation of a scheme of this magnitude. What is going to be its ultimate cost? The construction of a dam is not the whole undertaking; it represents only a preliminary expense. It will be necessary later on to install filtration plants to carry out reticulation, and, above all, to get the water to Brisbane. The construction of this dam is but a minor part of the scheme; the big expense will come later on. No provision is made in the Bill for that at all.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member for Enoggera must not interrupt the speaker. He knows that.

Mr. MOORE: This Bill does not suggest what the ultimate liability upon the citizens of Brisbane will be. It has been suggested that this will be work of a reproductive nature. It is reproductive in one sense, but it is not reproductive from a wealth-producing point of view. It will be reproductive in that the people will have to pay for it in rates to the Brisbane City Council and in taxation to the Government to meet interest and redemption payments. It cannot be called reproductive from any other point of view. The whole basis of the Bureau of Industry when it was formed was to report to the Government what works were going to be reproductive of wealth and provide work.

One important statement was made by the Premier—important, not only to Brisbane, but also to every local authority in Queensland. He said that the fact that the Government do not pay local authority rates for the land used by them is an adequate reason to justify their bearing a proportion of the cost. There is a direct recognition of the liability of the Government for services that are rendered to their lands and buildings throughout this city, on which they justify a large contribution towards the construction of this dam. That suggestion has never been put forward previously. It has always been repudiated by Governments in the past. No Government have ever recognised previously that there was an unseen liability to local authorities in the various areas throughout the State; but once the Government justify a contribution to work that is being carried out by a local authority by the fact that they are not paying for services they receive from the ratepayers in that area, a very wide door is opened for applications for contributions to water and other schemes throughout the State.

The powers that are being given under this Bill are most extraordinary. They were large enough under the amending Act of last year, which gave the Bureau of Industry power, with the authority of the Governor in Council, to issue debentures for any amount, without the authority of Parliament. This Bill goes even further. It gives the Bureau of Industry extended powers for

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the taking and purchasing and securing anything that it likes, borrowing any money that it likes for the construction, not only of this work that we are discussing to-day, but any new work upon which it likes to embark. It goes further. It gives a works board, or any other board appointed under this Bill, the same opportunity of securing funds as the bureau—and all the funds that are secured by any of these boards are to be deemed to be guaranteed by the Government. At all times the sole authority for issuing debentures of any amount, and the sole authority for borrowing should be Parliament; yet any board that may be appointed under this Bill can put forward any scheme for the construction of any works—and “works” have a tremendously wide definition under this Bill—and then, with the consent of the Governor in Council, proceed to borrow to carry them out. “Works” will mean and include any work or undertaking whatsoever that may from time to time be undertaken with the authority of the Governor in Council, and they can be constructed, managed, and controlled under this Bill. That practically gives the Bureau of Industry or any board created under it power to socialise or nationalise any or every industry, and to manage and control it, and the money for doing so can be raised with the authority of the Governor in Council.

The Bureau of Industry is also to have power to take over any wharf under the Public Works Land Resumption Act, either compulsorily or by arbitration. In some cases no appeal is provided from the action of the bureau or board appointed thereunder, and the bureau need only grant as compensation such sum as it thinks reasonable and proper, and there will be no appeal from its decision.

Mr. WATERS: You want the community to be exploited.

Mr. MOORE: I am discussing an important Bill, and inane interjections should be withheld.

This Bill will place additional liabilities on the people of Brisbane and Ipswich. We have a tentative estimate of the cost of the work by competent men, but those men have not been able to give their whole attention to this scheme. Let us look at the members of the sub-committee that went into this question. We have Mr. Kemp, the Commissioner of Main Roads—

Mr. W. J. Copley: A very capable man, who knows his job.

Mr. MOORE: All that I am suggesting is that in the construction and supervision of main roads throughout the length and breadth of Queensland he has a full-time job—a job that more than fully occupies his time. We have Mr. Fison, engineer and nautical surveyor, Department of Harbours and Marine. He also has a full-time job.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: He knows his job.

Mr. MOORE: I am not suggesting that these gentlemen do not know their jobs. I am suggesting that this committee is appointed and that the gentlemen who comprise it, who have other work to do, have to give whatever spare time they can to a cursory examination of a huge scheme. Then we have Mr. Nimmo, the designing engineer of the Main Roads Commission; Mr. Morris, the Superintendent of Technical Education;

Mr. Salisbury, of the Sub-Department of Irrigation and Water Supply, who is quite a competent man and has been used successfully as a land commissioner, but is of no value to any extent in an engineering problem; and we have Professor Brigidon, who is a professor of economics, and a competent man. I am directing my attention to a huge scheme that is being introduced on the recommendation of that special committee, which comprises extraordinarily competent men in their own line of business, but men who all have full-time jobs. When it comes to a technical investigation of a huge scheme of flood prevention and water storage it would be necessary for these men to be excused from the carrying on their ordinary work for two or three months to give them the proper opportunity of examining the scheme in all its phases. To say that this special committee, by a cursory examination, is able to put before us a definite scheme and estimates of costs that can be relied upon is expecting too much. We are putting too great a load on these gentlemen to think that they could possibly do that. This is only the beginning of a flood prevention scheme. It has become a question not of a water supply for Brisbane but of creating employment.

Mr. KEOGH: That in itself is good.

Mr. MOORE: It is quite good, but I am pointing out that other factors have to be considered.

The report of the special committee appointed to investigate and report upon the scheme gave the following comparative figures:—

	Middle Creek Dam on Brisbane River.	Stanley River Dam.
Capacity in million gallons..	225,000	206,250
Catchment expressed as a percentage of the total catchment of the river above Brisbane .. ..	51	10

Thus, as a water supply scheme, there is not very much difference, whereas from the point of view of the catchment area for flood prevention the Middle Creek dam shows a percentage of 51 as against 10 per cent. in the case of the Stanley River dam. This is only the beginning of a flood prevention scheme, and whether it is necessary at the present time as a water supply scheme for Brisbane is doubtful. The flood-prevention scheme can be justified because there is always the risk of damage from flood, but so far as a water supply scheme is concerned—

Mr. KEOGH: You know we have not a sufficient water supply.

Mr. MOORE: I am not talking about sufficiency. I know that the reticulation in many places is bad, and that at some heights the position is almost hopeless; but it is not a question of the water supply in those areas not being satisfactory, but rather a question of whether ample water is available in the catchment areas to enable a good supply to be given, provided the

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reticulation is satisfactory. Take the statement in this report—

“In times of very low river flow—

Mr. WATERS: Why don't you deal with the Bill?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member should be careful to avoid reflections on the Chair. I will ensure that every hon. member shall deal with the Bill. That is a question that must be left to the Chair.

Mr. MOORE: This is the statement—

“In times of very low river flow it is sometimes necessary to allow water stored in Lake Manchester on a tributary of the main river to flow to the Mount Crosby weir. The Lake Manchester reservoir was constructed about eighteen years ago as a drought reserve supply, and has a capacity of 7,000 million gallons. Since it was completed in 1916 it has only been necessary to utilise the water from this reservoir on a very few occasions, and the maximum amount drawn from this source at any one period has not exceeded 1,100 million gallons. Since Lake Manchester has been completed it has very seldom been necessary to insist on the rationing of the water supply.”

On page 27, the report says—

“The total capacity of the abovenamed storages amounts to 8,800 million gallons, or about eighteen months' supply at the present average daily consumption, after allowing for evaporation.

“Mr. Gordon Gutteridge, in dealing with this matter, after very careful consideration and after making due allowance for possible drought conditions, maintained that the Brisbane water supply with the existing storages would be quite sufficient to provide for an average daily demand of 26.4 million gallons extending throughout a very long period. After examining carefully Mr. Gutteridge's calculations, I consider that his estimate of the capacity of the storages was a reasonable one.

“A flood mitigation dam would provide for ample supplies for a population of at least 1,500,000, and, in addition, it would still retain its flood-reducing capacity.

“Without imposing any rationing of water on the population, the average daily consumption taken over a period of several years has not exceeded 13 million gallons, and I maintain that it should not be necessary to consider the provision of additional drought reserve storage of water until the population to be served exceeds 450,000.

“The rate of growth of the population of Brisbane and Ipswich has been very much less than was estimated before the recent census, and it is very probable that the future growth of the city will be much less rapid than it has been in the past. Most cities reach a stage beyond which they grow very slowly, and, as Brisbane is the distributing centre for only a portion of the State, it is likely that a period of twenty-five years will elapse before the population to be served reaches 450,000.”

There is a clear indication by authoritative figures that it is not a question of an inadequate

water supply at the source, but an inadequate scheme of pumping or reticulation from the source to the various places throughout Brisbane where it is used. As is said in the report, the big Manchester dam has only been drawn upon on a few occasions, and the maximum taken from it was 1,100 million gallons although it has a capacity of 7,000 million gallons.

If it is a question of employment, then we come to a very different basis, and this Bill goes entirely away from the report submitted by the committee that is appointed to go into the question. The committee is very definite, and on page 6 of the report, it says—

“This is a substantial relief, and, in their final result on all employment in the State, the works may reduce the present volume of unemployment by about 10 per cent. The individual benefits could be more widely distributed by spreading the work over a larger number of men.

“If the State contributes about half of the capital cost, or a little more as is here proposed, it will be chiefly to relieve unemployment. And if this cost were to be borne entirely from loan funds, it would add a burden of about £50,000 a year to the annual budget of the State. There is a clear case for a contribution from the Unemployment Relief Tax Fund of at least half of the total cost to the State. This sum corresponds roughly with the total benefit to that fund of the expenditure proposed, by relief given and revenue provided, both directly and indirectly.

“The general problem of the use of the Unemployment Relief Tax Fund is wider than the scope of the committee's reference, which, however, covers the equitable allocation of liability for cost, and therefore raises the question on the largest single unemployment project yet proposed.

“The committee suggests that the share of the total cost allocated to the municipalities is an equitable future charge on the ratepayers, but that only about one-quarter of the State's share is an equitable charge on future general taxpayers. The balance of loan money used to subsidise the works would properly be a charge on the Unemployment Relief Tax Fund until it was repaid.”

The Bill is constituting the Bureau of Industry another Parliament. The construction of the Stanley River dam is only an incident in the Bill—only one small paragraph—in which, moreover, very little attention is devoted to it.

In the speech made by the Premier there was no suggestion in regard to the Unemployment Relief Fund bearing any share of this cost. It is to be a subsidy-loan and is to come from the Treasury. It is laid down in the Bill that where the Bureau of Industry or other board appointed by the Governor in Council is to carry out the works that it is told to carry out by the Governor in Council, the Treasury of Queensland is responsible; its loans are guaranteed by the State. The point is that the cost of the works is to be defrayed out of loan money. The whole justification for this scheme, according to the Premier's speech-

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was the relief of unemployment it would afford. In the report and recommendation of this committee it is pointed out that that is one of the major considerations. If that is so, it should not be a charge on the general taxpayers of Queensland to anything like the extent that is proposed; it should be a charge, at any rate to more than half the amount provided in the Bill, on the Unemployment Relief Fund. If unemployment is to be relieved to the extent suggested, it should not be an extra charge upon the taxpayers of Queensland; it should be a diminution of the amount they already pay. They are already contributing up to 1s. in the £1 of their income for the relief of unemployment, but the fund they create is not to be used to pay for a project that is being embarked upon distinctly for the purpose of affording that relief! On the contrary, an extra charge is placed upon them on account of the interest and redemption on the accelerated rate of loan expenditure.

And when it comes to a question of the relief of unemployment we should see exactly where we are heading. In the four months, July to October, 1935, the number of men employed on loan works was 3,968 and for the same period of 1934 the number had increased to 10,098, or an increase of 6,130. The reduction in the number of intermittent relief workers in the period July to October, 1934, according to page 10 of the report of the Department of Labour and Industry, is 3,647. Therefore, but for accelerated rate of loan expenditure there would have been 2,483 more intermittent relief workers instead of 3,647 less. I am endeavouring to point out that the accelerated rate of expenditure of loan money is not having the effect on intermittent relief that was anticipated.

In the report that has been placed before us for discussion it is definitely set out that this project is an unemployment relief scheme and that being so the Unemployment Relief Fund, to which people throughout the State are contributing, should bear a considerable portion of the burden of the cost rather than that an extra burden should be placed upon them by the use of loan money.

Mr. O'KEEFE: What work is being done from these loan funds?

Mr. MOORE: Practically all the work about the place. The Mackay Harbour Board is to receive a subsidy-loan, the local authorities have something like £1,800,000 subsidy, and there is to be a fraction of subsidy in this, i.e., £1,500,000. All the public buildings being constructed at the present time are being built out of loan funds. From the accelerated loan expenditure we are not obtaining the reduction that we should in the expenditure from the Unemployment Relief Fund, and that is the factor that must be taken into account when such schemes as this are put forward.

The Bill goes ever so much too far, in my opinion, as regards the powers that are being given to the Bureau of Industry. When works to cost over £500,000 are to be carried out power is given to vary the Contractors' and Workmen's Lieux Acts.

Mr. O'KEEFE: What were the provisions of the original Bill?

Mr. MOORE: The Bureau of Industry was first established for a particular purpose.

Mr. O'KEEFE: Nothing eventuated.

Mr. MOORE: Something did eventuate, and in 1932 when the Bureau of Industry Bill was brought down by the present Government the following are the things it was suggested it would do:—

"To investigate, collect information, and report on reproductive works that would provide employment and to increase the wealth production of the State.

"The organisation and capitalisation of labour conditions of particular industries.

"The trade of Queensland both overseas and interstate.

"Stock of commodities, both primary and manufactured.

"Monetary conditions, and both wholesale and retail prices.

"Employment and unemployment generally, and in particular industries and localities.

"Any other matter, including any questions of unfair competition or of sweating, or of monopolies detrimental to the public or to any section thereof which the Minister or the bureau may consider to be in the public interest; and to further the objects of this Act.

"The relations between employers and employees."

It was an advisory board to investigate and advise the Government. Then, we have the report of the bureau issued this year, and, in view of the statements that were made when it was established, it is interesting to note what is contained therein—

"The committee found that private enterprise was not neglecting opportunities that did in fact exist within the circumscribed limits of reduced purchasing power, of taxation, and of labour restriction. Private enterprise adapts itself to whatever conditions obtain, and is disinclined to approach industrial tribunals for what appear to be 'concessions' for any new enterprise. The procedure of litigation is not encouraging, and there is no particular responsibility attaching to individual employers to take the risks associated with new employment, for the sake of more employment. The position, therefore, is one of deadlock, and this is characteristic of all countries."

We find that the Government have diverted the Bureau of Industry from the original conception, that is, an advisory board to make recommendations to the Government for accelerating wealth production, and have turned it into a constructing authority. The Government have already one constructing authority in the shape of the Department of Public Works. During the last twelve months this department increased tremendously the number of its employees. The Government have already a body of engineers. This Bill not only constitutes the Bureau of Industry a constructing authority but also affords an enormous opportunity for the creation of boards with powers to do almost anything. There is no suggestion that the other boards that are proposed to be established shall be controlled by Parliament or that they shall submit any reports to Parliament. They are to be given the right to recommend relief schemes to the Governor in

*Mr. Moore.]*

Council and to exercise enormous powers to borrow, and the Governor in Council is to be the sole authority to approve or otherwise. These bodies can consider ill-digested schemes in respect of which only tentative estimates have been made. It is obvious that the committee only considered this matter in a rough way. If it had gone into the question of the construction of a water supply and flood prevention scheme for Brisbane—

Mr. O'KEEFE: That is a reflection.

Mr. MOORE: Allow me to finish. If the committee had considered the cost of the whole undertaking and if it had carried out a thorough technical investigation for the benefit of Parliament, then it would not have considered merely the construction of a dam, but it would have submitted figures to show what the eventual cost would be in bringing the water to Brisbane and in providing hydro-electric schemes, and what revenue would be secured. Mr. Morris, in his minority report, makes some suggestions relating to hydro-electric schemes and estimates the revenue likely to accrue to the board. He points out that it would be very much wiser to construct a dam at Middle Creek so that hydro-electric schemes might be carried out providing for cheaper power and thus meet interest and redemption payments. The committee did not consider the matter from that angle. It made a tentative proposal to the Government for the relief of unemployment, irrespective of its ultimate cost to the State. The Government recognise that the estimate is only a tentative one, because in the Bill—

Mr. O'KEEFE: Your Government did the same thing in connection with the hydro-electric scheme at the Barron Falls.

