

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**THURSDAY, 17 OCTOBER 1935**

---

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

**THURSDAY, 17 OCTOBER, 1935.**

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

QUESTION.

BEER PURCHASED BY RAILWAY REFRESHMENT ROOMS.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*) asked the Minister for Transport—

“How many dozen bottles of beer—  
(a) imported from other States; and  
(b) locally brewed—were purchased by the Railway Refreshment Rooms during last year?”

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. P. Pease, *Herbert*), for the MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Hon. J. Dash, *Mundingburra*), replied—

“Information is being obtained.”

PAPERS.

The following papers were laid on the table—

Regulation, dated 9th October, 1935, under “The Explosives Act of 1906.”

Order in Council, dated 9th October, 1935, under “The Workers’ Compensation Acts, 1916 to 1934.”

By-laws Nos. 320 and 321 under section 134 of “The Railways Acts, 1914 to 1934.”

ROYAL COMMISSION ON RACING AND GAMING.

WITHDRAWAL OF NOTICE OF MOTION.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*) [10.32 a.m.]: I desire permission of the House to withdraw the notice of motion in General Business standing in my name. As a commission has now commenced investigations, no good purpose would be served by proceeding with the motion.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the Leader of the Opposition be permitted to withdraw the notice of motion under the heading General Business appearing in his name?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—ESTIMATES—FIRST AND SECOND ALLOTTED DAYS.

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

ESTIMATES IN CHIEF, 1935-36.

EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR (BALANCE OF VOTE.)

The PREMIER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*) [10.34 a.m.]: I move—

“That £3,026 be granted for the Executive and Legislative—His Excellency the Governor (balance of vote).”

The CHAIRMAN: If it meets with the concurrence of hon. members, I propose to follow my previous practice of allowing discussion on the whole of the ramifications of each department so far as the consolidated revenue account is concerned on the

Chief Office vote, and to confine the discussion on the other votes strictly to the operations of the sub-departments concerned.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Item agreed to.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL.

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

“That £87 be granted for ‘Executive Council.’”

Item agreed to.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

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

“That £31,344 be granted for ‘Legislative Assembly.’”

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*) [10.36 a.m.]: Whereas last financial year the amount appropriated under this heading was £29,634, the vote for the current financial year is £31,344. I do not consider that the amount is excessive, taking into account the number of members. Many people are under a misconception as to the work of a member of Parliament. They think that the members work only during the time of the session, perhaps four months in the year, and the remainder of the year is a holiday.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It is a popular delusion.

Mr. MOORE: It certainly is. It is a wrong conception of the work of a member. His work is continuous all the year round. It is just as well the public should really understand how much work has to be performed by a member on behalf of his electorate and his electors. He is supposed to be at the beck and call of each and every one of his constituents at any time, and under any circumstances. Very often one hears it said of a member of Parliament that he has a good life, he has nothing to do, that “Parliament only sat for four months.” The work of a member should be appreciated more than it is. A great portion of his work is performed outside of the session. In fact, it can be said in many cases that he does more work outside than inside the Parliament House.

There seems to be an ever-growing practice for people to call on hon. members at any time during the sittings of the House. I know it would be a very difficult practice to put into operation, but I consider that during the session, certain specified hours should be set aside for interviewers. It is very inconvenient to have a continuous stream of callers when one should be devoting one’s attention to the matters under discussion in the Chamber.

The PREMIER: I do not think people should call when the House is sitting.

Mr. MOORE: Requests are made to members to leave the Chamber to go outside to interview callers. Nine times out of ten the interviewer is merely prospecting.

The PREMIER: “Prospecting” is a good word. (Laughter.)

Mr. MOORE: The conversation is opened by the caller remarking “Don’t you remember me?” Probably the hon. member has never heard of him.

The PREMIER: That is the preliminary to the “bite.”

*Mr. Moore*]

Mr. MOORE: The member replies "Yes." Very often the answer, to be truthful, should be "No." It is not fair that hon. members should be continually asked to leave the Chamber during a sitting. Certainly there are instances when an elector from the country desires to see one on an important matter and it is only right that he should be interviewed. That is not what I am objecting to. My objection is to the continuous stream of callers who expect members to interview them at any time and all the time—whenever they feel disposed to visit the House. Very often it is more for conversational purposes than anything else. There should be some curtailment of this sort of thing, but I know it is rather difficult to effect. The practice is becoming more prevalent than previously. A few years ago we had not this continuous stream of callers that one now sees. In some cases they first of all try the members on the Government benches and when they prove barren, try members on this side.

The PREMIER: Every new member is tried out on things that have been rejected over the last twenty years.

Mr. MOORE: I quite understand that. We have all been through the mill. In my opinion the Legislative Assembly is still performing a very useful function. It is often heard said that if a vote was taken in Queensland on secession from the Commonwealth the verdict would be "yes." We have had the spectacle of one State of the Commonwealth sending delegates to the British Government with a petition for secession. This is due in a very large measure to a lack of understanding and the lack of an Australian outlook in recognising that there are difficulties in our present system of government. We all recognise that each State has to contend with difficulties. We all recognise that most States are getting advantages in some way or other, but an attempt is certainly being made by most of the States to get round section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution by means of subterfuges, such as a wrongful use of the Health Act or the quarantine regulations. If that practice is to be exploited to any extent, the suggestion will inevitably be made that the Constitution should be broken up. All sorts of subterfuges are being used. We see a subterfuge being used to prevent potatoes going from Tasmania into Victoria, and stock regulations to prevent cattle going from Queensland into New South Wales, or another coming from New South Wales into Queensland. We must realise that while we have sovereign rights we are legislating within our own sphere of activity and we cannot get round the Constitution of Australia by subterfuge. If it is in the best interests of the various States that there should be an alteration in the Constitution, the right thing to do is to make that alteration by constitutional methods. It is wrong to endeavour to get round the Constitution by using doubtful methods, or methods never contemplated by its creators.

The people cannot grumble at the expense when the total cost of the Legislative Assembly is only £31,344. Their only concern is to see that they get value for their money. I think that members of Parliament do give more than value for what they receive from the public. I do not intend to weary the Committee by pursuing the

[Mr. Moore.

subject further. I merely wanted to call attention to the fact that the work of a member of Parliament is not finished when he leaves the House. He is working all the year round, very often on week-ends as well as week days. It is evident that the people expect a great deal more from Governments and members of Parliament to-day than they did a few years ago.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN (*Dalby*) [10.43 a.m.]: I should like to know why it is necessary to increase the number of messengers. I have been here quite a long time and I do not see any reason why we should have another messenger.

There has also been an addition to the office cleaning staff. The cost is not much, but I believe that economy should be effected wherever possible. I understood that the laying down of the parquetry floors would considerably reduce the amount of cleaning work. We spent an enormous amount of money on them. That work must have cost £1,000 or more and I thought that by paying that we should be reducing the cost of office cleaning. Although the parquetry floors look very well, they are, unfortunately, very dangerous. The surface is very slippery and we members of Parliament have discovered that we must now wear rubber soles and heels to prevent our falling when walking on it.

I have been informed—I do not know whether it is true, but I think I ought to draw attention to the matter—that the parquetry floor has introduced borers into the building. That is a very serious matter, if a fact.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: A few bores! (Laughter.)

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Hon. members may laugh; but I am told that when the parquetry was put in it contained borers, and those borers are likely to eat the flooring and other woodwork. If there is some way of checking this damage, I think the Premier should investigate the matter. I am told that the flooring-boards in this building are white pine, and that not only would such damage be dangerous, but that repairs would be very costly. If that money could be saved, it might help towards reducing taxation.

I am pleased to see that a reduction has been made in the expenditure on "Hansard" and other printing—telegrams, stationery, etc. Perhaps even the amount of £7,750 may not be necessary, because "Hansard" is generally filled by members sitting in opposition, whether Labour or Country-National, and as on this occasion there are very few members of the Opposition, "Hansard" should be much smaller during the next three years than for many years past.