Mr. MOORE: The late Government refused to give any consideration to the matter until tenders were called. When tenders were called and it was found that the work could be carried out within the estimate, one was accepted, but this Bill does not provide for the calling of tenders. The Bill gives the Bureau of Industry, or any other constructing authority that may be set up, power to borrow an indefinite amount in order to complete the work. This Parliament is asked to approve of a Bill that really confers enormous powers upon another Parliament, which is to be permitted to pledge the credit of the country. The Bill provides that any loans that are raised, any debentures that are issued, or any financial obligations that may be incurred by this outside authority are deemed to be guaranteed by the Parliament of Queensland. That is a tremendous power to give to any authority. The dam will take approximately four years to complete, but it will serve very little purpose, and will be of very little benefit until the rest of the undertaking has been carried out. It is certainly going to be a measure of relief of unemployment, but as a flood prevention scheme the dam will provide only 10 per cent. of the protection required. The main justification for the Bill is that it will provide a considerable measure of employment, and, incidentally, provide an increased water supply for the city of Brisbane.

We should be in a position to know what is to be the ultimate cost in the future. Why should a preliminary scheme be suggested and afterwards it be found necessary

to incur an expenditure of £3,000,000 to complete the scheme when the people are unable to bear the burden? I fear that we shall arrive at the same position that exists in connection with our sewerage scheme. It was originally estimated that the sewerage system would cost £1,800,000, but the cost to date is nearly £8,000,000. The ratepayers in the city of Brisbane cannot carry that load of debt. A considerable proportion of the interest has been capitalised, and is being met out of the revenue received from water rates. There is a demand for the writing-off of a proportion of the loan money expended upon these works, and it is just possible that we shall reach a similar position in connection with this proposal, or even a worse one. The people, therefore, have already got that load to carry.

This work will not increase the wealth-earning capacity of the people. It will only take away some of their wealth. It will place them in a position of providing infinitely more loan money to complete the scheme and get the water to Brisbane, in addition to constructing the necessary appurtenances to it. That is a factor we must look at when considering this project. This Bill in reality provides for only a section of the scheme.

We do not know what powers we are giving to the Bureau of Industry under some of the clauses. We are authorising it to go on with the Stanley River scheme as only one scheme, and are giving a blank cheque to the Governor in Council to appoint whatever board the bureau considers necessary, and to borrow any money it seeks authority to borrow—money that the Parliament of Queensland is deemed to guarantee. We have no knowledge of what work is to be proposed. We are asked under this Bill, which is brought down for a specific purpose, to give an open cheque for any work that may be suggested, no matter how incomplete the investigation has been, or what it may cost. We know what a cursory investigation took place before that huge scheme connected with the Theodore irrigation area was embarked on. It was brought into this House with a flourish of trumpets. Hon. members opposite talked as if the millenium were being ushered in, and how prosperous farms would be dotted over the whole of that area, how a new province would be added to Queensland. Then it was found that there were insufficient foundations for the dam, and serious animadversions were made on a Government that brought in such a huge scheme on such paltry investigation. When engineers went out to report on the basis on which the scheme was inaugurated they made a report condemnatory of the Government, and pointed out how the scheme had been launched on insufficient investigation, merely an elementary investigation, without any consideration being given in the first place to discover whether the area was suitable for irrigation. A similar sort of thing is being brought down to-day. Not only have we got conflicting reports before us, but we have a minority report from an engineer who sets out his reasoning very clearly and effectively. Then we have the report of Mr. Gutteridge, who is not at all enamoured of the present scheme. He suggests that it should be only a preliminary, and if it is going to be effective a further enormous amount of money must be expended. He

[Mr. Moore.]

also points out the additional expense necessary for the construction of the dam that must be made afterwards. We should not be asked to go into a question like this light-heartedly and blithely, nor should a Bill like this be brought down giving the bureau tremendous powers and leading us to think that is the end of it. Instead, we are opening the door to untold expenditure which must be met by additional taxation on the residents of Brisbane and Ipswich, and the taxpayers of the State. The Government may have no desire to write a blank cheque, but this position provides for that course. It places the bureau in a position of engaging in what might be big works which might be useless and cost the State an enormous amount of money. Then consider the position of Brisbane to-day. The rates that are being charged to meet ordinary commitments and the repayment of loans, together with interest thereon, has reached a point which is causing the taxpayers alarm. The Government are adding to their financial responsibilities by engaging in a huge scheme like this on a cursory examination and conflicting reports. That is entirely wrong.

This Bill has been brought in on a day when four or five Bills have been rushed on to us. We have scarcely had time to read them, yet we are expected to give careful consideration to this scheme, which is of vast importance not only to Brisbane but to the whole State. To suggest that we are able to do this in the time allotted is ridiculous. I can quite understand the Government engaging, in the grandiloquent words of the Premier, in the largest works of its kind for the relief of unemployment in Australia. That might be so, but the Government are ignoring the fact that the unemployment relief tax which is contributed to by every wage earner is not to be used in the construction of these works. The money for their construction is to be borrowed, which means that the taxpayers will be asked to find additional taxes to pay additional interest and redemption. The Government are ignoring the fact that they are placing further burdens on the people. They are also ignoring the fact that no special engineers have made a comprehensive survey of this scheme. The estimated cost is merely a rough estimate, and it may considerably expand once construction work commences. This is all of vital importance, and to suddenly jump into such schemes without a thorough and complete investigation is a wrong principle. It may get us out of a difficulty to-day by being able to provide for the relief of unemployment. From that point of view I am satisfied that is the reason why the Government are going into it. It is not a question of flood prevention, or extra water supply, because, as I have pointed out, additional water supply is not an immediate necessity. It is only a method of finding something which is called reproductive work, but it will only add a burden on the earning powers of the State. This will not overcome the difficulty, and the whole thing is very much like a policeman holding up the traffic rather than taking steps to remove the cause of the traffic congestion. The Bill will place onerous burdens of an unknown amount on the people of Brisbane. We are expected to come to the conclusion that it will assist the unemployment position, but, as a matter of fact, it will in the final analysis make

the position more difficult and certainly place a greater burden on the people of Brisbane.

I object to the Bill, which is too indefinite and too wide. It does not deal with one specific purpose, but is introduced to give huge powers to a body outside Parliament—a body that can incur obligations at the suggestion of the Governor in Council and pledge the credit of the State in so doing. We have not the slightest idea of its real purpose. If we are to have a Bill of this kind, we should know exactly where we stand.

Mr. BELL (*Stanley*) [12.23 p.m.]: The far-reaching effects of this Bill lead me to the conclusion that we are departing to a great extent from the original idea of the Bureau of Industry. I object to the powers that are given to it, for the granting of these powers to such a body seems to me to be another way by which hon. members can free themselves from the responsibility associated with membership of this Parliament. From time to time we heard people declaim against the Commonwealth Government or the Government of the mother country because various industries are affected by certain action that is taken, and it appears to me that the present Government, in giving very wide powers to this bureau, have in mind the possibility that other works will have to be undertaken in the future and in this way they will escape responsibility.

I have carefully studied the report on the two schemes, in respect of which opinions are divided. Now, when we have a division of opinion amongst men who were specially appointed to inquire into the question, and when we are dealing with a project involving an expenditure of approximately £2,000,000, the most sensible action to take would have been to secure the opinion of some disinterested expert to decide between these varying opinions, even though it might have cost several thousand pounds. From a flood prevention point of view it is admitted that the Middle Creek scheme would be the more satisfactory, but the report states that we cannot afford to spend the money that such a scheme would involve. As the Leader of the Opposition has pointed out, we cannot expect the £1,750,000 mentioned to be the final expenditure, for other expenditure will follow, and I really feel that before a decision here was arrived at we should have secured an independent view of the whole position.

The PREMIER: What do you mean by an independent view?

Mr. BELL: I mean the opinion of some outside person who has had extensive experience of such schemes.

The PREMIER: I will back Mr. Kemp against any engineer in Australia on an engineering matter.

Mr. BELL: The Premier may be right. In view of the fact that there is conflict of opinion on important points I consider it would have been advisable to secure further expert opinion outside the State.

The PREMIER: And in the meantime do nothing, and have unemployed men and unemployed capital.

Mr. BELL: I welcome the construction of the dam to the extent that it will relieve

*Mr. Bell.]*



unemployment, and I am of opinion that it will serve the purpose of providing a permanent water supply for Brisbane; but from the point of view of flood prevention I do not think it will be as beneficial as is anticipated in some quarters.

I particularly ask the Premier, when the matter of compensation is under review, to extend every consideration to those settlers who will have to remove their homes from that area. A scheme of this nature will protect the people who have built their homes on the low-lying areas around Brisbane, and that may be termed a form of compensation to them; and it is only just that those people who will have to remove their homes and lose land in the area that will become inundated as a result of this scheme should receive sympathetic consideration by the board.

Clause 4 adds a new subsection (1) to section 6 of the principal Act, and under it the bureau or any board constituted under it may divert roads, so that an owner of land may have his source of access to his property cut off for a considerable time, and he will have no redress. When the board is dealing with the matter of compensation the loss suffered by the individuals cannot always be calculated according to the value of the land taken from them. The great inconvenience to which they have been put should be considered, and it must be remembered that the best of the land is that in the low-lying areas that will be inundated by water, and the loss of that first-class low-lying land forming the frontage to the present water courses will detract from the value of the inferior land at the back of it to the extent of 15s. or 16s. an acre. In fairness to those settlers I trust the Premier will ask the board to consider those facts when the matter of compensation is under review.

At 12.34 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. Hanson, *Buranda*) relieved Mr. Speaker in the chair.

Mr. BELL: I ask the Premier to give those people the protection they are entitled to by virtue of their freehold rights.

The PREMIER: The Bill gives them protection for their rights, but the public interest will be protected, too.

Mr. BELL: I am glad to have that assurance from the Premier, and I am sure the people in the locality will appreciate it.

The remaining matter I consider important is that dealing with the unemployed. We have the assurance of the Secretary for Labour and Industry that every consideration will be given to the local unemployed when men are being engaged. Recently I understand that the Kilcoy Shire Council commenced subsidy loan works, and I believe outside labour was employed in preference to the local unemployed. I trust that the assurance we have received from the Secretary for Labour and Industry will be carried out in its entirety.

Mr. WIENHOLT (*Fassifern*) [12.36 p.m.]: I intend to make a very short speech—very short indeed; but enough to relieve me of any responsibility in the matter. I opposed the formation of the Bureau of Industry—I opposed it when it was a small child in the shape of the Bureau of Economics and Statistics. I opposed its rapid progress through its various stages, and now, when it

is growing into a giant, I still oppose it. The Bill proposes to give the bureau perpetual succession and a common seal. So far as I am concerned, it gets no succession and no seal. So that as to that point of the Bill, so far as I am concerned, the measure needs no discussion.

As regards the Stanley River scheme I think we can sum it up in this way—unlimited expenditure and problematical value. I can foresee that the system of finance is going to be one huge muddle. Not only is the Commonwealth Government likely to again be brought in, but the State Government, the Brisbane City Council, and the Ipswich City Council also. There is only one bright spot and that is the proposal to use the Unemployment Relief Fund towards defraying portion of the cost of construction. No definite statement has been made to the House as to what actual financial return there will be to meet all the interest on this great expenditure. Considering that these millions of pounds are to be expended in order to give some security to Brisbane property-holders from the flood menace, and that it is a form of insurance, I think that some arrangement should be made with all the insurance companies for the payment of a special levy, or rate, or something of that sort to help meet the tremendous interest bill that we will have to bear. Of the cost of the scheme the State is supposed to bear 40 per cent., the Brisbane City Council 57 per cent., and the Ipswich City Council 3 per cent. So far as I am concerned, I do not like the look of the finances of the city of Brisbane even now. At the present time I doubt if that council is in a position to carry further financial obligation. I am very anxious about that aspect of its affairs. So long as the policy continues of handing out large grants of loan moneys “free, gratis, and for nothing,” we shall have the council, which has incurred huge debts for water supply, sewerage, and other items—already bearing heavily on the ratepayers of the city of Brisbane—asking for the Government to take over those debts also. Although at the present time the costs are supposed to be borne in the ratios of 40 per cent., 57 per cent., and 3 per cent., boiled down the ultimate result will be that 100 per cent. will be borne by the primary producers of Queensland. They are the only people who are really able to help solve our unemployment problem, and I do not want further burdens placed on their shoulders.

Mr. NIMMO (*Oxley*) [12.40 p.m.]: The Bill before the House deals with what is known by the general public as the Stanley water supply and flood prevention scheme. It has been stated this morning that this Bill deals with a preliminary scheme, and it is very questionable whether the public are not being misled. Nominally, the scheme is to employ labour.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: To prevent your Indooroopilly Bridge being washed away.

Mr. NIMMO: The hon. member interjects that it is to prevent the Indooroopilly Bridge being washed away, and that is what the general public understand by the scheme. They believe that the proposed scheme is actually one of flood prevention. However, it is clearly a preliminary scheme that will cost £1,750,000. The completion of the scheme will have to be undertaken later, and the cost will be tremendous. It is very

[*Mr. Bell.*]

doubtful if even the completed scheme will actually prevent floods in the river. The scheme being embarked upon is more or less an experiment. It has not yet been thoroughly investigated, and we are in the dark as to the true position. In fact, no man in Queensland knows what is the true position regarding this scheme.

Then the question arises: Will it relieve unemployment? If this scheme will relieve unemployment, well and good; but it must be remembered that it is only a temporary measure of relief, and that the work is not of a reproductive nature. A tremendous amount of water has been impounded at Lake Manchester upon which it has not been necessary to draw to any considerable extent. A large volume of the water is practically wasted through evaporation and tremendous soakage during dry periods, and I venture the opinion that not half of the water impounded in this lake is conveyed to the pumping stations for reticulation throughout the city. It should be taken by gravitational means through pipes to the reservoir at Mount Crosby. I have been on Lake Manchester in a motor boat, and to all appearances it is like a harbour with practically a twelve months' reserve water supply for the city. Yet we are asked to embark upon a scheme to provide additional storage capacity!

We have a report on the matter submitted by public servants—men who are too busily engaged in other jobs to give the necessary attention to this matter. The Premier said that Mr. Kemp, one of the members of the committee, was one of the finest engineers in Australia. I do not contradict that assertion, because I know that Mr. Kemp has carried out splendid work in road construction; but the proposal under review is one for the consideration of experts, and Mr. Kemp is not an expert on water supply schemes. He is so busily engaged on other works that he cannot possibly give proper consideration to a scheme like this. It has been thoroughly considered by competent men, and their report suggests that it is not a wise one. How can we hope for any protection from flood when it is known that the Stanley River receives the water from only 10 per cent. of the catchment area, whilst the water from 51 per cent. of the catchment area flows into the Brisbane River? The havoc wrought by the flood of 1887 was caused by water from the Bremer River and not from the Brisbane River. What protection could be anticipated in the event of a flood on the catchment areas of the Brisbane and Bremer Rivers by a scheme to be carried out on the Stanley River, which receives the water from only 10 per cent. of the catchment area? No benefit would accrue at all.

The scheme is a nebulous one. It is claimed that it will provide a considerable measure of relief for the unemployed; but as a large body of men will be attracted into this area because of the work offering, it can be justifiably claimed that the unemployment problem will be accentuated, because further work will have to be provided for these men on the completion of this undertaking. The large sums of loan money that are available to-day at cheap rates of interest should be utilised in making the country more reproductive. We should embark upon a scheme of water conservation throughout the State with a view to

increasing the productivity of the country rather than increase the water supply of a city at a time when there is sufficient reserve capacity for at least the next ten years. The Bureau of Industry was originally established to act in an advisory capacity to advise the Government in connection with relief schemes for unemployment. There is no doubt that the schemes that have been recommended up to date have been unsuccessful, because the unemployment problem is still with us.