Mr. RUSSELL (*Hamilton*) [10.48 a.m.]: The Leader of the Opposition raised a very interesting point in connection with the increased cost of the Assembly. I think something should be added to his statement concerning the work of members of Parliament. A good deal is said these days about the exorbitant cost of Parliament, but people confuse the cost of Parliament with the cost of government. The cost of Parliament itself is very trifling when spread over the whole community, and I contend that a member of Parliament, occupying as he does a very high position, should be paid adequately, and should be able to have at his command

all those facilities to which he is entitled. It has been said that it would be cheaper to abolish State Parliaments and resort to unification. If one analyses the question carefully, however, one must come to the conclusion that there would be no saving to the community. The real cost is that of the public service, and whether that cost is excessive is not for us to discuss on this vote. The point I wish to make clear is that the cost of Parliament is a very small item, in view of the service rendered by members of Parliament and the attendant costs of running Parliament. I think we can safely claim that the Queensland Parliament compares favourably with other Parliaments in Australia. There are times when members are outspoken, but they are fairly decorous, and the public receive value for their money. I think this is an occasion when both parties in the House are in unity.

We should not fail to recognise the wonderful work performed by the "Hansard" staff. The appropriation for "Hansard" is included in the vote under discussion, although the State Reporting Bureau is dealt with in another vote. After an experience of nine years in this Parliament, I must say that the service rendered by "Hansard" is simply wonderful—the speeches are recorded accurately. I think every hon. member will agree that we receive a fair deal from the "Hansard" staff, and when we compare their work with the work done elsewhere, one must admit that we have a very proficient staff rendering splendid service to hon. members. Whether or not "Hansard" should be continued is another matter altogether. Some hon. members are of the opinion that "Hansard" is a waste of money, and that if there was no "Hansard" there would be less "talk to the gallery," and we should settle down to business more than we do at times. Both sides of the Chamber are prone to take advantage of "Hansard" to air their views, believing that their constituents might be pleased to know that they are doing their duty in Parliament. When the Labour Party sat in opposition, its members filled more pages of "Hansard" than we can ever hope to do.

Mr. O'KEEFE: All good stuff.

Mr. RUSSELL: I have my own opinion about that; a good deal of it was piffle. I think we should place on record our appreciation of the very valuable service rendered by the "Hansard" staff to members of Parliament.

The PREMIER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*) [10.53 a.m.]: The point raised by the Leader of the Opposition is a very important one. There is no doubt that the work of members of Parliament has increased very materially over the past twenty years, and the work that they do outside the sittings of Parliament is often much more strenuous and harassing than their duties in this Chamber. A member who attends to the requirements of his constituents is of very great value indeed. It is a common practice for members to receive correspondence from their constituents asking them to do certain things which, if they were undertaken by paid agents, would involve the constituents in the payment of a considerable sum of money for the services rendered.

On one occasion I negotiated the purchase of a sugar-mill for some of my constituents. The negotiations, which extended over a considerable time, involved interviews with

solicitors and other people, but finally I was successful in having the purchase price reduced by approximately £43,000. Had those negotiations been conducted by a paid agent, one can easily realise the cost that would have had to be borne by the farmers for the services rendered. An amount of approximately £150,000 was involved, and the usual commission on that sum would be a considerable amount. That work was done by me as a member of Parliament, without charge, for and on behalf of my constituents.

I remember that on another occasion a man happened to be in the office of a solicitor practising in Mackay and remarked, "I should like to have an interview with Forgan Smith." The solicitor rang me up at the court house, where I had an office, and said, "Can you give so-and-so an interview?" I said, "Yes, send him along straight away." I had known that man since he was a boy; in fact, I knew his family well. He did not require an introduction to me at all, but did not know where he could see me. That solicitor charged him £3 3s. for introducing him to me. The man came to see me about it. I said, "Do not pay the account." I do not think he did. That shows that the services of a member of Parliament to his constituents are very valuable indeed. Those hon. members who look after the interests of their constituents are worth a sum far in excess of the salaries they receive.

The problem of callers at Parliament House is one that hon. members must deal with themselves. We know that hon. members have many callers from all over the State, and that these interviews take up a great deal of their time. Moreover, it is a practice that is growing. If hon. members care to make it a rule that when Parliament is sitting they will not see visitors other than members of a deputation that has been arranged with a Minister, I can see no objection to it. If I, as Premier, were to grant all the interviews that I am asked to give, instead of working about seventy-five hours per week, as I do at present, I should find twenty-four hours a day would not suffice. Consequently I have been compelled to lay down a rule that I will grant interviews only during certain hours of the day on certain days of the week. If I did not do so I should not be able to do the administrative work for which I am responsible.

The hon. member for Dalby referred to the provision made in the Estimates for an additional messenger. He was engaged for the convenience of members to deal with the increased number of callers. The hon. member for Dalby asked for information concerning the engagement of an additional cleaner. The duty of that official is to keep the floors of this building in good condition. That is a wise policy. Two things are accomplished—the floors of Parliament House are cleaner, and they are in better condition than they have been for years previously. This additional man is experienced in the laying of parquetry flooring, in which he was previously employed. The consequence is that he is able to effect any slight repairs that are required.

The hon. member also mentioned the question of borers. There is always the danger of borers becoming manifest in any timber. Timber often lies on the ground in the bush for a time before being conveyed to the sawmills. Borers may be in

*Hon. W. Forgan Smith.]*

that timber when it is cut, and are not noticed when it goes out to be used. I remember when I built my house, taking precautions with respect to borers, but six months after it was completed I had to strip three studs because borers were in evidence. There was no sign of them when I constructed the house.

The only way to deal with such a condition is to strip the timber off immediately and poison the surrounding wood. There were borers in the floors of this House—in two or three small pieces in one floor—but the individual who was charged with looking after the floors discovered them immediately and the parquetry was stripped round the area affected, the pine floor poisoned, and new parquetry put in.

The danger involved in walking on the parquetry floors is very real. It is always present with polished floors; and makes it necessary to wear rubber heels on one's shoes or boots. I fell in one of the passages one day, and it was certainly annoying. In the big ante-chamber in the Federal Parliament House a member's wife recently fell and broke her arm. One has to step very gingerly when one is walking on a polished floor, particularly if one is not used to skating on ice. Members of Parliament are often acquainted with that mode of locomotion, and they are not so liable to the same injury as other people who have not a similar knack. (Laughter.) The hon. member can rest assured the question of borers is receiving careful attention, and the daily cleansing by an expert that these floors get enables a daily inspection to be made. If any difficulty arises suitable action will be taken.

Mr. MAHER (*West Moreton*) [11.3 a.m.]: The condition of the parquetry floors throughout the building necessitates some attention. Since these floors have been put down I have seen from twelve to fifteen people suffer nasty falls. The Premier admits that he fell, and other members of the Assembly have fallen, whilst visitors to the House, who are not so accustomed to walking on parquetry floors, have suffered very severe falls. One woman was quite overcome one morning owing to a backward fall which brought her head in contact with the floor. These floors are undoubtedly very elegant and pleasing to the eye, but from a utility point of view they are not so satisfactory. Before somebody is seriously injured the Government should take steps to have mats or some other form of floor covering put down in order that members and visitors may be able to walk about without the risk of a serious fall.

The PREMIER: The floor covering would have to be in the form of rubber, because if you put down a rug it would not eliminate the risk of slipping.

Mr. MAHER: It may appear humorous to some people to see others fall, but there is nothing so humiliating to a dignified man or woman than to lose his or her balance.

The PREMIER: They are liable to be seriously hurt, too.

Mr. MAHER: Yes. One elderly woman asked in my hearing in the House one afternoon, what was wrong with everybody, because they all appeared to walk so queerly. The queer movements of people who walk up and down the corridors in order to retain their footing is apparent to

visitors. As the floor has been put down, the next best thing is to place upon it a rubber mat or some other suitable covering in order that people may walk with safety upon it. I commend that suggestion to the serious consideration of the Premier and Mr. Speaker.

Mr. GAIR (*South Brisbane*) [11.5 a.m.]: The remarks of the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition regarding the work of parliamentarians are very timely. It is to be regretted that the false impression that members of Parliament work only during the period of the session, which usually lasts five months in the year, is growing on our people. It is my opinion that the Press is to a large extent responsible for that false impression. The Tory Press never loses an opportunity of drawing attention to the fact that Parliament is sitting, that members of Parliament have commenced to work at last, and that they will work for only two or three months. That section of the Press never loses an opportunity to ridicule the parliamentary form of government, with the result that a large number of readers get the idea that the only time a member of Parliament works is during the sittings of the House. That is entirely wrong. It is my experience as a metropolitan representative that a member of Parliament has a great deal more to do when the House is in recess than when it is sitting. There is a great deal more running about to be done during the recess because a number of considerate persons seek the assistance and advice of members during recess, and hesitate to trouble them during the session. It is to be regretted that a great number of people are everlastingly ridiculing the parliamentary system of government and holding it up to contempt. It is the democratic system of government and allows for criticism by both Press and people, but it does not become either of them to destroy the prestige of Parliament. If that system should be destroyed as a result of this ridicule and contempt, there is only one alternative—the establishment of a dictatorship, under which the privilege of criticism would be lost. Under a dictatorship they would run the risk of experiencing the same restrictions as the people of Germany, Italy and other countries governed by dictators. They would not have the right or privilege of criticism as we enjoy it. It is without hesitation that I say that members of this Assembly are giving good value for the money received, and it ill becomes the Press or the people to criticise members of Parliament and Parliament as has been the practice during recent years. Only last week Brisbane "Truth," a weekly newspaper, contained an article drawing attention to the fact that members of Parliament were to receive an additional £20 a year. The article pointedly drew attention to an allowance to cover the cost of telephone, postage stamps, and telegrams. Does that paper or any other section of the Press or any person in the community believe that a member of Parliament should meet the costs of the installation or upkeep of a telephone that is installed mainly for the convenience of electors? Do these people consider that the expense incurred in telegrams and postages on letters to his electors should be borne from his salary? If so, then their idea of the value of the services of a member is pretty paltry. I do not hesitate to say that

[*Hon. W. Forgan Smith.*]

the salary paid to a member of Parliament in Queensland to-day is inadequate.

Mr. MAHER: You were better off in your job.

Mr. GAIR: That is quite true. The present salary received by members of Parliament in Queensland is altogether inadequate, and the reduction of the salaries of members from £750 to £500 per annum was one of the many mistakes perpetrated by the Moore Government. I sincerely hope the citizens of Queensland will recognise the great service rendered to them and to the State by members of this Legislature. Before I resume my seat I should like to express my appreciation of the services rendered by the "Hansard" staff, the Clerk of Parliament and his assistants, the messengers, who are at all times very willing and courteous, the switchboard attendants, who have a very arduous, tedious, and irritating job, and the courteous and very efficient attendants in our refreshment-rooms. I do not think I have overlooked anyone.

Mr. MAHER: You have missed the cleaners.

Mr. GAIR: The cleaners are doing their work efficiently. I wish to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, upon the great improvement that has been made in the surroundings of this building since you have occupied your present high office. This Parliament House is an excellent old building, and it is the duty of Mr. Speaker and his committee to keep it in a decent state of repair. Before you occupied the position of Speaker many portions of the building were allowed to get into disrepair, and I congratulate you upon the attention you have given to them. If you have laid parquetry floors that tend to be a little dangerous, I know, from personal experience, that that danger can be easily overcome by using rubber heels on our footwear, whilst notices are posted round the building asking visitors to exercise care on the slippery floors.

The hon. member for Dalby spoke about the expense of the floors. I think Mr. Speaker can explain that the parquetry floor cost very little more than linoleums would have cost. No one can say that parquetry floors do not look considerably better than linoleums.

Mr. MAHER: Ornamental, but not useful.

Mr. GAIR: They are very useful, and will give lifelong service, whereas linoleums would need to be replaced in a very few years.

Mr. BEDFORD (*Warrego*) [11.11 a.m.]: Speaking in as benevolent way as I can on the tremendous discrepancy between the amounts paid to the men who do the actual work of government and the amounts paid to those who are merely appurtenances of government—more or less admirable decorations—it is only necessary to say that the cost of legislative government of this State is £31,000 per year and the Commonwealth Government spent £50,000 on one Duke. Seeing that Opposition newspapers condemn and belittle Parliament, even to the extent of objecting to the additional postage allowance for members of £21 each; it is pertinent to say—seeing that those newspapers take all their standards and comparisons from the mother Parliament of Great Britain—that £31,000, the cost of the legislative arm of the government of this State, with its tremendous area and its colossal

ownership of public estate—is only the amount of the annual grant to three royal babies and twice the grant to one royal duke.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Enoggera*) [11.13 a.m.]: A serious matter which merits consideration by members of this Assembly, is the time lost by hon. members in interviewing electors when the House is in session. I believe that we could overcome the difficulty of being called away while a contentious matter is being debated by sitting on Mondays. That would give us Friday and Saturday mornings to interview those electors who desired to see their members. I do not want to curtail the rights and privileges of the electors in my constituency, but I want to be able to do the job for which I have been elected in the manner in which it should be done. I realise that we cannot give full attention to matters under discussion if we have to leave the Chamber two or three times every morning and every afternoon to interview people. If the House were to alter its time of sitting it might be necessary for the country members to come back to the city from their homes a little earlier, but at the same time it would enable hon. members to fix a day for interviewing. If country members got away on Thursday night they could come back on Sunday.

Mr. DANIEL: You could not do so without getting a special train.

Mr. TAYLOR: Friday is the only day when relief workers can come to the House to see a member concerning any grievances they may have. Friday is the day on which most members have their greatest numbers of callers, and the House should give some consideration to that fact. Otherwise, let us revert to the afternoon sittings.

Mr. MAHER: Hear, hear! That is the solution.

Mr. TAYLOR: That would, however, take away from the member the opportunity for his social activities in his electorate. Scarcely an evening passes, in the metropolitan area at any rate, on which the local member does not attend some function or other where his presence is demanded. Most of the public functions of any note are held in the months from August to November. The city's social activities do not commence much before the Exhibition, and all the balls and the big events follow it. Some provision should be made for a member of Parliament to be able to attend the House during the Parliamentary session without interruption and at the same time to give his constituents uninterrupted access to him so that their rights and privileges may be fully retained.

Mr. BRAND (*Isis*) [11.17 a.m.]: I do not think we should blame the people and the Press so much for their criticism of members of Parliament. It is due to our great modesty as members of Parliament in not telling the people of the things we have to do. It cannot be forgotten, Mr. Hanson, that the work done by members of Parliament for their electors is kept in confidence by hon. members. I support the hon. member who said that members of Parliament have a great deal of work to do and are not adequately paid for the services they render to the people.

We should value our democratic system of government. The people should realise that under the autocratic systems of government in other parts of the world, members of

*Mr. Brand.]*

Parliament are not able to give the people the service they are able to get in this country. I doubt whether it would be possible to find any body of legislators in any other part of the world who would emulate the example of members of this Parliament, who a few years ago voluntarily reduced their salaries from £750 to £500 per annum. Their action was a clear indication of the unselfishness of members of Parliament, although they realised that the salary of £500 was not adequate if they were to carry out their work as it should be done. I know that in my own case, were it not for the fact that I have other interests, it would be impossible for me to do my duty in the efficient manner in which I am endeavouring to do it to-day. I think the same can be said for many other hon. members.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: You did not say that when the salaries were being reduced.