The present Government have certainly increased the loan indebtedness of this State to an enormous extent, upon which an increased amount of interest has to be paid. It has been definitely proven that we are not going to get out of our difficulties merely by borrowing large sums of money. Speaking in this House in 1928, Mr. McCormack said—

“Everybody knows that there is depression in Australia; but I do not think that depression can be cured by the lavish expenditure of borrowed money. I certainly will not be forced into that position. I would be unfair to the people I represent if I led them to believe that I could solve this unemployed problem—to use a colloquialism—merely by putting a stone in a hole in the road. It is not going to be solved in that way; it is merely going to be accentuated.”

Mr. McCormack spoke truly. To-day we are simply making the position of the State worse by continuing this policy of borrowing. Speaking in this House in 1930 the present Premier said—

“I have taken the view—quite apart from the present depression—that Australia, including the States, would have to curtail expenditure from Loan Fund Account sooner or later, and I have advocated a restriction of public borrowing and a restriction of expenditure from the loan fund to those avenues that would develop the State and increase its capacity to meet its present obligations and commitments that may be incurred in future.”

Is this scheme going to increase the capacity of this State to produce wealth? It is not. It will result in further taxes and burdens on the people. If that policy is to continue, that burden will become so great that the people will not be able to exist.

The Bureau of Industry is having very great powers conferred on it. It is commonly stated that we have too many Parliaments and too many Governments. This Bill practically creates another Parliament and another Government. The powers created for the bureau make it a body almost supreme. It can engage in any work it thinks fit, and borrow money to carry out those works, with the consent of the Governor in Council. It need not consult Parliament at all. Any form of State enterprise can be undertaken by it under the powers conferred in this measure. When the bureau was first created the intention was that it should recommend schemes for the relief of unemployment. In the year following its creation it was made a bridge board in order to build the Kangaroo Point Bridge.

Mr. W. T. KING: There is nothing wrong with that.

*Mr. Nimmo.]*

Mr. NIMMO: I do not know whether I should be in order in discussing the Kangaroo Point Bridge. It is another white elephant that is to be acquired by the present Government.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. NIMMO: I thought so, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The bureau has now been made a dam board.

The PREMIER: What did you call it?

Mr. NIMMO: A dam board—a Stanley River Dam Board. All its other schemes have apparently fallen flat. This scheme upon which it is embarking will involve a large amount of public money, which, if wisely spent, will to some extent relieve the unemployment problem. The only redeeming feature of the whole scheme is that it will give employment to a number of men. It is a question, however, whether we are doing the right thing in creating employment in the city areas and bringing about an exodus of men from the rural areas where they are required to carry on the work of primary production. The other day the Attorney-General tabled information showing the results of the voting at the recent Federal elections, and the alterations in the rolls since the last redistribution. We find that in electorates like Coorooora and Barcoo, agricultural and pastoral areas, that there has been a reduction in the population. We also find the same thing occurring in the Murrumba electorate.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must connect his remarks with the question before the Chair.

Mr. NIMMO: I am pointing that this policy of creating work in city areas is attracting men to come from the rural areas into the city, and that the population of the rural areas is being depleted. The effects of this loan expenditure in the city areas are only of a temporary nature, and are injuriously affecting rural interests. We find that the population in the electorate represented by the hon. member for Murrumba—a primary producing constituency—has been depleted, and quite a number of other country electorates are in the same position.

When the hon. member for Stanley was speaking the Premier interjected that it would take time to do what that hon. member suggested, but I really think that extra time would be well spent. If a flood prevention scheme is to cost £5,000,000, let us be as positive as we can on its wisdom in all its phases. We recall the tragedy of the sewerage scheme for Brisbane, a scheme that was embarked upon in much the same nebulous fashion as the scheme now under review, and a scheme that, instead of costing £3,000,000, as was anticipated, has actually cost £8,000,000 to date. It is that kind of tragedy that ruins a country. I really believe that if an expert had been engaged to consider that scheme in all its phases, a much better sewerage system would be in operation in Brisbane to-day.

I can clearly see that the Premier's intention is that this bureau should take the place of private enterprise, which up to a point has failed to relieve the unemployment problem. But why has private enterprise failed in that way? Some reason must exist. The reason is the huge burden of taxation imposed upon it. Private enter-

prise cannot function successfully in this State and carry that huge burden, and every hon. member knows that the greater the number of these unproductive schemes there are, the greater the increase in taxation, making it impossible for private enterprise to enter into the job of relieving unemployment. I contend that the bureau has failed to relieve unemployment. The Government have made provision in the Estimates for a greater expenditure of loan money during the current year than was the case last year. Last year £1,411,174 was provided for intermittent relief work, whereas this year £1,515,627 has been appropriated, and at the same time the appropriation for ration relief has been increased from £200,000 to £350,000. That all goes to show that the problem the bureau is supposed to have tackled has not been solved, but is becoming intensified. Some slight improvement may appear in the figures of unemployed persons, but that improvement has only been caused by the expenditure of loan money, and when funds are exhausted it will disappear. I appeal to the Premier to deal with the question under review in a big way and first secure the most expert advice available. Moreover, let us spend this loan money in developing our natural resources in the country—

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: What about a couple of millions to satisfy your wants?

Mr. NIMMO: That sum would not suffice for the excellent schemes I have in mind. For example, we might build the railway from Charleville to Blackall, and if not a railway, at least an all-weather road that would develop the country and be of benefit to the State. Here we propose to spend £1,750,000 on a prospecting scheme, for, after all, embarking on this scheme is on all-fours with the case of a man embarking on a gold prospecting venture. This is what Mr. L. C. Morris said in forwarding his minority report—

“The Honourable the Acting-Premier,

“Sir,—It is with extreme regret that I find myself unable to agree with the recommendations which have been submitted to you by the special committee of the Bureau of Industry which was formed to consider a water supply and flood mitigation scheme for Brisbane, and of which I was appointed a member.

“While there are many paragraphs in the report with which I am in entire agreement, I consider that if the committee's recommendations be adopted and a dam be constructed on the Stanley River at Little Mount Brisbane a very serious error of judgment will be made, and that the provision of an adequate flood mitigation scheme will be deferred for many years. I maintain that the case for the Middle Creek dam on the main Brisbane River has not been fully stated, and that the expenditure of public funds on the Stanley dam would be very unwise.

“I am attaching hereto a minority report on the matter outlining my views in connection with various points mentioned in the committee's report.

“Yours faithfully,

“LEONARD MORRIS,

B.E., A.M.I.E.E., A.M.I.E. Aust.,

“Superintendent of Technical Education.”

“Brisbane,

“26th May, 1934.”

[Mr. Nimmo.

In the face of that report is it not advisable to exercise caution? Do not let us rush into this matter! Let us secure more information before embarking on a scheme of such vital importance!

At 2 p.m.,

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. R. M. KING (*Logan*) [2 p.m.]: The Premier, when introducing this Bill, stated that in the first place the intention was to clarify the position as far as the bureau was concerned, and, secondly, it was to deal with activities in connection with water supply and flood prevention. There is no doubt that it is desirable to have an adequate water supply for the city of Brisbane, and also that a satisfactory flood prevention scheme should be carried out. If the Bill is given effect to and a satisfactory scheme for flood prevention is carried out, and we are assured of a greater water supply, much good will have been accomplished.

So far as the bureau is concerned, there are provisions dealing with its incorporation as a body corporate having perpetual succession and a common seal, and giving it power to acquire lands, but in addition to that it is to have extraordinarily wide powers, which, I respectfully submit, should never be conferred upon a bureau or an institution of this nature. The Bill gives power to construct, establish, and control works, and to enter into contracts, and also power to sell, exchange, or lease, or otherwise dispose of land. It gives power to the bureau to enter into contracts and provides that the contracts entered into shall be guaranteed by the Government. Power is given to this body to supersede Parliament, and be a Parliament of its own. The giving of that power is bringing into effect that dangerous doctrine of a new despotism I spoke about the other day. It is giving power to the bureau to alter an Act of Parliament and to substitute something for it. In addition to that, it gives power for the allocation of the powers of the bureau to another Crown instrumentality—a Crown instrumentality that we know nothing whatever about, and might not have the necessary qualifications and competency to carry out the duties of the bureau. I think that is a very bad feature of this Bill. I do not think any Bill should give power to a body under the guise of a State instrumentality, or any other body for that matter, to exercise Parliamentary functions outside the authority and control of Parliament. This bureau has all those powers conferred on it by this Bill, and it can practically do what it likes. It is given a blank cheque to fill in, subject to the approval of the Executive Council. It is clothed with very wide powers in connection with resumptions, and is given the same power as local authorities in that respect. Such powers should not be conferred on any institution to enable it to act absolutely independently of Parliament.

The Premier has stated that the scheme for water supply and flood prevention is a very sound one. The project is sound in itself. To use his own words, "It is a wise insurance, it will provide additional water supply, and it is a sound scheme for the relief of unemployment." So far as the statement is concerned that the scheme is sound in itself, let us examine the reports we have received from our experts. Even those who have made the report are them-

selves full of perplexity. They are only talking of possibilities. It is impossible to bring in a scheme, having due regard for the forces of nature—which no power of experts can control—and say that what its precise results will be. This one is like buying a pig in a poke. The report is founded only on possibilities, and it has been pointed out on this side of the House that the project is far too big to expect the men who made the report to pronounce on it in addition to their present duties, although they are perfectly competent men in the positions they are filling at the present time. It has been pointed out that these members of the bureau committee are full-time men and engaged on very important work. They are doing their work well in the interests of the community, but whether, as a body, they are competent to examine a proposal and say that it will be absolutely water-tight and fool-proof, is another matter. It is almost an impossibility to expect them to do this, and they themselves do not claim to be able to do it. The report deals with alternative works and I think it just as well to read sections of the report in order to enable the public to judge for themselves whether this proposed scheme will be the wise and prudent one the Government claim it to be. On page 2 of the report we find this—

"The committee is now able to submit definite recommendations for works which will effect the dual purpose of water supply and flood mitigation as far as can be justified at present. It is unable to recommend the construction of two dams—even over a long period—as has previously been recommended, and a choice has to be made between two dam sites. The choice will depend on the value attached to protection against floods.

"The risks of floods occurring at any time are so uncertain that it is thought advisable to submit alternative recommendations based respectively on—

(a) The estimated insurance value of flood mitigation, as far as that can be ascertained; and

(b) The minimum provision required to give security against the damage of an 1893 flood.

"The evidence for these alternatives is outlined in this report.

"In the opinion of the committee the present value of probable flood damage does not warrant the expenditure required for the second alternative, but if a major flood were to occur within the next few years that expenditure would be justified.

"The committee, therefore, recommends that certain improvements should be carried out in the river at Brisbane at an expenditure not to exceed £500,000, together with either—

(a) A dam at Little Mount Brisbane at a cost not exceeding £1,750,000; or

(b) A dam at Middle Creek at a cost not exceeding £2,750,000.

"Total cost, not including interest during construction, £2,250,000 or £3,250,000."

The alternative work that it is agreed should be adopted is the Little Mount Brisbane scheme, at a cost of £1,750,000, together with works in the lower Brisbane River at a cost

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of £500,000. We now turn to page 20 of the report and read—

“The possibilities need now to be discussed very briefly within the limits of reasonable prospects. Only one thing is certain: that floods must be expected to recur.”

That may happen at any time.

“There is no more reason to think of them solely in terms of another 1835 flood than there is to ignore them altogether. The floods that will come may be small or large, and it is just as possible that they will be under 20 feet as over it.”

That is the great drawback of the proposed Bill.

“The Little Mount Brisbane scheme will, for practical purposes, prevent damage from floods up to 20 feet just as effectively as a larger scheme. There is a wide range of possibility for larger floods, between a 20-foot flood and an 1893 flood reaching 27 feet, and beyond that level. The possibilities remain although the probabilities diminish. But it must be remembered that the value of each increment of flood mitigation diminishes too, in proportion to its cost. The greatest advantage is gained from taking the ‘top’ off a flood. Should a flood of the magnitude of the 1893 flood recur, the Little Mount Brisbane scheme would prevent damage valued at £2,350,000. This degree of mitigation, added to the prevention or mitigation of smaller but still dangerous floods, gives a high value to the scheme even if all unfavourable possibilities are allowed.”

I admit that this scheme will possibly, even probably, mitigate the damage likely to follow from a flood, but damage is certain to follow to a greater extent than is anticipated in the report, and it is going to be very great, too. I recognise full well that any scheme that is going to mitigate loss and damage will be welcomed, but we have to consider whether the benefit to be derived from the scheme will be commensurate with the cost that must be incurred. Is the anticipated cost going to be the maximum amount that will be expended upon this particular scheme? Nobody knows. The estimated cost is £2,250,000., but I venture to say that this amount is going to be very largely exceeded. To what extent I do not know, nor do I think any hon. member knows. That it will be exceeded I do not think there is any possible doubt whatever.

So much for the soundness or otherwise of the scheme. If all the expectations are realised the scheme possibly will be a fairly sound one, but there will always be that element of doubt to which reference is made in the report. There will always be a feeling of anxiety amongst the people of Brisbane and surrounding districts that the measures to be adopted under this Bill will not be sufficient for the purpose. I do not want to throw cold water on a water scheme, but I am very much afraid that that element of doubt will always remain with us.

The Premier has argued that the scheme can be regarded as a wise insurance proposal. If we were quite sure of that we should be more satisfied about the Bill, and when we reflect on the flood damage that has

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occurred in the metropolitan area and surrounding districts from time to time, we must be convinced that there should be ways and means of preventing that loss altogether. In page 10 of the report the committee states—

“The committee submits in Part III. what are the first detailed and authentic estimates of the damage that would now be caused by flood. The following figures are for probable damage from floods of given heights at the Port Office—

Flood.	Total Material Damage.	Estimated Total Damage.
	£	£
15 feet .. .. .	114,000	125,000
20 feet .. .. .	827,000	1,075,000
25 feet .. .. .	1,718,000	2,400,000
27 feet (as 1893) ..	2,370,000	3,320,000
30 feet .. .. .	3,904,000	5,470,000

These figures are only an estimate of the damage that would follow floods having the respective heights set out. We admit that any effective scheme would be a splendid insurance against loss by flood; but there again there is the element of doubt as to whether the scheme is going to be effective or not.

We now come to the question of additional water supply. We all recognise that in a growing city like Brisbane, with all the additional public conveniences that are being constructed, and those that are required, especially the sewerage scheme, we shall require more water. We desire to see our sewerage scheme carried out in its entirety throughout the metropolitan area as soon as possible. That scheme will entail great demands on our water supply; but we find that at Lake Manchester a tremendous quantity of water is stored. It is estimated at 7,000,000,000 gallons. This storage facility was completed in 1916. Of that 7,000,000,000 only 1,000,000,000 gallons have been utilised. That storage of water has been lying idle for many years, and can be called on at any moment. In view of the quantity that has been drawn upon that supply, even taking into consideration the possible increase in the population of the metropolis, we have yet a large quantity of water that can be drawn upon before we require to make any further provision. The opportunity is supposed to occur now when we can carry out the dual work of averting threatened damage by flood and providing for a water storage for future years. We really do not want any more water at the present moment.

The Premier stated, as a further reason why this scheme should be proceeded with, that it was a sound scheme for the relief of unemployment. The whole scheme, boiled down, is a scheme to relieve unemployment. The other aspects are incidental, and may, or may not, prove effective.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: The main object of the scheme is flood prevention.

Mr. R. M. KING: I do not agree with the hon. member. It is anticipated that this scheme will provide work for 1,500 men extending over four years. In its final result it may reduce unemployment by about 10 per cent. Naturally, one is pleased to see

works carried out for the relief of unemployment; but the question arises whether this vast amount of money is being spent in the interests of the community as a whole, having regard to the main object for which it is being spent—namely, relief of unemployment. If we could make up our minds that the money is being well spent and in the best interests of the community with that object in view, there would be nothing to cavil at; but I would stress the unquestionable fact that we are pursuing a policy of "borrow, boom, and burst." The public debt of the State is increasing at a tremendous rate.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: The hon. member for Oxley said we were not borrowing enough.

Mr. R. M. KING: The hon. member did not say that; what he suggested was that we were not spending this borrowed money on reproductive work, and he pointed out directions in which the money should be spent.

Mr. W. T. KING: We are creating assets.