Mr. BRAND: I have just told the Committee that we were unselfish enough to reduce our salaries; but possibly, when the finances of the State improve—I am glad to know that they are improving—we shall be able to restore that voluntary reduction in salaries. If I were in charge of Parliament I should decide that the salaries of hon. members be submitted to an arbitrator for determination, as was done in other States of Australia. We cannot overlook the fact that we are paid less than the parliamentarians in other parts of Australia, with the possible exception of Western Australia and South Australia.

I wish to pay a tribute to the excellent service rendered by the officers of Parliament in every sphere, particularly the "Hansard" staff. After an experience of fifteen years in this Parliament I am constrained to say that the "Hansard" staff is more efficient to-day than at any time during that period. It is a most efficient body giving a wonderful service to Parliament, and comparing the excellent service with its total cost, it cannot be said that the staff is getting too much.

The parquet floors are both ornamental and utilitarian, and have the additional advantage of displaying in a practical manner one avenue in which our waste timbers can be utilised. Parliament House is a fitting building in which to display the products of our own country. The question of the borers is a small one, as they can be eradicated by treatment.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*) [11.26 a.m.]: I also wish to pay my tribute to the "Hansard" staff and all officers engaged in the services of the House. We are very well served by all the officials, who earn their money. "Hansard," particularly from my own point of view—which enables me to appreciate their difficulties—reproduces a wonderful record of our debates. I know very well that members of "Hansard" experience a great deal of difficulty owing to the acoustic properties of this building. I have no complaints at all to make with the services they render. I also include in my words of appreciation the services rendered by the other officials, including the representatives of the daily Press. They certainly deserve every credit for the work they perform.

Mention has been made of the fact that the hours of sitting make it difficult for members to give their services in this

[*Mr. Brand.*

Chamber and attend to the number of callers who desire to see them. We could overcome that difficulty in a measure by sitting different hours. The most convenient part of the day for Parliament to sit, both for members and working purposes generally, is the afternoon and night. That would enable Ministers to attend to their administrative work and members to attend at the departments to transact business on behalf of their constituents. Every hon. member has business to do on behalf of his constituents in the Government offices. It is very difficult to attend to that business with the present hours of sitting. Representatives of metropolitan electorates can perform this work better than the representatives of country electorates. The present hours of sitting suit them because, as one hon. member remarked, they enable him to attend social functions in the evening. If hon. members had work to do in Parliament, then I am sure his constituents would excuse him from attending social functions. They excuse the representatives of country electorates because they know we have to come down to Brisbane to care for their interests in Parliament. No one would take any notice of the absence of an hon. member from social functions if he was attending to the business of his country. The afternoon and evening are the most convenient times for Parliament to sit. It would allow an hon. member more reasonable time to transact his business at Government offices and attend to his mail, and constituents could call upon their representative without interfering with his business in the Chamber. I sincerely hope that hon. members opposite who have the fixing of the hours that Parliament shall sit will reconsider their present attitude.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN (*Dalby*) [11.29 a.m.]: I consider from practical experience that the present hours of sitting are the best for Parliament. I have had experience of afternoon and night sittings. In fact, I have sat in this Chamber many nights and days in succession. That experience proved to me that we do our work better by day than at night.

The PREMIER: Hear, hear!

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I have always supported day sittings, and will continue to do so. We who come from the country have our job to do. During the period Parliament is sitting we are compelled to live in Brisbane and give attention to the business of the country, which should be transacted in the day time. Day sittings are preferable from a health point of view. Better work can be done in the day time, when we are not physically and mentally tired, than in the night time.

As the representative of an electorate far away from Brisbane I have not many callers, but when I get a card indicating that one of my constituents desires to see me I welcome the opportunity, and am only too pleased to see him.

We are not in the same position as city members: our visitors do not come along to talk because most of them have come down to the city to do business that in many cases necessitates a visit to a Minister. My greatest difficulty is to obtain an interview with the Minister for them. I am only too pleased to meet them and have a talk with them. I trust that the Government will not alter the time at which the House meets. The proper time to do our

work is during the day time. If we sat at night, as soon as the hotels closed after 8 o'clock—if they do close after that hour—there would be many more visitors to Parliament House who might expect us to shout them drinks. It is only natural that members will have a few drinks in those circumstances, and that is when trouble commences. In my experience in Parliament any friction that has occurred in this Chamber has generally happened about midnight. It is much preferable for Parliament to continue sitting the hours in operation at present.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Nanango*) [11.32 a.m.]: The duties of members of Parliament is a very interesting subject. It is generally thought by the people that the work of a member of Parliament is finished when the House adjourns. It has been said to me, as well as to other hon. members, "When are you going back to work?" Which conveys the suggestion that the only time members of Parliament work in the interests of their electors is when the House is sitting. Perhaps the prevalence of this opinion amongst electors generally is due to the fact that members of Parliament have in the past neglected to tell the electors of the multifarious duties they had to perform during the time Parliament was in recess. Electors generally do not know that their members may be of great assistance to them by way of getting concessions and introducing them at the departments. Many electors approach their member in such matters; many others do not ask him to do anything.

It is apparent that Parliament and members of Parliament are falling into disrepute in this State. Whether that is so throughout Australia I am not in a position to state. In this State members of Parliament are vilified, not only by some of the people, but also by a big section of the Press. As a rule people do not criticise without reason, and we should ask ourselves, "What is the reason for this attitude on the part of these people?" The reason for it may be found in this Chamber. The bitterness displayed by members one to the other and misconstruction placed on their statements is partly responsible. If by their conduct in the Chamber members created a better impression it would be reflected in the opinions of the people and Parliament would receive its due respect. It cannot be denied that there is nothing wrong with the system of parliamentary government, but it is discouraging to find it belittled not only by the people but also by their representatives.

Having had the opportunity of inspecting the Houses of Parliament in the various capitals of Australia I feel that the men and women responsible for the supervision and conduct of Queensland's Parliament House are to be commended. The conduct of the House speaks for itself. It is a credit to those responsible. Having been a member of this Assembly for a number of years I claim I can speak with authority, and I emphasise the fact that the House is a credit to the staff and the staff a credit to the House. Hon. members should make public more often than is done the news of the beautiful appearance of the Queensland House of Parliament and their surroundings. The people of Queensland should be proud of them. It is on very rare occasions that a private member has an opportunity

of voicing his sentiments in regard to the buildings, the surroundings, and the staff of Parliament, and therefore I have taken this opportunity of doing so.

The hon. member for Enoggera put forward the suggestion that in order to obviate the continuous stream of callers during the session certain hours should be set aside on Fridays and Saturdays for interviews. Evidently the hon. member was speaking purely from the point of view of a metropolitan representative. It would be utterly impossible for the representatives of country electorates to visit their homes during the week-end and return in time for the sittings on Mondays. In a number of cases the train services would not allow of its being done. Perhaps the difficulty of the numbers of callers could be overcome if metropolitan representatives did not encourage visitors of some of the class that come to the House.

Mr. TAYLOR: What is wrong with them?

Mr. EDWARDS: The hon. member knows what is wrong, when after being called out of the Chamber he has a request made to him for a few bob.

Mr. TAYLOR: Are not they as good as the class of people you interview in your constituency during the week-end?

Mr. EDWARDS: Not for a moment do I say that the majority of callers are not here with the legitimate object of endeavouring to enlist the services of a member of Parliament to do something for them in the interests of their business or the obtaining of honest employment. That is not the sort of caller to which I was referring. The hon. member knows very well that there is a section of the community who are always out for what they can cadge, and it is this class that I say should not be encouraged.

Mr. TAYLOR: And they are not all in the city.

Mr. EDWARDS: That may be so, but at the present time there is a system of providing rations and the giving of sustenance to our unfortunate people who are in need. Those of our people who are unfortunately in need of such help should be encouraged to obtain it through the proper channels. We could thus obviate their visiting the parliamentary building and having hon. members called out of the Chamber during a session. It is of great advantage to country visitors to be able to call here when the House is sitting. They then have the opportunity of seeing the building and of seeing Parliament in session. They have the opportunity of seeing members and, perhaps, Ministers, and being able to carry out the business that brought them from the country. It is of great assistance to country people in many instances as well as an education in the government of this State.

Mr. BRASSINGTON (*Fortitude Valley*) [11.41 a.m.]: In supporting the vote now before this Committee, I desire to place on record my appreciation of the staff of Parliament for their unvarying and unflinching courtesy and assistance. This Parliament is very fortunate in having such a splendid staff to carry out the numerous duties we require of them. No matter what a member may require, within reason the staff can be relied upon to give good service and every

*Mr. Brassington.]*

satisfaction. I also desire to offer my congratulations to Mr. Speaker for the numerous improvements effected to this building during his occupancy of that position. I do so because I realise the problems he has had to meet. It has been my lot on occasions to differ from Mr. Speaker on certain points, but whatever my personal opinions may be, I still feel that I should place on record my recognition of the good service he has rendered in that capacity.

Some hon. members opposite have expressed their desire to revert to the old system of night sittings. As one who believes in the principle of day labour and maintaining progress where that is possible, I desire to express my opposition to that suggestion as being unsound. All hon. members on this side devote the whole of their time to carrying out their duties as members of Parliament. They come down here every day for that purpose. Therefore, we can see no definite or sound case for altering the present system to the well-worn one of sitting at night. Hon. members opposite have been noted for many years for their arguments in favour of the reintroduction of that old-time system.

Mr. CLAYTON: Not all of us.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: Most of them. It is easy to see why hon. members opposite favour that system. The reason was given by the hon. member for Isis this morning when he referred to the fact that he had a private income in addition to his salary as a member of Parliament. It is plain that the majority of the hon. members opposite have business interests, and desire to attend to those interests for the major portion of the day and attend this Assembly at night sitting—in other words to devote the fag end of their intelligence to the business of the community.

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: That is not so.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: Let us cast our minds over the happenings of past years. I could name a large number of members of the Opposition Party who attended to their businesses in the city during the early part of the day and attended the night sittings of this House, there to give the fag end of their intelligence to the services of their country. I am of opinion that when a man enters Parliament his duty is to give his full service to the people, and if it entails a sacrifice to carry out that ideal, it is his duty to make that sacrifice, and to be here at all times. He must by virtue of his position endeavour to satisfy the needs of his constituents. Hon. members opposite cannot make a success of their representation if they devote portion of their time to outside interests and the remaining portion to parliamentary duties.

Mr. DANIEL: What about the solicitors on your side?

Mr. BRASSINGTON: The hon. members referred to are here in this Assembly during the whole of the sittings, and no argument can be brought forward by hon. members opposite to challenge their position. The professional men on this side seem to attend to their affairs outside the House before the sitting hours of Parliament, and they are here practically the whole time attending to their parliamentary duties. No sound case has been made out for the resurrection of a system that is dead and gone, and

[Mr. Brassington.]

conferred no benefit whatever on the State while it existed.

I support the remarks of the hon. member for South Brisbane, who this morning did a great service to this Parliament by placing before the people many facts concerning the work of hon. members. There is a general impression that members of Parliament are in a fortunate position and are receiving benefits from the community, holding soft jobs, and having very little responsibility to the people. I take this opportunity of endeavouring to dispel that illusion, and of saying that if a member of Parliament carries out his duties conscientiously he will find ample work to occupy the whole of the time at his disposal. In my own case, so far as possible I meet my constituents and—within a reasonable limit as laid down by the practice of members of Parliament—do any business they desire me to transact.

I take exception to the remarks of the hon. member for Nanango that persons come here of a type hon. members should not encourage. I consider that is unfair and unreasonable, and is more or less a libel on unfortunate members of the community who in their extremity must turn to their political representatives for advice. I make no apology to the hon. member for Nanango, or to anyone else, for the fact that I have met these people, or for the fact that very often my humble advice has been the means of getting for members of that unfortunate section of the community some better treatment than they had received in the past. Anyone who says it is wrong for a member of Parliament to do that does not know the duties of the office. If it is wrong for me to do that I can only say that there is no other course open to me, because so long as I am found here as a member of Parliament I feel it is my duty and responsibility to meet my constituents and to take as much interest as I can in their welfare.

Hon. members opposite and the public must realise that in addition to the necessity of meeting constituents a responsibility is placed on many members in connection with organisations within their electorates. The general public fail to realise that if hon. members on this side do not devote a reasonable portion of their time to party organisation within their electorates it may not be possible for the Labour Party to retain the popularity that it has enjoyed down through the years. It is part of the duty of a member of Parliament to give a fair measure of attention to the organisation within his area, to be loyal to his party, and to see that its machinery is up to the highest point of efficiency. I make these remarks because I feel that many of our own supporters do not realise the importance of that work and so that the people may know that the time of a member of Parliament is fully occupied.

It should also be the duty of a member of Parliament to give close attention to the major problems affecting the welfare of the people. It is their duty to study social and economic problems with a view to understanding them, to obtain a working knowledge of parliamentary procedure, and to become thoroughly acquainted with the various measures that are introduced from time to time. Those duties are very important in themselves.

Mr. O'KEEFE: They are the main duties.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: As the hon. member for Cairns interjects, they are the main duties. A conscientious member will devote a considerable portion of his time to a consideration of these important problems. The impression is held in certain quarters that parliamentarians have very little work to do, but a very good case can be made out by the conscientious member of Parliament who endeavours to do his work faithfully and well.

The impression is also held by a certain section of the people that the salary paid to an hon. member is out of all reason in comparison with the services rendered. I emphatically assert that the salary is not excessive, it is little enough. The impression is also held that hon. members are paid their salaries free of income tax—another mistaken idea that can and should be refuted. Members of Parliament must pay their share of taxation in common with every other citizen in the community. There is also the mistaken conception outside that members of Parliament are in receipt of numerous concessions from certain quarters, but that, too, is not a fact. My experience as a member of Parliament is that almost without exception I have had to pay for my entertainment. I believe that that is the sound principle to adopt. As a member of Parliament I ask for and expect no concessions from any section or person outside this Assembly. The financial position of a member of Parliament should be thoroughly considered so that a fair and reasonable salary may be laid down enabling him to carry out his duties according to the best traditions of Parliament. Members of Parliament are subject to a good deal of misrepresentation and abuse that they certainly do not deserve. Before I came into the Chamber this morning I completed the duty of replying to a number of requests for donations. That is one very important phase of the calls on members of Parliament. It is one for which hon. members are given no credit. Complaint cannot be made that we enjoy high salaries and at the same time we must be given credit for the many calls made on our purses.