Mr. R. M. KING: We may be, but I fail to see where they are. I venture to suggest that when the hon. member's son comes to look for these assets in the days to come, he will have to look a long way before he finds them; and even if he does find them, he will be looking for his father with an axe because of the heavy burden that has been imposed upon his generation! We are committing a definite dereliction of duty in creating a debt we will not pay but will place upon the shoulders of the innocents who follow us. How many times do we say, "Give the boy a chance"? He is certainly being given a chance—a chance to wipe out some of the debts incurred as a result of the financial jazz tactics of his forebears.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: Are we not now carrying the legacy from the old squatter days?

Mr. R. M. KING: Of course, we are; but two wrongs do not make a right, and we have no reason to add to the difficulties of those who will follow us, especially in the light of the experience that we have had.

Mr. KEOGH: What about the war debt?

Mr. R. M. KING: It is no good arguing war debt with the hon. member, because he talks of "peace at any price."

The work of river improvement proposed to be undertaken with the expenditure of £500,000 is necessary, and is indeed one of the best parts of the whole scheme. In past years efforts have been made—and successfully, too—to mitigate the dire results of flood, especially when, as the Premier pointed out, the flood waters encounter a rising tide. Work has been carried out at Kangaroo Point, at Lytton Rocks, at the South Brisbane railway wharves, at Kinellan Point, New Farm, and at Newstead—all very necessary work.

The PREMIER: That is work that had to be done in any event, having regard to the needs of shipping; so that we are serving two objects there.

Mr. R. M. KING: The work that has been done at those points has greatly assisted the easy flow of flood waters, but it will be necessary to improve those works to a greater extent to make them more effective, particularly in view of the shallow depth of water at those points. A bigger scour would enable flood waters to get away more quickly. So that, taking it all in all, the

expenditure of money on river improvement that will mitigate flood damage is money well spent, quite apart from the fact that it will increase the shipping facilities of the port to a great extent. We desire to attract shipping to the port of Brisbane, and it is very essential that shipping should be able to come up the river to the heart of the city. But what is the use of spending money in making the river accessible for big shipping if we are going to build a bridge at Kangaroo Point that will prevent many ships from coming up to the heart of the city? A bridge should be planned that would be 20 or 30 feet higher than the proposed one in order to allow shipping to utilise our river to the fullest extent. According to the plans and specifications of the bridge that is contemplated a number of ships will not be able to use our river beyond that point.

It is satisfactory to note that it is possible that we will get some assistance from the Federal Government in connection with the cost of this proposed scheme. I think we shall need all the assistance we can get, because, as I said at the outset, I consider this scheme will cost a good deal more than £2,250,000. I think we should consider ourselves fortunate if the scheme, when completed, does not cost more than £5,000,000.

The Premier stated there were really two reasons that urged him to go on with the work, first, the availability of cheap loan money, and, secondly, the availability of labour. I agree that the availability of labour supplies a strong incentive to go on with the work; but I consider that loan money is availed of too easily, and in the long run the ease with which it is obtained will prove a curse instead of a benefit to this State. This work will be carried out by loan money, and up to a certain extent it is going to be reproductive, but to a very large extent it will not be reproductive. To the extent that it will be reproductive it may be considered money wisely spent; but I wish to emphasise the point that much of the money being spent to create employment is being spent on unproductive works.

Those workers who are engaged on works financed by loan money will be in a worse position when that work is completed, because at that time the State will experience greater difficulty in gaining equilibrium owing to the added interest burden; and, furthermore, private enterprise—which will have to bear the added cost of government and interest charges—will not be in as favourable a position to supply that permanent employment that is so necessary to restore Queensland to a normal condition.

Mr. MAHER (*West Moreton*) [2.35 p.m.]: I do not look on this Bill as one designed specially to construct a water supply dam on the Stanley River, nor as a scheme for flood mitigation. I look on it rather as one that gives vast and almost unparalleled powers to a Bureau of Industry. So great are these powers that they practically represent an abdication on the part of the Ministry, and it is a definite affront to Parliament to feel that we are called upon to delegate such tremendous powers to an outside body—powers whereby millions of money may be raised by loan with the sanction of the Government without the approval of Parliament. The Bill creating the bureau was strongly urged by the present Premier. It was stated to be one for

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the encouragement of employment and rehabilitation of industry.

I can say only that the result of the work of the Bureau of Industry has in no way justified its existence. As a matter of fact, from my observation of the working of the bureau it represents a definite duplication of the work of the present Government departments. In every aspect of its activities we find it clashing with the Department of Agriculture and Stock, the Department of Public Lands, and the Department of Labour and Industry, and in all its investigations duplicating the work carried on by other Government departments. To that extent it represents an extra expense and burden on the taxpayers of Queensland. Nothing new has been obtained in the results it has achieved. No new knowledge has been secured for us which could not have been provided by the existing departments of the State. At the moment memory recalls the case of the bureau engaging the services of Mr. Wynn Williams to investigate and make a report on the prickly-pear areas of the State. That gentleman had to be paid his salary and expenses. He was formerly, I understand, a land commissioner of the State, and all the information that he could secure as regards the prickly-pear areas is available in the records of the Land Administration Board. Why was that extra expense incurred? Why was such an officer as this, apparently retired from the position of land commissioner, with his sphere of usefulness past, employed by the Bureau of Industry? Why had they to fall back on an officer of that kind and incur expense by sending him out to obtain a report on the prickly-pear areas of Queensland when all that information is available already? A similar remark applies to the investigation the bureau has made into the tobacco industry. We have had the disastrous experience of Beerburrun, a scheme initiated by the present Secretary for Agriculture. The record of that experiment is there for all to see. Why should the Bureau of Industry incur additional expense in making investigations into the possibility of putting large bodies of men into employment at growing tobacco when we have such an experiment right in front of us? The bureau delved into the work that has been done by the existing government departments, and to that extent its work represents a definite duplication and brings about a great deal of extra expense.

The bureau has been conducting investigations into rural development. As a matter of fact, it was called upon to do this, because the Premier when introducing the Bureau of Industry Bill at an earlier date, made this statement—

“The Bureau of Industry stood for an organised plan of rural development. An organised plan of rural development will emerge and be carried on definitely until completed in the different parts of the State.”

Obviously the bureau had to consider this phase of the matter, and according to its report made inquiries into the question of rural development. The only thing I can find in the report and the only recommendation it has made in this respect is summed up in these words—

“The bureau has supported the application of loan money to such uses as ringbarking and clearing, through the

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Department of Public Lands, the procedure of which is simpler than that of the Agricultural Bank . . .’

Is not that the work of the Department of Public Lands? Such inquiries as it has made have not produced any result.

The question of beef cattle supplies was taken up the bureau, despite the fact that a Royal Commission on the Beef Cattle Industry was appointed by the Government in 1928, and in spite also of the useful work of the Queensland Meat Industry Board. Notwithstanding this the Bureau of Industry made investigations and no doubt expensive inquiries in this respect. The only statement contained in the report is that a report is to be published covering the result of its investigations. Nothing useful has been discovered that was not previously known.

It has also gone into the matter of water conservation. It is stated in the report—

“Since 1932 some 300 advances have been made to private landholders, involving a capital expenditure of about £30,000 on water conservation, chiefly on dams, tanks, and wells.”

We must remember that the use of the money for this purpose was authorised by the Moore Government. That fund has been administered by the Land Administration Board and anything that the bureau has done has in no way increased the amount of money for that purpose nor brought about any greater demand for the use of it.

On the subject of fodder conservation the bureau issued a pamphlet and that represents practically the full result of its inquiries in that respect. In its report to Parliament it states that the pastoralists refused to accept its recommendations for the purchase of fodder for conservation purposes. The price of sheep and cattle to-day are so low that it obviously does not pay any pastoralist to expend money in keeping his stock alive. It is a much more payable proposition to let the sheep and cattle die when prices are low than pay large sums for fodder for relief purposes. Looking at the matter in a practical way the pastoralists were not disposed to accept the recommendations of the bureau in that respect.

It also issued another pamphlet recommending the construction of cheaper silos. The farmer is not able to bear the cost of silo construction for fodder conservation when the prices of dairy products and farm products generally remain so low. In any case the question of fodder conservation and the erection of silos is one that properly belongs to the Department of Agriculture and Stock. Here is a duplication of governmental activity.

The bureau also considered the question of increasing employment on farms, but it found itself up against inexorable economic facts, which no amount of argument can overcome. Whilst it was considered desirable to place a large number of young men in the farming industry for purposes of farm training it was found that the people in the cities who enjoyed a higher standard of living than those in the country, really under artificial conditions, objected to their sons beginning a farming career and although the Government offer every encouragement by the establishment of a

farm school at St. Lucia specially designed to give an intensive training to boys seeking a farming career, and despite the demand for boys by thousands of farmers throughout the State to work on farms, the demand cannot be filled for the simple reason—

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

Mr. MAHER: Yes. The Bureau of Industry investigated the important question of employment. It has been stated that the ultimate object of the Bill is to give employment to a big body of men, and I am trying—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must realise that a general discussion on the Bureau of Industry will not be in order on this Bill which seeks to confer certain definite powers on it. If the hon. member connects his remarks with those principles he will be in order. This is not a vote on the Estimates.

Mr. MAHER: I shall connect my remarks in the way that you suggest, Mr. Speaker. I object to the tremendous powers contained in the Bill being vested in the Bureau of Industry. The Bill provides that the bureau may have and exercise all the powers, authorities, and jurisdiction of a local authority under the Local Authorities Acts. Why should this Parliament be asked to confer all the powers of a local authority on a body of fifteen gentlemen composed mostly of public servants and union secretaries? This is a new departure in parliamentary history in Queensland; and as the Leader of the Opposition reminds me, this is only a minor power. The bureau is also vested with power to take, purchase, take on lease, sell, exchange, lease, and hold land. In addition, it has power to borrow millions of pounds, subject only to the consent of the Minister of the day and with absolute disregard of Parliament itself. Will anybody say we are justified in voting away such tremendous powers to an outside body? What has the Bureau of Industry done to justify our setting it up as a State within a State? That is what it amounts to. We are really giving a charter to the bureau almost tantamount to making it a State within a State. I object very strongly to that position arising so far as the Bureau of Industry is concerned.

Having perused the report of the committee that investigated the proposed construction of the Stanley River dam I consider that the expense is not justified. At the present time the residents of Brisbane and Ipswich are amply served with water. It is only on the rarest possible occasion that the authorities controlling the distribution of water in these two cities have found it necessary to draw on the tremendous reserves of water in the Lake Manchester dam. That dam was situated in my electorate in the last Parliament and I have had ample opportunities of seeing its beautiful expanse of water together with the pumping plant at Mount Crosby. I can only say that, in my opinion, there is an ample water supply for the cities of Brisbane and Ipswich for many years to come without embarking on the expenditure of millions of money in this water scheme on the Stanley River.

If it is intended that the scheme should also embrace a scheme of flood mitigation in the Brisbane River then it is apparent we are only playing with the subject. If the Government were serious in their intentions to adopt a scheme to mitigate flood dangers in the Brisbane River they would have adopted the major scheme that was investigated, that is, the Middle Creek scheme, which entails an expenditure of £3,250,000. The fact that they have adopted the minor scheme suggests that the Government are not seriously concerned with flood mitigation in the Brisbane River, and that they are merely deluding the people, who think that provision is being made in that respect by the expenditure entailed under this Bill. In view of what I have said, flood mitigation is undoubtedly the most important factor to approach. I have shown that the question of additional water facilities for Brisbane and Ipswich is not urgently necessary at the present time. Taking a long-range view of that question, and looking ahead for twenty-five to forty years, at the same time taking into account the probable increase in population in that time, one can only come to the conclusion that an ample water supply is available for that period. Therefore, flood mitigation is really the important question, and by adopting the minor scheme of constructing the Stanley River dam the Government have failed to tackle that problem. That suggests that they are not facing the question in a serious spirit.

An important factor that we must take into account is the divergence of opinion among the members of the committee that investigated this scheme. We are bound to take into account the important minority report of Mr. Morris. Mr. Morris differs very materially from the conclusions arrived at in the majority report. In a scheme involving an estimated expenditure of £2,250,000—which will probably extend to £5,000,000 or more—the Government would be well advised to call to their assistance some outside expert opinion in order to check up on the majority report. Any matter like this, involving the expenditure of millions of pounds, cannot be taken lightly or considered in an irresponsible spirit. Where a grave divergence of opinion on material issues is found, the Government should engage expert men properly experienced and qualified in big water projects in other parts of Australia to examine both the majority and minority reports, and, if necessary, to make an entirely independent report before the Government launch out on an expenditure of £2,250,000 in expanding the city water supply. I reiterate that the Government are really more concerned with the question of increasing the water supply, which is not warranted, than of mitigating the effects of floods in the Brisbane River.

Another feature of this amending Bill to which I desire to refer is the fact that the Government, having determined to embark on the expenditure of £2,250,000 on this increased water supply for the cities of Brisbane and Ipswich, have apportioned the cost in a manner to which I strongly object.

Mr. GLEDSON: Rosewood and other towns ought to pay a portion of the Ipswich share.

Mr. MAHER: The hon. member for Ipswich is quite absurd, for neither Rosewood nor any other town in my electorate

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will derive any benefit from this extravagant proposition.

In the allocation of cost the State Government have undertaken to find £1,190,000, while the Brisbane City Council is obliged to find £1,000,000 and the Ipswich City Council £60,000. Brisbane has a population of approximately 350,000, and Ipswich 25,000, so that, all told, approximately 350,000 or 360,000 inhabitants will secure the full advantages, if any, that accrue from the expenditure of this money. In other words, one-third of the population of the State will receive the benefit. I submit that those who receive the benefit should pay the piper, at any rate in the main, and that the amount of £1,190,000 that the State is called upon to pay is excessive. The rest of Queensland—the general taxpayers and particularly the men on the land—who derive no benefit from this expenditure—are called upon through taxation to meet an obligation of the State in respect of £1,190,000 of loan money. I object to the State being levied upon in this way, and I hold that if the cities of Brisbane and Ipswich want this expensive kind of undertaking—it is not warranted—they should be prepared to pay for it, and that in the circumstances their fair contribution should be two-thirds of the total cost involved. No hon. member can convince me that he could go to Longreach, Cairns, Charleville, Toowoomba, or any other provincial city and justify the argument that the people who derive no benefit should be called upon to meet half the total cost involved. It would be bad enough in all truth if some benefit would accrue to the State from the expenditure of this money, but although people in the country districts will receive no benefit directly or indirectly, they are called upon to pay slightly more than half of the total cost. In this respect I want to ask the Premier whether he forced the hand of the committee, because it is interesting to find this rather significant passage in the majority report—

“The committee’s recommendations are generous to the municipalities, and as such they are based on the value of the works in relieving unemployment rather than on any estimate of the proportion normally due from the State. Should the Middle Creek site be preferred for its greater flood mitigation capacity, the extra cost thereof should be chiefly the liability of the municipalities who are more directly concerned. The committee is not able to recommend that the State should bear half of the cost of this additional expenditure.”

I submit that is rather significant. It indicates to me the committee differed very largely from the Government’s view, and it will be interesting to know whether the Government forced the hand of the committee in this respect—whether it was suggested to the committee it would be wise to make a report in accordance with the Government’s scheme for financing this venture. The committee shows a slightly rebellious spirit in that section of its report. They are not altogether enamoured of a scheme whereby the taxpayers of the State will be called upon to bear half the total cost. They make it perfectly clear, as I emphasise this afternoon, that the municipalities are being treated very generously. Who could say other than that the Brisbane City Coun-

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cil is being treated extremely generously, because the whole scheme is designed to benefit the city of Brisbane? Whilst on that subject, it is not out of place to ask how the ratepayers of Brisbane, labouring under an excessive rating—consequent upon the heavy loan expenditure incurred by previous councils—are going to stand up to their increasing liability for interest in view of the extra million being borrowed by the council to meet its share of this expenditure? I submit that the ratepayers of the city of Brisbane are in for a very bad time. These chickens will all come home to roost. It is an easy matter to lay out expensive schemes, but there is a price to be paid in every case and that price has to be paid and the receipt secured in due course. The Government, in imposing this scheme on the Brisbane City Council to the extent of £1,000,000, are placing a very heavy burden on the shoulders of the ratepayers in the Greater Brisbane area.

Mr. GLEDSON: Generosity is shown to the council.

Mr. MAHER: Of course there is generosity to the council in the fact they are getting £2,250,000 worth of work of direct benefit to this city, comprising a water scheme and a supposed flood mitigation scheme. No wonder the committee says there is evidence of abundant generosity to the municipalities! They are getting the scheme at less than half its cost, but that does not reduce the heavy interest obligations which the city council will have to meet.

Another phase of the same thing is referred to on page 6 of the committee’s report, in which it is stated—

“The committee suggests that the share of the total cost allocated to the municipalities is an equitable future charge on the ratepayers, but that only about one-quarter of the State’s share is an equitable charge on future general taxpayers. The balance of loan money used to subsidise the works would properly be a charge on the unemployment relief tax fund until it was repaid.”

That again emphasises the fact the committee had some sense of responsibility in this matter, and no doubt recognised that in the apportionment of cost it would be only fair to make an allocation whereby the benefited area would spend at least its share of the cost on a population basis. It appears to me as though such a recommendation had been made for the approval of the Government, and it was possibly suggested to the committee that it might be best for it to make a fresh recommendation or a recommendation more in accordance with the Government’s idea of financing the scheme. To my way of thinking, the whole scheme of finance suspiciously resembles the Government’s policy of loan-subsidy schemes where local governing bodies are concerned. Under the scheme of assistance of local governing bodies the Government give a subsidy in the proportion of pound for pound, and it looks to me as though all other schemes have been swept aside by the Government in their desire to adopt their pet fetish of a “pound for pound loan-subsidy scheme.”

The main object of the Bill is the desire of the Government to cope with the unemployment problem. In that very laudable desire the Government can count upon the

genuine sympathy of every member of the Opposition and, indeed, of everybody in this State. It is only in respect of the ways and means adopted by the Government to attain such a desirable end that we are at variance with them. I am certain that were the Government to take a wide view of the requirements of the State, they could find much more attractive schemes for the expenditure of millions of loan money than that proposed in the Bill. As a matter of fact, if the Government were to embark to-morrow on the construction of a great highway between Charleville or Longreach and the Northern Territory to open up a means of communication with that vast territory and to endeavour to encourage the flow of trade into Queensland it would be doing something of service to the State—and something that would stand to their credit for all time. Portion of the millions of pounds that are being wasted in the scheme under discussion could have been used to much greater profit elsewhere in the State. I am well satisfied that there are many schemes much more attractive in this respect than that for which the Government seek to secure the ratification of Parliament this afternoon. Whilst we are all desirous of seeing that a large body of men secure work, who have been out of work or have been doing intermittent relief work, at the same time it occurs to us to ask, are the Government facing up to the problem in the right way? It is proposed, in the terms of this Bill, to give employment to 1,500 men for a period of four years. No doubt that will be extremely helpful to large numbers of men who are in desperate circumstances at the present time; but, as I stated when I spoke on the introduction of the Bureau of Industry Bill originally in this Parliament, the Government refuse to face up to the economic circumstances of our time. It has got to be realised—and I know that members of the Government Party do not realise it—that the conditions around us to-day have come to stay. There is no escaping that fact. The man who thinks or deludes himself into thinking that there is a much-talked-of corner in sight is a fool, nothing more nor less. We are back on pre-war conditions in this country, and nothing will alter that fact. We have passed through a period of tremendous inflation in the Commonwealth, and, indeed, throughout the world. The good times that we knew during the twelve to fifteen years before 1930 have entirely disappeared, and, unquestionably in my opinion, the conditions we know to-day are here to stay, perhaps with slight variations and fluctuations within the next ten or fifteen years. We then have to accommodate ourselves to these changed conditions. The continued expenditure of millions and millions of pounds of loan money by the small handful of people we have in Queensland—less than a million spread over our wide areas—is quite beyond their capacity to repay, and will cause an intolerable burden to fall on the children of the men who are responsible for this condition of things. We are not going to solve our problems by the continuous expenditure of loan funds in this way, and the duty devolves upon the Government to consider the position seriously and face up to the fact, which I am certain the Premier understands and appreciates full well. We have to readjust our standard in accordance with the prices being realised for our exportable products and the goods we produce and manufacture. If that

is not done, this problem of unemployment will go from bad to worse, and the day must come—and that in the not far distant future—when these millions of loan money will not be available, because our credit will become a constantly diminishing quantity. When that point is reached, desperation and misery will overcome the people of the State. This must happen, unless we call a halt, and thus I say that whilst I am glad to see several hundreds of men who have been out of work secure some immediate relief in the matter of employment, I can see that such employment is a palliative only and not a general cure. If a great State like Queensland, so rich in its resources, is properly governed and controlled and expenditure wisely handled, and if we are prepared to accept the economic facts and circumstances of the time in which we live, there should be no necessity at all for the expenditure of vast sums of loan money on such scheme as the Kangaroo Point Bridge, where £2,000,000 are going to be spent—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MAHER: And the Stanley River scheme, whereby another £2,250,000 will be spent, in the terms of this Bill. If we recognise these things and give the necessary measure of encouragement to people engaged in industry and men with capital to come here, if we reduce taxation, if we relax many of the restrictive conditions that operate in industry, and if we fix a general wage standard at least competitive with those in the other States of Australia, then—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MAHER: I appreciate your leniency, Mr. Speaker, and I respect your call to order. I greatly regret that the Government have a desire to embark upon this scheme involving an expenditure of £2,250,000 and that they have not sought out a scheme of a more reproductive nature.

Mr. KENNY (*Cook*) [3.15 p.m.]: This Bill is one of the most important submitted to Parliament during this session and I have no doubt that the Premier will argue that it has been introduced for the purpose of carrying out a flood prevention and water supply scheme for Brisbane, but so far as I can see that is only a minor feature of the Bill. The Bill will certainly empower the Government to carry out the scheme foreshadowed, but it also seeks to vest greater powers in the bureau than are possessed by Parliament itself. The bureau is to be given power to borrow and construct whilst Parliament is to have no say as to how the money shall be raised or how or where it shall be spent. We, as the representatives of the people, should recognise that Parliament is adopting a very dangerous precedent in divesting itself of those powers and that they should not be delegated to any other body. The Bill also gives the bureau power to delegate its authority to other boards under its control. The bureau was originally established for the purpose of tendering advice to the Government, but the new bodies that are to be constituted under the control of the bureau itself will really take the place of the bureau as originally established. When the bureau was established it was claimed that it would be composed of men capable of investigating and reporting to the Government upon schemes that would have an economic value to the State, but it

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is now proposed to delegate those powers to the board comprised of men who may not even possess those qualifications. I am absolutely opposed to any proposal to allow the bureau to delegate its powers to subsidiary boards under its control, that will not be subject to the control of Parliament.

It has been argued that the scheme will be of tremendous advantage in that it will provide employment. Whilst I am not going to argue that that is not correct, and whilst I am prepared to admit that a certain amount of employment will be created by the operation of this scheme, we shall have to be very careful to see that in creating employment in one direction we are not accentuating unemployment in another direction. It is quite an easy matter to promote employment by the lavish expenditure of loan money, but if the scheme recommended by the bureau or any other body is not a sound one, an additional burden may be placed upon the very people that it is designed to assist. In carrying out a loan programme everything depends upon how the money is expended and upon the return from the investment. I know that it will be fairly contended that if industry is unable to spend money and to provide employment it is the duty of the Government to embark upon a loan programme in an endeavour to revitalise it.

When we look back over the loan expenditure of the last two years we find that industry has not been revitalised, and I cannot see how the revitalisation of industry will be assisted by the expenditure intended under this Bill. When loan money is exhausted the men employed on loan works are in the same position as before those works were started, and in this case both the State and the local authorities concerned will be in a much more difficult position than before this scheme started. They may have a burden of debt and the ratepayers and taxpayers will have to bear it.

I have not sufficient knowledge to say whether this scheme is sound or unsound. The information before us is very vague. The information supplied by the special committee of the Bureau of Industry to investigate and report on this scheme is meagre. The members of that committee had their ordinary duties to perform, and, therefore, could only devote a portion of their time to considering this important proposition. If the Government had engaged an expert man and placed a staff at his disposal for six or eight months, he might have made a thorough analysis of the whole scheme with a view to forming a definite opinion as to whether it was sound or otherwise, and Parliament would have been in a position to discuss it. The committee appointed was not unanimous in its findings, particularly as to the value of the scheme as a measure of flood prevention. The report informs us that the Stanley River dam will have a capacity of 10 per cent. only of the waters which drain the whole area. It is doubtful, therefore, whether it will be of the assistance we are told it would be for flood prevention.

The other argument in favour of the scheme has been that it will supply additional water required for the cities of Brisbane and Ipswich. We may find a good argument in favour of the scheme from that point of view.

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My main objection to the Bill is that it hands over powers that should be reserved to Parliament to an outside body, which again has power to delegate the whole or portion of its powers to some other body.

The policy of endeavouring to place people back at work by the expenditure of loan money is one that must receive the very serious consideration of Parliament. While we may be able to place people in employment by that means we must recognise that the cost may be too great, and if the cost is greater than the resultant benefit such a policy is unsound. The Government must be able to satisfy the people that the expenditure of the money is in the interests of the people of the State as a whole, and that it will at least earn interest and redemption.

A doubt arises in my mind after reading the report of the committee. The committee reports that the initial expenditure on this scheme is £1,750,000, but that is only the first moiety. One member of the committee offers the opinion that it will cost another £3,000,000 to complete, which will bring the cost up to £4,750,000. We have, then, no guarantee that that will be the end of the expenditure. It may reach £6,750,000. There is nothing to show Parliament where the expenditure on this scheme is going to stop. Both the Brisbane and Ipswich City Councils must consider their position in that light. If they do not know the extent of the indebtedness to which their ratepayers will be committed, then the time will arrive when these councils will have to approach the Government for relief, because their ratepayers cannot shoulder the burden of costs, and the whole of the people of the State will then pay the penalty. We have an instance of that in the sewerage scheme in Brisbane. The estimated cost was £1,800,000, but to date over £3,000,000 has been spent and the work is not half completed. A proposal was made some time ago to the Government that the Brisbane City Council should be relieved of £2,000,000 of the indebtedness on the Brisbane sewerage scheme, and if another £3,000,000 of indebtedness is placed on the shoulders of the people under the scheme now under consideration a definite case will indeed be made for relief from the Government. When we give an open cheque to the Bureau of Industry to borrow and construct these works we should consider very seriously the position of the Government and of the local authorities concerned. However, the whole question of the advantages to be derived from a scheme of water supply and flood prevention is one for experts.

The information I have does not enable me to say that the scheme is sound or otherwise, but I say definitely that it is unsound and unwise to grant such wide powers to the Bureau of Industry, including power to delegate its authority to boards under its control.

The PREMIER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, Mackay) [3.25 p.m.], in reply: No new ground in relation to this problem has been broken by the speeches made by hon. members opposite, who, as a matter of fact, appear to be very undecided as to whether or not they should support this policy. In some respects they commend the scheme; in others they condemn, and their whole attitude might be summed up in this way: "The scheme is all right; we cannot afford

to oppose it, but we cannot afford to admit that the Government have done anything worth while."

Some hon. members opposite have suggested that this scheme could well be delayed in favour of other measures that would afford unemployment relief and that are more urgent and worthy of attention. The attitude of the Opposition is amusing. The House will remember that when the Kangaroo Point Bridge was being discussed, critics of the scheme condemned it as being premature, and suggested that what was really required for the metropolitan area was a water supply and flood prevention scheme. That was the basis of the case put forward by hon. members opposite no later than last session! Hon. members opposite cannot have it both ways. I pointed out on that occasion that a water supply and flood prevention scheme was being thoroughly investigated. It has been thoroughly investigated and this Bill is the result.

I have given a good deal of thought to the scheme. As a matter of fact, when I was Secretary for Public Works the old Water Supply and Sewerage Board operating in Brisbane was to some extent under the administrative control of my department, and as a consequence such matters as water supply and flood prevention were being continually brought to my notice. In 1927 the board proposed to undertake a scheme on the south side of the river, but on that occasion the Government refused to grant the authority, because thorough investigation showed that the water supply that would be available under the scheme proposed would be totally inadequate for the needs of Brisbane, having regard to the cost involved. That was the substance of the report of Mr. A. G. Gutteridge's, Commonwealth Director of Public Health Engineering, and it confirmed the reports of our own Irrigation and Water Supply Department and of Mr. Kemp, Commissioner of Main Roads. That scheme was not proceeded with, but the royal commission went on to advocate the Stanley River scheme that is now under consideration.

Another argument used by the Opposition is that we are setting up an authority outside the control of Parliament. Hon. members opposite object to the bureau being a corporation representing the Crown, and claim that everything should be subject to parliamentary control. In that argument again we have evidence of the inconsistency of the Opposition, for on other matters hon. members opposite have condemned what they call "political control," and have raised their hands in holy horror at any idea of Government control of banking and finance. Yet their whole case to-day, so far as they did present a case, was a plea for political control of these works! I can imagine hon. members opposite and others seeking to exercise political control!

A further suggestion was made that a select committee should be appointed to investigate this scheme. It is rather late in the day to make that suggestion, and having regard to the views that have been expressed one can only come to the conclusion that a select committee would not contribute anything of value to the discussion that is not contained in the report itself. The matter was, I repeat, thoroughly investigated—investigated by competent engineers and authorities who had all the

data at their disposal and all the information that is available—and as a result this scheme is brought forward.

Some hon. members suggest that the minority report be adopted. The minority report is only signed by one individual. It is a perfectly good report and the member of the committee who made it was entitled to make that report; but a careful analysis of the entire report will indicate clearly that the basis of the minority report is the consideration that in addition to impounding a greater volume of water at Middle Creek it would enable the surplus to be used for hydro-electricity. The hydro-electric possibilities of this proposal were considered, and if it could be established that the Middle Creek scheme, with those possibilities, had advantages that would set off the additional expenditure then much could be said for that scheme; but that phase of the question has been thoroughly investigated and my advisers point out that the possibilities in that direction are not sufficient to warrant the additional expenditure at the present time.

It is suggested that the dam at Little Mount Brisbane is inadequate. Well, who can say what is adequate in coping with the forces of nature? We can only act on information we have obtained as to what has taken place in the past. We have the available knowledge in regard to the events of many years, and the utmost that we can do is to provide a form of insurance against a known risk within our capacity to finance that known risk. We know the forces of nature are such that some things are possible. The 1893 floods meant a rise of 27 feet. No one could seriously argue that that represented the maximum flood rise; nor could it be argued that a 30-foot rise is impossible. What we are doing here in the Little Mount Brisbane dam is to provide for control to 20 feet. A rise of 20 feet represents an enormous volume of water, and if it can be controlled the consequent reduction of flood dangers to the desired minimum, and the resulting saving of property more than balance the cost. A 20-foot flood over the Brisbane area would do more damage than the total cost of all those works, including the river improvements. What is proposed under this scheme, is that the Flood Board shall be in control, a board of experts who will collect all the data that is necessary in relation to flood control. We know the state of the tides, we know whether the tide on a given date will be a high one or not. The degree of the flooding of the upper reaches of the Stanley, the Bremer, and the Brisbane Rivers can also be ascertained. It does not happen overnight, or in the course of an afternoon. It requires continuous, steady rain over a given period to raise the water even by 3 feet, let alone 20 feet. The proposal is that if weather conditions are such as to justify anticipations of flood, the control of that huge area of water enables the risk to be reduced to an absolute minimum. Water would have been impounded in considerable quantity by the dam, and if a flooding was expected to take place in the upper reaches of the river that water could be released before the major floods came down; consequently there would be a gradual spill into the Brisbane River and the water would be carried away under a system of orderly control that is not available at the present time. In addition,

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the widening and the deepening of the river that is contemplated under this £500,000 scheme increases the security the flood prevention scheme will give. The improvement of the river of itself is a flood insurance. Even if nothing were done in the upper reaches of this river, the deepening of the river channel or the get-away for flood waters is obviously an advantage. Therefore, the building of a dam at the Stanley River, giving a system of orderly control of flood waters up to 20 feet, plus the deepening and straightening of the river is a great step in advance. It may be that later on, with the development of population in Brisbane and consequently a need for greater water supplies, a further scheme may be necessary.