There is also the bigger and broader principle of Parliament as an institution. In every country, throughout recent years, a decided attempt has been made to discredit and belittle Parliament. In many countries Parliament has been abolished. We have in Australia the finest and best form of government to be found in the world. The principles of government in this Commonwealth are the best because they are the broad generous principles of democracy—a form of government that must be cherished, protected, and fought for wherever it is attacked. It would be a sad day if ever the efforts succeeded of those in this country who seek to discredit and destroy Parliament. It would be a sad day, indeed, if we had to resort to the system introduced elsewhere, such as the dictatorships in Germany and Italy. I say in all sincerity that the people of this Commonwealth must protect themselves from such inflictions. It is up to the people to recognise their urgent responsibilities in that direction. Parliament must be supreme and its rights preserved. It is only right that members of this Parliament should do everything within their power to uphold the rights of Parliament and the people in order that this

institution can be continued in the best interests of the people. Interested people can criticise and say what they like. They can criticise democracy; they can criticise Parliament. That is their right in a democracy, but they cannot point to any better system, they cannot point to a country that has as good a system as the party system in Australia. There is nothing wrong with democracy. There is nothing wrong with constitutional government. All the dogmas that have been introduced from other countries and the opinions of democracy that have been voiced by its opponents are found to have no basis when it is remembered that democracy must depend for its very existence on the people's will, because it is they who have the power of electing representatives to our Parliaments. Boiled down, the principles of democracy are the people's most priceless possession. That standard of Parliament, the work it accomplishes, and the progress it makes are but a reflex of the opinions of the general public. The very high standard of this Parliament, supported as it is by the splendid work of the Government, is a true reflex of the desires of the people for progressive government. Let me add this important point: the people cannot only maintain this democratic system, they can study its weaknesses and improve it. The last court of appeal is the people. Consequently, it is their responsibility to maintain or improve Parliament as they desire. I sincerely regret the attempt made in certain quarters to belittle Parliament in an attempt to weaken its foundations, because, I repeat, the most priceless possessions of the people are democracy and their right to elect representatives to this Parliament to make the laws of the country. The people should realise the onerous tasks that face members of Parliament. If they do so, they will appreciate the many difficulties that confront them, they will admit that they may have been misguided in their views in the past, and recognise that their representatives give their best services to the State. If we are loyal to this institution and the people are loyal to it, then it will go on indefinitely applying the principles of democracy in the interests of the people in a sincere attempt to solve their difficulties. If democracy in Parliament fails to do that, if a dictatorship or some other system supersedes it, it will be a poor look out for the people.

Mr MAHER (*West Morston*) [12 noon]: The hon. member for Enoggera appeared to think it would be wise if we were to adopt Monday sittings. As the hon. member for Cunningham pointed out, if they were adopted country members would find it very difficult to return from their homes in order to attend the opening of Parliament on Monday morning. There are only a few country districts where the train or bus facilities would enable members to return on Monday morning in time; consequently the bulk of the country members would need to stay in Brisbane for the whole period of the parliamentary session. I do not think the suggestion of the hon. member for Enoggera will commend itself to the commonsense of the Committee.

I suggest to the Premier and the Government that they return to the system of afternoon and night sittings. I know the Premier

*Mr. Maher.]*

has on different occasions expressed opposition to evening sittings; but there is very much to recommend that system.

The PREMIER: I was in this Parliament when the House used to adjourn regularly at 11.30 p.m. I remember sitting from Wednesday at 3.30 p.m. until Friday morning. We do not want to go back to that practice.

Mr. MAHER: I quite agree with the Premier. I do not desire to see such a practice established in this Chamber, but I venture to say it is quite practicable for reasonable men to commence the afternoon session at 2.30 p.m. and rise at 9.30 p.m., just as consistently as we are able to commence at 10.30 a.m. and conclude at 5.30 p.m.

The PREMIER: There may be some other hon. members like you who would prolong the debate and we should not get the business through.

Mr. MAHER: I can assure the hon. gentleman that by 9.30 p.m. the bulk of the hon. members would be disposed to call it a day. I think there is a great deal of merit in the system adopted when the Moore Government were in power. That system is more or less traditional with hon. members on this side of the Chamber.

The argument advanced by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley that this is merely a subterfuge to suit the interests of hon. members of the Opposition who have business connections is not altogether correct, although it may work out that way in some isolated instances; but in the main my parliamentary experience leads me to think that members should have their mornings free to attend to the large volume of correspondence they receive—particularly country members—and to visit the Government departments. That would also meet the argument of the hon. member for Enoggera who said he would like to have Fridays and Saturdays free in order that he might attend to the personal calls of his constituents and not be worried by them while Parliament was sitting. I find it difficult to understand why Ministers cannot see the virtue of evening sittings, because they would then have ample time to receive deputations during the mornings when they would be free from parliamentary worries.

The PREMIER: A Minister would receive deputations at night when the House was sitting during the day.

Mr. MAHER: He would have the morning free if Parliament opened in the afternoon. He then would have the whole afternoon and the evening to devote to his parliamentary duties.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Should he work overtime?

Mr. MAHER: It might impose overtime conditions on him, but are they not already imposed on him? In order that a Minister of the Crown may get through his work and attend the sittings of Parliament as well, does he not have to work overtime either late at night or early in the morning?

The PREMIER: Sometimes both.

Mr. MAHER: Sometimes both. In fact, everybody worth while has had to burn the midnight oil. The individual, in order to make a success in life, has to expend a

[Mr. Maher.

great amount of energy and show great determination, and this usually involves the burning of the midnight oil. He who watches the clock when at his work is always the drifter. In all big things of life we have to exert ourselves beyond our desires, and therefore afternoon sittings should have a great appeal to hon. members from the standpoint of convenience.

There is another factor, related to the convenience of the public. A great number of people would like the opportunity of listening to parliamentary debates. This they are precluded from doing because of the day sittings. The vast majority of people have to attend to their daily work, and therefore have no chance of attending a sitting of Parliament. With afternoon sittings those interested would be able to attend and listen to the proceedings. The public should be encouraged to take an interest in the doings of Parliament. They should be given the opportunity of learning the different viewpoints of members representing the two great political parties of the State. From all standpoints, a great case has been made out in favour of evening sittings.

Dealing with the question of the work of members of Parliament, the term "parliamentary salary" is something in the nature of a misnomer. In point of actual fact the sum of £500 per annum is really a parliamentary allowance. I am prepared to say that an hon. member who gives attention to his electorate and the requirements of his electors and also the problems confronting this Parliament is not by any means overpaid at £500 per annum. As a matter of fact, having regard to the many calls that are made on him—which are referred to by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley—and are inseparable from the work, the petrol and oil used in his motor car and the hire of cars that is necessary from time to time in order to get over a large country electorate, heavy inroads are made in his salary. I must confess it has often been a problem to me how members with no other source of income than their parliamentary salaries are able to subsist—that is, if they have the same calls upon them that I have had. I have no doubt they have. At the same time the point to be considered is: is the time opportune? When the State is prosperous there would be a case for an increased allowance, but we are really still in a rather difficult period. In view of the budgetary position, the need to keep in view the general wellbeing of the State and the thousands of our fellow citizens who cannot get a job I find it rather hard to support an increase in parliamentary salaries.

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

Mr. TAYLOR (*Enoggera*) [12.10 p.m.]: The hon. member for West Moreton has been pondering over the problem I set when I suggested that Parliament should sit on certain days of the week so that other days would be free for the interviewing of constituents. I am pleased that my arguments have caused some discussion. I knew that my suggestion would not suit the country members, and if it does not meet the general convenience, I suggest that it might be better for Parliament to commence its session in the second or third

week of July instead of waiting until September. If we did that, and sat for three days in each week, we could complete the work by the time it now takes, without sitting "double-days." That would probably be a solution of the problem of finding time to carry out parliamentary duties and attending to the wants of constituents. The Government should give some consideration to the question of opening Parliament earlier in the year in future.

The TREASURER: The opening of Parliament is determined by the end of the financial year.

Mr. TAYLOR: I realise that, but it might be possible to adopt my suggestion so that members might have a little time to attend to the requirements of their constituents.