Very well! That can be undertaken at the time, so that complete arrangements will be made as they are necessary. But having regard to the information that is available, the known risk of floods, the known need for additional water, I claim that the case for this proposal has been fully established. It is wise in every particular, and must be of advantage to the whole of the State.

The method of control has been criticised. I ask: By what other means can it be controlled? Obviously it is not a matter that can be controlled by the Ministers of the Crown. They have not the time, even though they had the knowledge, to deal with these things. The board, composed of the hydraulic engineers of the cities of Brisbane and Ipswich, and the engineers in the Government service, is obviously the proper authority to administer the works when completed. As the Government and two local authorities are involved, obviously a joint board of men whose job it is to do these things and who have been trained in such matters, is the wisest method of control. No new principle is involved here, because the system of joint boards has been in existence ever since Queensland became a self-governing State.

The carrying out of the work could not be undertaken by the Department of Public Works. The activities of that department are confined very largely to building construction. No engineers doing work of this kind are employed in that department. It is composed of architects and similar experts, engaged chiefly in building construction. Therefore, the method of control that has been suggested gives the Government sufficient authority and provides the best means of giving effect to the scheme.

The suggestion that authority is being taken away from Parliament is merely absurd. I have demonstrated the lack of consistency on the part of the Opposition, who in one case argue against political control, and in regard to this work advocate it. They cannot have it both ways. But this corporation becomes a Crown corporation, and we as a Parliament will have as much authority over this Crown corporation as we have over the State Advances Corporation, the Main Roads Commission, and the Department of Railways. When the Railway Estimates were before the Committee of Supply we found member after member getting up and denouncing what he called "political control." When this Bill proposes to establish an administrative authority composed of engineers, the

same hon. members condemn that policy and advocate political control. This is a Crown corporation, and Parliament and the Government will have as much authority over it as they have over any other Crown instrumentality.

The expenditure of money, again, is controlled by Parliament. Parliament last session passed a Bill dealing with such things. Parliament, probably, will pass this Bill, and Parliament has already passed the Estimates and the Appropriation Bill providing the money for these works. Nevertheless, member after member has got up in his place in the House to-day and stated that there was no appropriation for this work, and that no parliamentary control over finance is retained. One hon. member went the length of saying that Parliament would only be asked to ratify expenditure that had already been incurred. To that I reply again that the Estimates in Chief and the Appropriation Bill put through the House quite recently contained the money both for the bridge at Kangaroo Point and for the amount of work that will be done under this scheme this year.

Hon. members opposite assert that we are rushing into this scheme. I have shown that we are not. We are acting on the best advice available. No member of the Government is an engineer—and in any event it is not a Government engineering scheme. It is prepared by those people who are most competent to prepare it, and nothing would be served by further delay. All hon. members in this House are involved in the problem of unemployment. It may be very good for us, who always have our food at meal times at a comfortable table, to advocate a policy of masterly inactivity. It is sometimes very satisfying to lean back in one's chair and say, "This is difficult, and consequently we will postpone the making of a decision."

Whilst the delay is going on, thousands of men are out of work. They should be considered. If work can be done and money is available, then it is the duty of Parliament to provide the employment so that the workless men can once more enjoy an income. The hon. member for West Moreton may be able to look with equanimity upon the scene that would follow upon delay, but such a policy is not a good one. Delay can only mean the infliction of further suffering on people who should not be called upon to suffer a moment longer than it is necessary. We are almost ready to commence this work. We hope to be able to make a definite start with a considerable number of men immediately after the Christmas and new year holidays; and as the work proceeds more and more men will be engaged until the maximum number is employed.

I have demonstrated that from an engineering point of view the proposal is a sound one; that a flood prevention scheme is a wise precaution, and that this scheme will provide Brisbane with the water it needs. Because it is raining heavily to-day and there is a plentiful supply of water on every hand, that is no indication that that state of affairs will continue over a period of years. We have experienced droughts in the past, and a water shortage or a flood is something too terrible to behold. We are justified in launching this scheme, and it is one that should provide a considerable

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amount of employment. All the essentials of a sound policy have been considered.

The hon. member for West Moreton referred to an officer of the bureau who has been engaged on some of the survey work involved in this proposal. I do not know what Mr. Wynn Williams has done to the hon. member for West Moreton, but the statement by the hon. member in this House was entirely incorrect. Mr. Williams is not a retired public servant. He is an authorised surveyor, and he is only fifty-five years of age. He has been doing survey work. He resigned from the public service of his own free will as far back as 1924. So that it cannot be suggested that we are employing a man beyond the age limit or that we are giving preference of employment to such a man.

MR. MAHER: That is not the point.

The PREMIER: That is the point, and the hon. member cannot get out of it in that way. He made an attack upon an employee of the bureau by suggesting that he was a retired public servant who had been retired on the age limit, and that he had possibly outlived his usefulness. The facts are altogether against his statement, and I mention the fact just to show how little regard some hon. members opposite have for facts. The truth could have been ascertained before the hon. member made his statement. Whilst I am not going to hold any brief for any Crown employee, it is my duty, as a responsible Minister, to protect public servants against the unfair and the untrue attacks that are made by such irresponsible members.

I am satisfied that we are taking the wise course in proceeding with this scheme. It will provide a very large amount of employment, and when completed it will be a valuable asset to the people of Brisbane.

There is only one other point that needs attention, and that is the suggestion by some hon. members that more public work is being carried out in Brisbane than in any other portion of the State, the suggestion being that Brisbane will reap an advantage that other sections of the community will not enjoy although they will be called upon to pay for it. That is a wrong attitude to take up in any Parliament and one that is absolutely untenable. No member can, with advantage, separate one section of the community from another. To pit town against country and rural occupation against town occupation is a form of industrial anarchy that cannot be accepted in any deliberative chamber. Every man engaged in useful service in a community is a producer and equally valuable to the State, and to suggest that one section of the community is going to enjoy an advantage for which other sections will be called upon to pay is a wrong way of expressing the position. It is merely an attempt on the part of some hon. members to play one section of the community off against another. It is an appeal to the baser passions that animate mankind rather than an appeal to his reason. That, of course, is the line on which members of the Country Party usually proceed.

I will give the House some information concerning loan expenditure by public bodies. The Bureau of Industry is a public body that possesses power to borrow with the approval of the Government. Up to date the total amount of grants allocated to Brisbane under

the various schemes in operation in Queensland is £1,002,950. The total amount of the grants for electorates outside Brisbane is £4,050,518. Therefore, we find that one-fifth of the public loan expenditure has taken place in the metropolitan area and four-fifths outside the metropolitan area.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: I deplore this attempt to pit one section of the community against the other and one section of the taxpayers against the other. Why, the cost of main roads, which go to develop the country, open up lands, and provide facilities for marketing is to a large extent borne by the State. It is a charge on the general taxpayer, and we should be no more justified in thus separating the cost of main-road construction than we would be justified in separating the expenditure here. Hon. members generally have nothing to gain by that kind of argument, but have everything to lose. It only needs to be exposed in the manner I have exposed it to show how foolish in the extreme it is. Careful investigators of the scheme, and those who desire sound development, and those who desire real employment to be given to our people, will support the Bill.

Question—"That the Bill be now read a second time" (*Mr. Smith's motion*)—put and passed.

#### COMMITTEE.

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

Clause 1—"Short title and construction"—

MR. MOORE (*Aubigny*) [3.52 p.m.]: This is a very important Bill, with tremendous long clauses, and we only received it yesterday. We sat until 10 o'clock last night. That does not give very much time to go through an important Bill of this sort. It is wrong to rush through a Bill like this, containing the principles this does, immediately after the second reading. Nearly every clause contains opportunities for the bureau to assume tremendous powers. It is all very well for the Premier to say that we spoke of political control, such as exists in the railways, but this bureau is outside of political control. I did not say anything about political control.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is dealing with the wrong clause.

MR. MOORE: I beg your pardon.

Clause 1, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2—"Repeal of subsection 1 of section 6—Nature of the bureau to be a body corporate"—agreed to.

Clause 3—"New subsection 1—Bureau to be a body corporate, etc."—

MR. MOORE (*Aubigny*) [3.54 p.m.]: This clause gives terrific powers. It is all very well for the Premier to talk about parliamentary control, but there is no parliamentary control in the true sense of the term. The fact that a sum of money was placed on the Estimates for preliminary investigations has nothing to do with the question of the actual construction of this work. The board is given immense powers, the same powers as the bureau, and the only authority required is that of the Governor in Council. The Premier dwelt at length on the question of political control, but what we are concerned about is parliamentary control, and it cannot be successfully argued that there

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is parliamentary control when we have a provision that—

“The bureau . . . or the works board or any other board appointed . . . shall have and may exercise all the powers, privileges, rights, and remedies of the Crown.”

Of course, Parliament may be called upon to ratify some action that has been taken, but no one can say that under this Bill Parliament has complete control. Tremendous possibilities exist in this clause, which is nominally introduced for the purpose of constructing a dam and widening the river. If the clause definitely set out that the board was to undertake that work, we should know the position; but at present there is no limit to what the bureau or the board may do. When the Premier speaks about a flood prevention and water supply scheme he does not tell us that this clause provides for any works under any conditions that the Governor in Council may determine. In every respect, the bureau and the board are being given parliamentary powers. All contracts made by the bureau or the board are deemed to be guaranteed by the Government of Queensland. I fail to see the simplicity that the Premier attributes to this clause.

Reference has been made to the employment that will be created—and no one objects to giving employment—but one must object to the extraordinary extraneous powers granted by various clauses in this Bill. No one in this Parliament is satisfied to sit with his legs under a comfortable table whilst other people are starving, and all hon. members are, I take it, actuated by the desire to give work that is of benefit to the State. What we on this side of the Committee object to is giving powers outside of that to the bureau, or the Works Board, or any other board that may be appointed. Hon. members have only to examine the clause to see the far-reaching nature of the powers and authorities of the bureau. For example, the bureau will from time to time, with the authority and approval of the Governor in Council by Order in Council, have power—

“(c) To take, or acquire by purchase, lease, grant or otherwise land as defined in subsection (1c) of this section, and goods, chattels, and other property or part thereof for the purposes of the construction and/or establishment and/or management and/or control of any works;”

The PREMIER: You gave the same powers to the Queensland Meat Industry Board in the Abattoirs Agreement Ratification and Meat Industry Acts.

Mr. MOORE: The hon. gentleman overlooks the fact that the Meat Industry Board could only take over works that were necessary for the carrying out of the business in which it was engaged, the board being given that power in much the same way as we give regulation-making power for the administration of an Act. In this instance, however, extraordinary powers are given—powers that are more than necessary for the construction of the work in view. If we are to have a water supply and flood prevention scheme, let us have a separate Bill specifically dealing with the matter, instead of having the matter dealt with as a side issue in a Bill under which anything and

everything can be done. With the authority of the Governor in Council the bureau may issue debentures.

No limit is specified for any work it desires to carry out. Has Parliament control over that? It has not. Its control is only a nominal control. In the Abattoirs Agreement Ratification and Meat Industry Act the conditions and the amount and the terms were made quite clear. I fail to see the necessity for conferring these tremendous powers in a Bill of this nature. I can understand that provision must be made for the amount of money that is going to be expended. It is doubtful whether these estimates put forward in regard to the construction of this dam are very reliable. I doubt very much whether they have been gone into in detail, because, in my opinion the committee appointed to inquire into the matter consisted of full-time men who had neither the opportunity nor the time to acquire sufficient information to give an accurate estimate of the cost. There is a suggestion in the majority report that one class of dam might be infinitely cheaper than another, but that the matter had not been gone into sufficiently to say so definitely. That indicates that it was not able to go into the scheme sufficiently to be able to say, “We can build it at a certain price.” It is said in the report that it is possible, if the matter were gone into thoroughly, that another class of dam might be built at a reduced price. When we are passing a scheme dealing with the building of a dam—and after the dam the transporting of the water to Brisbane and all the appurtenances connected therewith—we should at least have a definite opinion and definite estimates.

The PREMIER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, Mackay) [4.2 p.m.]: The objection of the Leader of the Opposition is not a valid one. In the first place the report on which this Bill is based has been in the hands of hon. members since June last. The information on which it was necessary to enable the hon. member to make up his mind is not very complex at all. All that is involved is whether or not this work shall proceed. The powers that are objected to by the Leader of the Opposition are merely a recapitulation of the powers contained in the principal Act and have already been approved by Parliament. None of the works that are dealt with by this board have been agreed to without the authority of Parliament. The Kangaroo Point Bridge was approved by Parliament last year. So the contention that work is being commenced involving large sums of money without the control or authority of Parliament cannot be sustained.

I have pointed out earlier that this is not a work that any one local authority could carry out. If the whole thing was within a local government area, with one authority, then that local authority could be authorised to go ahead with the work and it would have sufficient power under the law to do it. Such an authority must have the power to enter upon land, to resume land, and do all the things that a local authority does in the carrying out of any of its major operations. A joint board, on which the local authorities interested are represented, is being established under this Bill, and consequently to refrain from giving it the

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necessary power to do the work would be absurd in the extreme.

The major principle is that we approve of the work and we proceed to insert machinery to enable the board to go on with the work. What the hon. gentleman who has just resumed his seat objects to, as I pointed out earlier, is the very power and authority he himself gave to the Meat Industry Board. The relevant section is as follows—

"The board may acquire by purchase, lease, grant, or otherwise, and hold land for carrying out any of the purposes of this Act, and may also purchase, construct, maintain, and alter such buildings, yards, plant, machinery, and other works and improvements as may be deemed necessary for the purposes of this Act.

"Subject to this Act the board may, if it thinks fit—

(i.) Establish, maintain, and conduct abattoirs or saleyards for the sale of cattle in any part of the metropolitan area;

(ii.) Establish, maintain, and conduct works for canning, preserving, chilling, or freezing meat;

(iii.) Take delivery of cattle and slaughter the same on behalf of any other person;

(iv.) Make such arrangements as it thinks fit with regard to the collection. . . ."

and so on!

In the same section it is provided that the board shall be deemed to be a local body for the purposes and pursuant to the provisions of "The Local Bodies Loan Guarantee Act of 1925." All the things that are now being objected to by hon. members opposite were passed in this Parliament in a Bill they themselves passed.

Mr. MAHER (*West Moreton*) [4.6 p.m.]: The argument used by the Premier with regard to the comparison of the power given to the Queensland Meat Industry Board and that given to the Bureau of Industry cannot stand. For instance, under this Act the Bureau of Industry has power to enter into contracts in respect of construction, establishment, management, and control of any such works. It may of its own accord construct, establish, manage, and control any works. No such tremendous powers are conferred on the board controlling the meat industry. The Bureau of Industry can undoubtedly, outside the power of Parliament at all, and without reference to Parliament, embark on schemes of tremendous size and cost, so long as the Ministry of the day give their sanction. I am not going to suggest that the Ministry would fail to recognise their responsibilities, but in the way we see business being despatched here, I have not the slightest doubt that Parliament would be the last place where such big schemes would be discussed. The decision of the Government could and would be carried out by the Bureau of Industry without reference to Parliament at all. Therefore, I say that the Premier's retort to the Leader of the Opposition that the powers given to the Queensland Meat Industry Board were precisely similar to those contained in the Bill is absolute bluff on the part of the hon. gentleman, and cannot be

justified by the facts of the case. It is hard to understand why the Government should grant such great powers to the Bureau of Industry, even the power to over-ride an Act of Parliament. What has this Bureau of Industry done to justify the Government in reposing such tremendous powers in it? During the second reading I pointed out that the bureau had really done nothing in the way of providing any solution of the problem of unemployment mentioned by the Premier when he introduced the original Bill to this House. Judged on that issue the Bureau of Industry has been an absolute failure, and has failed to carry out the original objects of the Act. This Government are giving authority to the Bureau of Industry to construct bridges and to undertake this big water scheme in the Brisbane Valley. The Government came forward with a fanfare of trumpets that it was to be a bureau drawn from all sections of the community to provide a solution of unemployment. It has failed in its object, and why this constructing authority should be given such tremendous powers is beyond my comprehension. I fail to see why the Department of Public Works could not carry out these schemes. During the seventy odd years of responsible Government in Queensland the Department of Public Works has been the constructing authority in many of the greatest public works undertaken in this State—big harbour works and public buildings. Many of the really big schemes in Queensland have been carried through to a successful conclusion by it. Why, then, are we called upon to vote for a super-department, a Government department that has wider powers granted to it in terms of this amending Bill than are possessed by ordinary Government departments? I submit, also, it means a duplication of the power of the Government departments, and needless expenditure is being foisted on the taxpayers in consequence of the Premier's fetish for the Bureau of Industry, with the idea of impressing the people outside this Chamber that this bureau holds the key to the solution of the unemployment problem.

I am afraid that when the box is opened, like Pandora's box, it will be found to be empty. A considerable expenditure will be incurred, and the results anticipated may not be achieved. I protest against the legitimate objectives of the Department of Public Works being subordinated by this Bill. We should not have to maintain an expensive additional department of State and additional Government bodies. They are not warranted, in view of the fact that in the Government departments there is ample power to carry out work of this kind without resorting to a Bureau of Industry.

Mr. KENNY (*Cool*) [4.13 p.m.]: I object to the way that this Bill is being rushed through Parliament. We received the Bill only yesterday. The Parliamentary Labour Party may have had time to consider it, but I object to its being rushed through Parliament in this manner. During the last few days we have been discussing a number of Bills—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to deal with the clause.

Mr. KENNY: I will deal with the clause. The Bill is not receiving mature consideration. We have not been given time to frame

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any amendment on this clause. The Government are not even prepared to consider the Bill on its merits. The Premier, after taking the Bill into Committee, walked out of the Chamber and left the matter to the Home Secretary, who is reading the "Bulletin," and has only two members of the Government Party behind him.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have already called the hon. member to order. He must not proceed on those lines. He should have made his protest on the motion "That the Speaker leave the chair."

Mr. KENNY: I shall have to content myself with the mild protest I have made. The clause provides—

"The bureau shall, from time to time, with the authority and approval of the Governor in Council, by Order in Council, published in the 'Gazette,' have power, authority, and jurisdiction—

To enter into contracts in respect of the construction, establishment, management, and control of any such works."

That is a particularly wide provision—"any works." We have not been told what will be the effects of this provision, and I am satisfied that the Government are not considering it. Further on the clause provides—

"The bureau or any delegated Crown corporation or Crown instrumentality shall, with the approval of the Governor in Council, have power and authority in any contract for the construction of works, the contract price for which exceeds five hundred thousand pounds, to vary the provisions of section thirteen of 'The Contractors and Workmen's Lien Acts, 1906 to 1921,' in such manner as shall from time to time be so approved."

Here the Bill proposes to vest powers greater than the powers of Parliament itself, not only in the bureau, but in anybody to whom the bureau may delegate its powers. What is the use of considering the measure at all? My objection is that we are rushing it through without any consideration. This clause takes control away from Parliament itself; yet Parliament is not giving the matter any consideration. We have not been given the opportunity to frame amendments, and the Government are not giving the matter consideration, seeing that there are only three Government members behind the Minister.

Mr. R. M. KING (*Logan*) [4.16 p.m.]: Before the Premier resumed his seat he said that there were no powers in this Bill that were not contained in the Abattoirs Agreement Ratification and Meat Industry Act. I looked very carefully through that Act, and there is no power contained therein that does not specifically apply to the operations of the abattoirs. Although the Premier does at times say that the Opposition has no intelligence, at least we have sufficient intelligence at this stage to call his bluff and to show that he is entirely wrong. The powers contained in this clause are extraordinary. The clause says that the bureau may construct, establish, manage, or control any works; but it contains no definition of "works." There is no limitation—no works are prescribed—there is no restriction as to the works that may be carried out. The bureau may carry out any works whatever;

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and another part of the Bill gives the bureau power to override an Act of Parliament. Those powers are not to be found in the Abattoirs Agreement Ratification and Meat Industry Act. When we were debating the Bill on its second reading stage we pointed out that Parliament was being ignored altogether.

The Premier, in concluding the debate, said that anybody who made the statement that Parliament had been overridden by the appointment of the bureau was making an absurd statement. Then he went on to say that the bureau was a Crown instrumentality and subject to Parliament. It is a Crown instrumentality, but it is not subject to Parliament. It is subject to the Government, who may by Order in Council order it to do certain things. The Government are not Parliament. Yet Parliament is supposed to be supreme!

The HOME SECRETARY: The bureau cannot do anything without money, and Parliament must vote that money.

Mr. R. M. KING: The Premier wants to arrogate to himself and his Government the functions of Parliament. No doubt the Government are an effective part of Parliament, but they are only one part. It is presumption on the part of any member of the Government to say that the Government are Parliament; they are nothing of the kind. The Opposition have rights and are a part of Parliament. Therefore, the powers contained in this Bill are powers given to a body that is not subject to Parliament at all, but subject to the Government. The bureau really has greater powers than the Government, because it can override an Act of Parliament.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*) [4.21 p.m.]: There is no necessity to give the bureau the powers in this clause in order to enable it to construct a dam across the upper reaches of the Brisbane River. We have another department that supervised works in the Theodore area just as big as this scheme, that is, the Sub-Department of Irrigation and Water Supply. It possesses the engineers for the job. There is no reason why it should not supervise this work. If the Government are satisfied that this scheme is a sound one, and that the dam is necessary, where is the necessity of handing it over to the bureau? It is not a big work. The Sub-Department of Irrigation and Water Supply has already supervised bigger works. It was allowed to plan a work that at one time was to cost £4,000,000, and it would have carried that work through had the money been available. This is only an unnecessary duplication of offices. We are giving this bureau very autocratic powers, quite unnecessary for the job, when we have a competent department, possessing competent engineers who could prepare specifications, call for tenders, let a contract, and supervise the work. We should then know what the scheme was going to cost. No one knows now what it will cost. The Government are going ahead regardless of its cost. We are not going to get anywhere with a bureau like this. It seems extraordinary that every Labour Government is just the same. A previous Labour Government appointed the Irrigation and Water Supply Commissioner—I give this as an illustration—clothed him with autocratic powers, very much the same as this Government has given to the bureau, and later on found it

absolutely necessary to curb those powers. Millions of money had then been wasted. It was beyond the power of the Minister or Cabinet to interfere. Here we are giving similar powers to a bureau, which certainly is composed of good men now. No one knows who will succeed the present members of the bureau. Every one of the Government representatives can find quite sufficient work to do inside his own department. We are heading for trouble after having had one experience with a body possessing similar powers. We found that experiment was a failure and a bad system, under which the State's money was wasted. Why should we be copying word for word the original Act, which conferred the same powers on the Irrigation Commissioner after the Government found it was unnecessary? It should not require the Bureau of Industry to complete the dam on the Stanley River. Lake Manchester was constructed without a Bill like this, and it was constructed under the contract system.

Competent officers to supervise the work and to prepare estimates are available in the Department of Public Works or in the Sub-Department of Irrigation and Water Supply, and if the Government were dissatisfied with the advice of these engineers they could secure the opinions of others. After all, the engineers on this board would give their advice in any event. To group the heads of departments in a bureau without any particular set of officers to carry out their orders will mean the setting up of another department, resulting in duplication and, in the payments to two or three departments in respect of one class of work. There is no benefit to the unemployed in wasting money after this fashion, nor is there any benefit to Brisbane or the State. You can justify building a dam across the Brisbane River to prevent damage by flood on the score that unemployment will be relieved, but you cannot justify wasting money on that work when you can do useful work for the same money elsewhere. This is not the only place in the State where money can be spent usefully and for the benefit of the State. Other works are necessary. Do not merely bring about a duplication of departments for the sake of having another public building to house a department that has no work to do when other men in other departments who could do the work are drawing their salaries and are idle. Whilst this work is being carried on by the bureau the engineers in the Department of Public Works will be idle. Why should not this work be done by them?

The HOME SECRETARY: The complaint was that the officers on the special committee having full-time jobs to do could not devote as much time as possible to this work.

Mr. DEACON: Let me put the hon. gentleman right. The complaint was that the officers who composed the bureau had full-time jobs in their own departments, but in this instance we have men in the Department of Public Works capable of doing the work but having nothing to do because the Government appoint another set of officers to do the work. It is nonsense! It is stupid! It is sheer waste of money! Of course, the Government do not seem to have any idea of economy, their view being that all that is necessary is to shovel out the money to somebody. That is not the way to manage the State. The Govern-

ment are either ignorant of management or acting deliberately in a way that will waste a lot of money. For the sake of all the other works in the State that require attention and that will have to be skimped—works that would help to increase the production of this State—I object to this clause. It is not possible to get the clause altered, because the Government have made up their minds, whether they are stupid minds or their own minds.

Mr. RUSSELL (*Hamilton*) [4.29 p.m.]: The Premier would lead us to believe that Parliament assented to a similar clause last year, but there is a vast difference between what was agreed to last year and what is proposed now. Section 20 of the Industries Assistance and Other Acts Amendment Act provides that the bureau shall be empowered to undertake—

“The carrying out by the bureau of delegated Crown corporation or instrumentality, as prescribed in section six of this Act of the works, namely, the construction of a bridge across the Brisbane River and all necessary approaches . . .”

The HOME SECRETARY: Read section 19 of the original Act.

Mr. RUSSELL: I contend that that Bill was framed for one specific purpose—the construction of the bridge over the Brisbane River—because the works are specified. This Bill gives the bureau authority to construct any works whatever, and we object to that vast power being vested in the bureau. We contend that every project should be the subject of a separate Bill. We object to the bureau, which to my mind is becoming the supreme economic council of this State. What the Leader of the Opposition said is quite true; there is no parliamentary control over the bureau, except of a purely nominal nature. Appropriation Bills and Estimates have been passed by this House, but hon. members had no chance of discussing Loan Estimates, and we were not allowed much discussion on the Appropriation Bill. The votes for these Government works are generally tucked away in a very obscure corner of the Estimates, and there is not much opportunity of discussing any specific project. I contend there should be a Bill to deal with the Stanley River scheme alone. If the Premier desires to alter the constitution of the bureau or give it greater powers it should be the subject of another measure.

The PREMIER: The principles you are arguing against were confirmed on the second reading.

Mr. RUSSELL: I consider I am in order in referring to this matter, and if I am not, the Chairman will correct me. I emphatically protest against the undue haste that has been displayed. We are not objecting to the employment of men on this scheme, but we object to the powers that are being conferred on this bureau.

There is no analogy between the powers vested in the bureau and the powers vested in the Meat Industry Board. The Meat Industry Board was constituted for a specific purpose and those powers were outlined; but in this case the bureau is given a blank cheque to construct any works it considers necessary, with the approval of the Executive Council. The nature of the powers should be specifically mentioned and not

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left at large so that the bureau, at the dictation of the Government, may construct bridges all over Queensland and enter upon any project provided it has the sanction of the Government; Parliament then being asked to agree to the vote. We claim that Parliament should be the sole arbiter in regard to all these schemes. We strongly object to the vesting of enormous powers in this supreme economic council that the Premier is endeavouring to create.

In order to test the feeling of the Committee it is my intention to ask hon. members to give their opinion as to whether it is advisable to vest these enormous powers in this bureau and to give it authority to go ahead with any project, provided the Government are agreeable. If the Premier will confine the operations of the bureau to the construction of the Stanley River dam we are prepared to let the matter go; but we are not prepared to agree to the assumption of these enormous powers. Every project should be discussed on its merits by Parliament. The Kangaroo Point Bridge was dealt with in a previous Bill, and was referred to in a small paragraph in the measure. The whole question should be placed before the Chamber in a concrete form and all the estimates and plans should be laid on the table of the House.

I move the following amendment:—

“On page 2, line 12, omit the word—  
‘any,’

and insert in lieu thereof the word—  
‘the.’”

If that is agreed to, I propose to add to the paragraph the words—

“namely, the construction of the Stanley River dam.”

My object is to confine the operations of this Bill to the project under discussion by the Committee, namely, the construction of the Stanley River dam. If the Government like to build the Nathan dam or any project, let them deal with it separately instead of embarking on several projects under a general authority under one Bill, and giving the bureau this tremendous power to do as it likes, provided it has the sanction of the Government.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! On the second reading of the Bill the House approved of the principle that the Bill should apply to the construction of any works; therefore the amendment is totally out of order, and I cannot accept it.

The PREMIER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, Mackay) [4.35 p.m.]: The hon. member who has just resumed his seat has objected to the general powers of the bureau and to the clause under review, and also asserts that hon. members opposite have not had sufficient time to deal with the Bill. This whole matter is really a recapitulation of the principal Act. The hon. member read portion of section 19, but not the whole of it. Section 19 of the principal Act, following on the portion the hon. member read, says—

“The bureau shall, from time to time, with the authority and approval of the Governor in Council, by Order in Council published in the ‘Gazette,’ have power, authority, and jurisdiction—

(i.) To construct, establish, manage, and control any works.

(ii.) To take, or acquire by purchase, lease, grant, or otherwise, land for the purposes of the construction and/or establishment and/or management and/or control of any works.

“For the purposes of these provisions, and notwithstanding any Act or law to the contrary, the bureau shall be and shall be deemed to be a constructing authority, and acting under the authority of the Governor in Council within the meaning of ‘The Public Works Land Resumption Acts, 1906 to 1917’ (or any Act amending or in substitution thereof) and such last-mentioned Act shall, subject as hereafter provided in this Act, mutatis mutandis, apply and extend accordingly.”

What the hon. member complains of I have actually read from the existing Act. He also complained of not having had an opportunity of debating the matter. Hon. members debated the matter last year. The introductory stage last year occupied one and three-quarter hours, the second reading ten hours, and the Committee stage thirteen and three-quarter hours.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*) [4.37 p.m.]: What that statement has to do with the question at issue I have not the faintest idea. Last year we voted against the second reading of the Bill that amended the Bureau of Industry Act. It was gagged through. We also called for a division on the third reading because we objected to the principles it laid down. We objected in particular to the principle of giving an authority outside Parliament power to borrow and to construct any works it desired. We objected to the principle of an outside authority overriding Acts of Parliament. In every case last year we objected to that principle, but because the Government, having a majority, overrode us does not prove that we did not care. We did care, and we have every right to protest now. My contention is that there is no occasion to give these vast powers to an outside body. It is entirely wrong. Our contention has been that the control of the finances of this State should rest with Parliament. This Bill is going outside that principle altogether and is not a recapitulation of the existing section—there is more in the clause, inasmuch as it gives power to delegate the powers of the bureau. The principle is entirely wrong and we thoroughly object to it. We voted against it consistently last year until the guillotine fell.

Mr. GLEDSON: Are you objecting to the representation on the board of the Brisbane and Ipswich City Councils?

Mr. MOORE: I am not concerned with the representation of the Brisbane and Ipswich City Councils. The hon. member has been asleep all this time instead of paying attention to the transaction of business and if he knows nothing of the Bill that is not my fault. What I am objecting to is the fact that these powers are being given to this outside authority, which can control even the credit of this State, through the Governor in Council. Whatever it does will be deemed to be guaranteed by the Government. Before it carries out any such work we, as Parliament, should have a specification and know exactly what is intended to be done. We do not know the liability that may be incurred, we do not know the amount of money to be jeopardised. The

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committee that was appointed to go into this matter has not brought down what might be called a final estimate by any means. It was exactly the same in connection with the Kangaroo Point Bridge. After the Bill was passed last year a proper board was set up and engineers appointed to see what it would cost. Then there was also the question of calling tenders to see whether the contract price would come within the estimate. Although we are not calling tenders for the bridge, the suggestion was that if the price was higher than the estimate it might not be constructed. But with this project we are giving an entirely open cheque. We do not know what it is going to cost. It is very fine for the hon. member to simply sit behind the Government and not register any protest, but to my mind the whole thing is wrong. The increased liability has not been taken into consideration. I am not objecting to the widening of the river or the cutting off of points in order to minimise floods, but I am objecting to the extraordinarily wide powers that are being given to an outside authority, responsible only to the Governor in Council.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*) [4.41 p.m.]: This Bill gives power to the bureau to spend money on any project without referring it to Parliament, to sell up anything anywhere. It has power to manage Queensland. If it could find a buyer it could sell the Government off.

The PREMIER: There are no sellers as far as the Government are concerned. Your party tried that before.