Mr. McLEAN (*Bundaberg*) [12.12 p.m.] I also desire to express my appreciation of the courteous attention and efficient discharge of their duties by the officers of Parliament. A point occurs to me concerning the dignity of Parliament. Every parliamentarian has a certain amount of dignity to preserve. I believe that a great deal more dignity could be observed by members of Parliament without in any way ceasing to be affable to their constituents. You, Mr. Hanson, the Temporary Chairman, and Mr. Speaker, would be greatly assisted if the inane, senseless, and personal interjections that are thrown across this Chamber were to cease, so that we could attend to the business of the State. (Opposition laughter.) The hon. member for Dalby laughs. He is the greatest offender of them all, and I do not desire to see the repetition of a display of political larrikinism such as was given by a woman who chained herself to the gallery—an incident with which the hon. member for Dalby was closely associated.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: That is an absolute lie.

Mr. McLEAN: The hon. member for Dalby was closely associated with that incident.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member for Dalby to withdraw the word "lie."

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I ask that the hon. member for Bundaberg withdraw the statement that I was associated with that incident. I had nothing whatever to do with it.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member to withdraw the word "lie."

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I withdraw the word "lie," and I ask that the hon. member for Bundaberg withdraw his statement. I had nothing whatever to do with that incident.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member for Dalby has denied the accusation made against him by the hon. member for Bundaberg. I ask the hon. member for Bundaberg to withdraw that accusation.

Mr. McLEAN: I am basing my statement on the fact that the hon. member for Dalby was associated with this woman for one hour prior to her advent into this Assembly. Whilst he was speaking in this Chamber he cast his eyes up to that woman, he smiled—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member for Dalby has denied association

with that incident, and I ask the hon. member for Bundaberg to withdraw the assertion.

Mr. McLEAN: I withdraw the statement, but I still desire to say that I was influenced in making that statement by the fact that the hon. member for Dalby was in this woman's company for one hour prior to her coming into this Chamber.

Mr. MAHER: Are you a private detective? (Laughter.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. McLEAN: If our friend were as intelligent as he is humorous he would be the genius of this Chamber. I do not desire to see this larrikinism displayed in the Assembly, and I believe that the dignity of Parliament could be raised a great deal if members would restrict themselves to the performance of the duties they are called here to perform.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN (*Dalby*) [12.16 p.m.]: I desire to say, Mr. Hanson, that the statement made by the hon. member that Mrs. Solly had seen me that morning, as she had seen me on many occasions, is perfectly correct.

Mr. WALKER: She had seen me that morning, too.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Mrs. Solly has come to me on many occasions and I have made it my duty to see her. It is ridiculous to suggest that I had anything to do with the incident referred to. You might as well blame the hon. member for Cooroora, who was in her company after I was. So far as smiling at her is concerned, I can honestly say I did not know the woman was in the gallery when I was delivering my speech. I was not associated with the incident in any way.

HON. G. POLLOCK (*Gregory*) [12.17 p.m.]: I wish to thank hon. members on behalf of the officers of the House, who are unable to express their personal appreciation, for the very many kind things said of them. As to myself, as the principal officer of the House, I do not quite know whether the lack of criticism was due to satisfaction with the work that has been done or whether it was an indication of a belief that it is not much use trying to get me to do anything. I prefer to believe that the former was the general spirit prevailing.

An interesting matter, which was raised by the hon. member for Dalby, concerns the existence of borers in the parquet floors. First of all, the real idea of laying parquet floors in this building does not seem to have been fully appreciated even by some members of Parliament.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Especially by those members who have fallen hard!

HON. G. POLLOCK: Probably so. The truth is that after investigation into the costs of putting new linoleum in this building, and comparison with the costs of other forms of flooring, it was found, to my amazement, that the very best parquet, which is almost everlasting, was only about 20 per cent. dearer than linoleum. The parquet within this House is composed entirely of Queensland hardwood. It is three-eighths of an inch thick, tongued and grooved, and held to the main floor by a couple of centre-punched secret nails in each piece. That floor, although only 20 per

*Hon. G. Pollock.]*

cent. dearer than linoleum, will be here, I believe, as long as the House is here. Linoleum has an effective useful life of only five years, so that there is a tremendous economy.

In the second place, in these days of unemployment it is important to remember that 75 per cent. of the cost of parquet flooring goes into paying the labour employed in laying it within the House, and the other 25 per cent. is spent upon Queensland timber, whereas most linoleum is brought from elsewhere.

Further than that, there is the advantage of having in Parliament House—a place seen by thousands of visitors from our own State and from abroad every year—a floor that can be a show floor for the whole of the State, to give people from outside an idea as to the worth of our timbers and their utility. Although there have been one or two accidents on the floors I believe that in the long run the work will have been well worth while for the State. The main idea behind the laying of the parquet floors was to show what beautiful furnishings could be manufactured from our hardwood timbers, and it is very doubtful if there are parquet floors in any other part of Australia so beautiful as some of those in Parliament House. Who would have believed, for instance, that the much-maligned and very common blue gum could make the beautiful corridor floors in this building? It has been an object lesson not only to me, but I believe to every other hon. member and to visitors from other parts of Australia and abroad.

The parquet floor was laid down by Wilson Hart and Co., of Maryborough. Naturally, the Speaker always has to give an ear to Government policy and if it had been practicable the job would have been carried out by day labour. But the Department of Public Works has no parquet experts, nor has it any machinery for the job. There is not sufficient demand for this type of work to warrant its setting up an expert flooring staff. So it was decided to entrust the work to men who knew how to do the job. And they did it well. They were very careful in carrying out their work, they took a pride in it, and they went to endless trouble to give us a job that would be an advertisement not only for the State but also for their own company in Maryborough. I think any unbiased man will admit that they succeeded to an admirable degree.

It seems to me very unlikely that borers were introduced into this building with the timber. I should like to mention that there are approximately 80,000 small parquet boards in the floors of this building, but only one out of those 80,000 has been found to be affected by borers, and that one twelve months after the floors were laid. It is only about three weeks ago that the floor polisher drew my attention to the fact that borers were present in one small piece of board in the billiard room floor. He discovered their presence as a result of his usual practice of making a very careful inspection of the floors each morning. He noticed that sawdust appeared to have come from tiny gimlet holes in the board. There were probably 80 to 100 borers in that one piece of wood. It was removed, the immediate surroundings were poisoned, and the board replaced. It is unlikely that there will be any further inroads by borers, but if there are we can

safely leave the floors in the hands of this man, who was one of the gang of parquet layers before he applied for the position of floor polisher. It is ridiculous to create the impression that the attacks by borers in the parquet floor are widespread, when it is remembered that only one out of the 80,000 boards was affected. After a very thorough and careful examination it was discovered that there were three other boards containing flight holes, that is, holes made by borers when they made their exit from the wood, probably in the log, at a certain stage of their lives. Those holes had been plugged with polish prior to being laid. These boards are not infected by borers, but, obviously, they were infected at one time. It seems hardly likely that there is any considerable number of borers, or, indeed, any borers now in the parquet floor. Before the flooring was laid it was treated specially in the kiln of the Forestry Sub-Department. That is to say, each piece of timber was subjected to the application of heat and seasoned and tested under the "blinker" process until it was found to contain only 10 per cent. of moisture. The process removed almost all of the moisture from the timber. The same result is achieved as in the seasoning of timber that has been left in the driest portions of Western Queensland for two or three years. The floors would be unlikely, after having been submitted to that preparation, to contain any borers or insect life of any kind. It is reasonable to assume that the borers were in the main floor before the parquet was laid, or that they infected this board by flight from elsewhere. That frequently happens. A person may erect a house and carefully inspect each piece of timber before it is fitted and discover a few months afterwards that borers have infected it.

MR. CLAYTON: They can be introduced into a house in a load of firewood.

HON. G. POLLOCK: At any rate, I believe that the slight coat of wax that has been applied to the parquet floors will act as a preventive of the incursion of any insect life. I am not afraid of any difficulty in this matter.