Mr. DEACON: Our party never tried to sell the Government. We should find it impossible. This Bill limits the power of the Government by handing them over to another authority. Neither the Premier nor any other hon. member has justified the proposal. Possibly it was stated in caucus that this was a proposal involving the expenditure of a large sum of money and providing employment for a large number of men, and probably the party decided to accept it no matter how long the work would last, how many men would be employed or what it would cost. Here is a body whose name can be used. There are responsible officers in other departments capable of carrying out the work. The officers of the bureau will not actually manage the work. Some one else will do it, but their names will be used to cover it up before the public.

Mr. J. G. BAYLEY (*Wynnum*) [4.44 p.m.]: The Leader of the Opposition is entirely justified in his opposition to the principle contained in this clause, which proposes to transfer almost unlimited powers to an outside body. These powers are limited only by the Governor in Council, and Parliament as a Parliament has no say whatever in the matter. If the Government can create a board such as is proposed here, then there is nothing to prevent them from creating other boards to carry out the work associated with other governmental activities and the outcome will be that Parliament will be shorn of the powers that rightly belong to it. I am opposed to that and every hon. member on this side of the Chamber is opposed to it, too. It is not that we are opposed to some of the projects that may be carried out. If they were placed before Parliament for consideration we should probably be in

agreement with nine-tenths of them, but we do object to the method that is being adopted to carry out the work. The hon. member for Cunningham is opposed to the work being carried out by a board. He said that there was no reason why the work should not be carried out by the officers of the Irrigation and Water Supply Department. The Home Secretary criticised that suggestion on the ground that these men were already fully employed, but if the officers of that department are fully employed it would be an easy matter to appoint additional expert officers from without the service whose training and experience would enable them to carry out this work.

The PREMIER: That is the meaning of the provision to delegate authority to any other Crown instrumentality. We could authorise the Commissioner for Railways, the Commissioner of Main Roads, or the Irrigation and Water Supply Department to do what you suggest.

Mr. J. G. BAYLEY: The bureau could?

The PREMIER: Yes. That is the meaning of the clause to which you object.

Mr. J. G. BAYLEY: That is a round-about way of doing things. Why should not the Government do the work direct and not through the bureau? That is what we object to. The Government are willingly depriving themselves of power that rightly belongs to the Government; they are delegating the power to the bureau and giving the bureau power to do things that only a body like Parliament itself should be in a position to do. The bureau is also given power to vary the provisions of "The Contractors' and Workmen's Lien Acts, 1906 to 1921." The Governor in Council may issue fresh regulations under those Acts, but here we are giving this outside body power to alter their provisions. That power should remain with Parliament itself, and should not be transferred to any outside body. For that and similar reasons the party on this side of the Chamber is solidly behind the Leader of the Opposition in opposing this clause.

Clause 3, as read, agreed to.

Clause 4—"New subsection 1A—Further powers of bureau, etc."—agreed to.

Clause 5—"New subsections 1B to 1F—Delegation of powers, etc."—

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*) [4.49 p.m.]: This clause contains new paragraphs as to the delegation of powers by the bureau. It states in one part—

"For the purposes of this Act the term 'works' shall mean and include any work or undertaking of whatever nature from time to time authorised and approved by the Governor in Council to be constructed, established, managed, and controlled under this Act."

Everyone knows how wide that definition is. It does not apply to this work we are talking about now, but to "any work or undertaking of whatever nature from time to time authorised and approved by the Governor in Council"—not authorised and approved by Parliament. In the amending Act last year the bureau was given power to issue debentures approved by the Governor in Council; and when we find that Parliament guarantees any liability that it may undertake, it shows what tremendous importance there is in a Bill of this nature. The giving of extraordinary powers like this without

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reference to Parliament shows what can be done under the Bill. I cannot understand the necessity for it. The Bill last year was wide enough in all conscience; but what the idea is of bringing in amending provisions such as this and conferring wider powers on the bureau I fail to understand, unless the Premier has some project in mind to be carried out without reference to Parliament. I could quite understand the necessity for these wide powers if some hon. members of the Government Party wished to do something extraordinary under the cloak of this Bill. I cannot understand why, in a measure like this, which the Premier contends is for the purpose of widening the Brisbane River, providing additions to the Brisbane water supply and laying the basis for a flood prevention scheme, such a wide definition of the term "works" should be given. The Premier did say, but only by inference, that the bureau would not carry out any works of major importance without the consent of Parliament. If it is intended to consult Parliament in such circumstances, why place such extraordinary powers in this clause? I can quite understand that the Premier, if he were on this side of the Committee, would strongly object to a body outside Parliament and not responsible to Parliament being clothed with such powers. We previously had the experience of a commission possessing such wide powers, and we know what happened. It is inexplicable to me that there should be this endeavour to provide an opportunity for an outside body to undertake obligations for which the State of Queensland will be responsible, merely on the suggestion of a board appointed by the bureau under the authority of the Governor in Council.

This clause contains several amendments. It defines the procedure on the question of compensation. The dispute is to be settled by an arbitrator; the costs are to be given against the bureau if a claimant proves that his claim is nearer the amount awarded by the arbitrator than that offered by the bureau; and if the amount offered by the bureau is nearer the amount given by the arbitrator, then the costs are to be paid by the claimant. Then it goes on to say that a committee of the bureau is to be called the works board and constituted by such persons—

"as the Governor in Council shall from time to time appoint, and that it may exercise the powers, authorities, and jurisdiction of the bureau in or about the construction and general supervision of construction in respect of such works as shall be prescribed."

The Premier said that all those powers were desired to be delegated either to the Commissioner for Railways for the building of a railway line, or the Commissioner of Main Roads, where the construction of a road was desirable. Those bodies have nothing to do with the delegation of authority to another works board appointed by the Governor in Council.

The clause proceeds—

"and such committee shall have and exercise powers, authorities, and jurisdiction as a constructing authority accordingly similar to those of the bureau."

The bureau can delegate to such works board power to enter into a contract of prac-

tically unlimited duration, incurring any expenditure, with the authority of the Governor in Council, and the State will be responsible for the cost. Yesterday the Home Secretary was most careful to provide in the Local Authorities Acts Amendment Bill that not one local authority should make any purchase on time payment or enter into any contract over a period of years without the express sanction of a poll taken beforehand.

Provision was made so that future councils would not be saddled with a liability over which they had no control. In this Bill, however, we are handing over to an authority the power to do all manner of things that we objected to yesterday and that the Home Secretary agreed should not be contained in his Bill. There is no consistency in the legislation of the Government. The Bill now under review has gone to an extreme in respect of a comparatively simple matter—the carrying out of certain specified works. I object to extended powers being given, and cannot understand why they are given, unless the Government have some ulterior motive.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*) [4.55 p.m.]: When we find that the clause provides, *inter alia*, that—

"For the purposes of this Act the term 'works' shall mean and include any work or undertaking of whatever nature from time to time authorised and approved by the Governor in Council to be constructed, established, managed, and controlled under this Act; and without limiting the generality of such term shall include any work or undertaking of whatever nature required for any of the purposes set out in section four of 'The Public Works Land Resumption Acts, 1906 to 1926'; and for the purposes of this Act, including resumptions by the bureau, the term 'land' shall mean land of freehold or leasehold or any other tenure, and shall also include wharves, jetties, piers, and constructions, and erections of any nature or part thereof above or below high-water mark and the sites thereof or intended therefor or for any of them, and any lease or license subsisting in respect thereof."

We can see there is no limit to the generality of the powers given. In view of these powers, is there any need to pass any other Act of Parliament? It is extraordinary to have a clause of that nature in the Bill, and there is no necessity for it. I have already pointed out that a previous Labour Government, of which the Premier was a Minister, gave autocratic powers to the Commissioner of Irrigation and Water Supply—powers very similar to these. The result was not very satisfactory, and, as the Premier knows, a tremendous waste of public money took place. I do not say that the officers comprising the Bureau of Industry would waste money, but at the same time we have an instance where similar powers were given to a Commission of Irrigation and Water Supply, and it was subsequently found necessary to curb the powers of that officer by legislation in this Parliament. The bureau already has the power to build the Kangaroo Point Bridge. Why is it necessary that the bureau should have conferred upon it such general powers as will enable it to construct, establish, manage, and control any other work or

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undertaking? No explanation is given elsewhere, nor can the Premier explain the clause to mean other than what the words say—that the bureau will have unlimited powers—powers that have never been given before, except in one instance, where the grant of the power was found to have been a huge mistake. If the clause goes through in its present form, the Premier and his Minister will live to regret it.

The PREMIER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*) [5 p.m.]: The hon. member who has just resumed his seat referred to the powers that were granted to a Commissioner of Irrigation and Water Supply, and endeavoured to draw an analogy between that case and the clause now under discussion. The fact is that the powers referred to were set out in the Act and given to the Commissioner to use in his discretion; but we are not doing that in this case.

The powers conferred on the bureau or any authority operating under the aegis of the bureau are subject to the control of the Governor in Council; in other words, the powers he objects to are only powers in respect of works authorised. Authorised by whom? Works authorised by the Governor in Council, the Government of the day, the supreme authority in the State, who, in return, are subject to the authority of Parliament. The passing of a no-confidence motion would change the Government of the day and set up a new Government.

The Leader of the Opposition is always amusing. He has a very convenient memory. In dealing with matters of this kind he forgets all the things he did himself. The hon. gentleman piloted a Bill through Parliament dealing with transport facilities of various kinds, in which he gave the Governor in Council power to grant franchises and create toll bridges.

Mr. KENNY interjected.

The PREMIER: The hon. member for Cook cannot draw my fire in that way. I am dealing with his leader; I am not dealing with him. The Leader of the Opposition contemplated granting a franchise to Dorman, Long, and Company, to build a bridge across the river without reference to Parliament at all. He did not propose to refer it to Parliament, and the question was practically fixed up but for the signatures. Does the hon. gentleman deny that?

Mr. MOORE: Yes, certainly!

The PREMIER: He would deny anything. I have here a letter from Mr. Harding Frew, who was agent for Messrs. Dorman, Long, and Company. The letter is dated 25th November, 1933, and reads as follows:—

*“Re KANGAROO POINT BRIDGE PROPOSAL.*

“Since your recent public statement that your Government was negotiating with the ex-Chief Engineer of the New South Wales Government in connection with the Sydney Harbour Bridge, namely, Dr. J. J. C. Bradfield, for him to undertake the design and supervision of the Brisbane Central Bridge, I have naturally refrained from pushing my own claims to this position.

“Now, however, that it appears this appointment will be made, permit me to submit my name for your consideration to assist Dr. Bradfield, perhaps in regard

to the design and preparation of the plans, specifications, and estimates of the whole of the approach spans.

“No doubt you are aware that the possibilities of the central bridge being undertaken as a toll project were first brought before the Moore Government by me, soon after their taking up office in 1930, and that the whole of the negotiations from that time to date in relation to the proposal that Messrs. Dorman, Long, and Company should arrange the necessary finance and design, construct and operate the project, have been undertaken by me personally.

“Such professional services have cost me a considerable amount of money, as they necessitated, inter alia, the preparation of alternative designs for the proposal, on the suspension, arch, and cantilever types of bridges, and the taking out of quantities, preparation of estimates, financial statements, etc., all of which were used in connection with the preparation of a draft Order in Council, which was tentatively agreed to, both by Dorman, Long, and Company and Mr. Moore personally, a few days before the last State election.”

Then again, the Leader of the Opposition, talking of the authority of Parliament, leaves out of account the purchase of the meatworks from Swifts. The hon. member agreed to purchase those works from Swifts and a contract was entered into between the Government of the day and Swifts before the thing was referred to Parliament at all. I quote section 4 of the schedule of the Abattoirs Agreement Ratification and Meat Industry Act—

“The Government will procure the passage at the present session of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland of an Act of Parliament constituting a board (hereinafter called ‘The Board’) to acquire the said property and to carry on abattoirs thereat and vesting in and imposing upon the board the said property and the benefits and obligations of this agreement, and authorising and directing the issue by the board and authorising and directing the guaranteeing by the Treasurer, on behalf of the said State, of the debentures hereinafter mentioned.”

In other words a contract had been entered into for the purchase of those works. That was a Crown contract to be ratified by Parliament. It was a Crown contract, and what the company desired and what the Government agreed to give was a parliamentary contract. The inviolability of Crown contracts had been invaded by the Moore Government and the Swift Australian Company were not prepared to take a Crown contract—what they desired was a parliamentary contract. A contract was made by the Moore Government, and a parliamentary contract was thereupon given.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*) [5.5 p.m.]: It has been a very interesting discourse by the Premier, but it has nothing whatever to do with this Bill. There was nothing in the letter at all except a tentative Order in Council.

The PREMIER: Which you did not agree with!

Mr. MOORE: Which I did not agree with. The tentative Order in Council Messrs.

*Mr. Moore!*

Dorman, Long, and Co. would not agree to, unless the Government were prepared to guarantee interest, and as the Government would not guarantee interest it came to nothing. There was nothing in that at all. It would appear as though the Premier has found something extraordinary. This is what I have said all along. Messrs. Dorman, Long, and Co., Limited, were a constructing authority and not a financing authority. Their representatives came up here for the purpose of looking at the central bridge project, but when it came to the question of finance they said, "Oh, yes; we are a constructing authority and if you will guarantee the interest then we might be prepared to consider the proposal." We never got anywhere within coöses of agreement and never could.

The PREMIER: What about Mr. Harding Frew?

Mr. MOORE: When it came to dealing with the members of the firm of Messrs. Dorman, Long, and Co. we found it a very different proposition to dealing with Mr. Harding Frew, as I suppose the hon. gentleman knows without my saying.

The PREMIER: It is a good thing it failed, anyhow.

Mr. MOORE: I do not know that it is. From the point of view of the people it would be an infinitely better thing for a private company to risk its capital in constructing the bridge, when it was going to be handed over under exactly the same terms at the end of the franchise.

The PREMIER: You say they wanted a Government guarantee. It is a good job that fell through.

Mr. MOORE: It fell through. My statement was always the same. But we were not putting forward the suggestion that the firm should build a bridge. They were making the suggestion to us, and when it came to the question of a Government guarantee we would not dream of touching it. If we were what would be the sense of offering a rate of interest? It would be ridiculous. It was only because it was a speculative enterprise in which a huge taxation would have to be paid by them, and whether it paid or not it had to be handed over to the Government at the end of the period of franchise.

The question of the abattoirs has nothing at all to do with this question either. What we object to in this Bill is not that one particular work is not submitted to Parliament but that the bureau may construct works from time to time and may incur obligations from time to time. That is the whole principle underlying this clause; it is not a question of one particular thing being ratified by Parliament. The Bill contains nothing to say that the works shall be ratified by Parliament or that they shall even come before Parliament. All the clause does is to give the bureau power, with the authority of the Governor in Council, to construct works at any time, at any place, and for any purpose, subject to no parliamentary control.

The PREMIER: All major works.

Mr. MOORE: It does not say so. If the Bill said that they even had to come before Parliament it would be a different thing.

Clause 5, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 6 to 3, both inclusive, agreed to.

[*Mr. Moore.*

Clause 9—"New section 6c—Approval of works for water supply and flood prevention"—

Mr. RUSSELL (*Hamilton*) [5.10 p.m.]: I really must record my protest against that part of the clause on page 8, line 27, which states that the plans and specifications shall be hereafter approved by the Governor in Council. I would move an amendment, but I do not think there is much chance of its being accepted by the Government. In any project involving large sums of money the plans and specifications should be approved by Parliament and not by the Governor in Council. The Premier may say it will cause delay, but that could be overcome by summoning a special session of Parliament to approve or otherwise of the plans and specifications.

The PREMIER: How many men in this House could understand plans and specifications?

Mr. RUSSELL: There may be on this side of the House, but are not over there. If sufficient light were thrown upon the subject we could probably form a reasonable opinion of the merits or demerits of the scheme.

The PREMIER: We never have plans and specifications before Parliament.

Mr. RUSSELL: As a matter of fact if this Bill passes through Parliament all the Government will do will be to instruct the authority to draw up some plans and specifications that Parliament will never see until the work is well in hand. I am standing for the rights of Parliament. We should have the right to inspect these plans and specifications and give our approval or otherwise. I am raising my protest against the assumption of authority by the Governor in Council.

Clause 9, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 10 to 13, both inclusive, agreed to.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill without amendment.

### THIRD READING.

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

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

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at 5.15 p.m.