There is a good deal in the point raised by the hon. member for West Moreton as to the difficulty experienced in walking on the floors. I have given a good deal of attention to it. Those of us who are in the building regularly get into the habit of making a perfect "pancake landing" and have no difficulty in walking around it. People who walk in from the street and imagine that they can walk along the parquet floors in the same careless way without minding their steps as they do outside, are apt to come to grief. In order to minimise that difficulty as much as possible I have had notices prepared and placed at every entrance warning the people of the danger of skidding on the floors. In order to remove that possibility it would be necessary to place rubber strips along the whole of the corridors. I am satisfied that would not be very effective unless they covered the whole width of the corridor. The whole of the beautiful parquet flooring would then be concealed. Otherwise immediately one left the centre strip he would be just as prone to slip on the polished floor as though no strip was there at all. I do not believe that difficulty can be overcome

[Hon. G. Pollock.]

unless the parquet floor is removed altogether. I would not recommend that. People walking around the building can, with proper care and a little thought, avoid few claims for damages.

MR. MAHER: We shall probably have a few claims for damages.

HON. G. POLLOCK: I do not think we shall. We have exhibited notices warning visitors that they must beware of the polished floors, that they are slippery. In any case we can easily overcome that difficulty. Personally, I believe the floors are worth while and unless the House asks me to do it, I should not dream of altering them for reasons I have already mentioned.

There is no doubt that much useful work can be done round Parliament House in the future. The people who built Parliament House gave us a building of which we can all be proud. They built well. They built the best Parliament House in all Australia. At all events, with the exception of the Federal Parliament House at Canberra, which I have not seen, I have not seen its equal. The Parliament House of Queensland stands out as a piece of Romanesque architecture without peer in the State Parliament Houses of Australia. It would be to our everlasting discredit if we allowed such a beautiful building to fall again into the disrepair that it reached prior to 1932. It is the duty of hon. members to see that it is kept in its present state of repair and that improvements are made from time to time. There are still rooms in the building that have to be painted. I expect to be able to undertake that work as funds are available, commencing during the present recess. I have chosen that time because Parliament will not be sitting—which is important—and also because our seasonal industries come to a close about the end of the year and it is desirable to provide as much employment as possible at that period. I believe a good purpose will be served in many respects by having that work undertaken early in the New Year. That will complete the renovation of the interior of the building.

The conduct of members of Parliament, the visits of constituents to them and other associated subjects are matters that lie within the jurisdiction of hon. members themselves. I have often felt—I am only giving my personal viewpoint—that no man would come into a court and ask to interview a jurymen during the time that jurymen was sitting on a case, nor would he ask a judge to leave his ordinary duties during the hearing of a case in order to attend to him. If hon. members wish to overcome the difficulty caused by the number of visitors, many of whom perhaps desire to see members in regard to trivial matters—although some people come here to see members on very important matters, and in many cases this is the only place to which they can come to see a member—it is merely a matter of carrying a resolution and asking me to give the necessary instruction to prevent people from coming here to interview members during sitting hours. If that were done the difficulty would arise of discriminating between ordinary visitors who wished to listen to proceedings in Parliament and have an interview with a member on a matter of consequence while they were here, and those who merely came here—as so many do at times, unfortunately—to make themselves a nuisance to members of Parliament. The matter could

only be arranged if hon. members came to an understanding that unless it was a case of emergency or urgency they would not interview visitors during the period when the House was sitting. If that arrangement were arrived at I should have to do my best to see that it was carried out—and it might not be a bad scheme. On our peak day we had 320 visitors. That would be a large number of people to be visiting Parliament when it was sitting; and undoubtedly that number of visitors would seriously interfere with the concentration of members on whatever work may be in hand.

At 12.32 p.m.,

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

HON. G. POLLOCK: Any alteration in the present system is a matter for hon. members, and I must accept their instructions in that respect.

I do not think there is anything more I can usefully add, Mr. King, except to thank hon. members for the co-operation they have given me during the past four years or so and to express the hope that if they have any ideas at any time for an improvement in the conditions surrounding Parliament House or the conditions under which hon. members perform their duties, I have a room to which every hon. member is welcome to come at any time he pleases to tell me those ideas—and perhaps hear my ideas on the matter if I do not agree with him. I do welcome ideas, and in this respect I wish to use this fact as an illustration. I have heard a number of arguments in regard to the white lines in Queen street—and this is somewhat of a digression, but it is for the purpose of illustration—and the way people were compelled to walk across them for a time. I am not concerned with that because I realise that behind it all—this may or may not be a tribute to the Home Secretary—is the fact that the man who is controlling that department has ideas of his own or is willing to listen to ideas. When good ideas are put into practice they will remain; the bad ideas will always be laughed out by the public. Some men are not afraid of new ideas and not afraid of trying ones in regard to which they have some little doubt. I welcome the co-operation of hon. members in the direction of improving the surroundings of Parliament House.

MR. KANE (*East Toowoomba*) [12.35 p.m.]: It is a very charming experience to hear parliamentarians saying such pleasant things about themselves and probably I should have much preferred to remain in the role of listener had it not been for the unusual circumstances in which I find myself—almost in accord with the sentiments expressed by members of the Opposition. The opportunity to express myself on this matter may not occur again. When hon. members spoke about the time parliamentary salaries were reduced it appeared to me as though there was a leaking out of the truth. One can visualise the Opposition, then in government, getting together and, according to their own admission, saying, "We will reduce parliamentary salaries because we can live without them." They set a standard of a two-man job for a one-man salary. This morning they say it is impossible to live upon their parliamentary salaries without other sources of income

*Mr. Kane.]*

from other occupations. An hon. member very graciously admitted that he could not live on his parliamentary salary and it would be very difficult for him to carry on without another source of income. His admission is capable of two interpretations: either the amount he receives from Parliament is less than his worth, or the amount he receives from other sources is more than his worth. In addition to metropolitan members and country members, there is a third class that cannot be included under either of these headings—those members who represent the larger towns situated in the country. The expenses of weekly visits to the capital are the greatest drain on their limited salaries. For that reason alone, without any other, I say the existing salary of £500 per annum, less reductions, is totally inadequate for members. I do not wish to be misunderstood. Cities like Rockhampton, Bundaberg, Ipswich, and Toowoomba necessitate weekly visits from their representatives in Parliament. Those members who have such cities in their areas represent conglomerate electorates. We have to combine the duties of both metropolitan and country representatives. During our sojourn in the country centres we have our town callers, and I make the request that the Government provide in each of the cities for the use of members accommodation reasonably comparable with that supplied to metropolitan members in this building. We do not ask for anything quite so grand, but there is a vast difference between the standard of the appointments and conveniences provided in this building for the convenience of members and that which we perform for ourselves in our country centres. I certainly appreciate the appointments in this building and the courtesy and the help afforded me in the performance of my numerous duties as a representative of the people, but it would be some measure of consolation for comparative inconvenience in the country if at least suitable accommodation were provided in country centres. It is necessary that a country member should frequently visit the various portions of his electorate. These visits entail the expenditure of a good deal of time and energy and finance. One also needs a motor car, a typewriter, and many other facilities in order to deal adequately with the numerous matters brought under his notice. Certainly in an electorate of the size of West Moreton it may not be so difficult to visit one's constituents, but it certainly takes time and involves expense in most country electorates. I am very glad I have the support of the hon. member for West Moreton in my complaint regarding the conditions provided for country members as against those for metropolitan representatives, and also as regards the absence of a travelling allowance. Frequently country members are called upon to visit the capital in the interests of their constituents.

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*) [12.40 p.m.]: I take this opportunity of voicing my appreciation of the work performed by the staff of Parliament House and also to draw attention to the need for further accommodation for members in this Chamber. No provision is made for the safe custody of papers. Hon. members will have to devote seventeen days to a discussion on the Estimates but we have no facilities wherein to store our papers in the Chamber. Neither

[*Mr. Kane.*

tables nor lockers are provided. Papers required by hon. members are spread out all over the seats. I would point out that lockers could be placed beneath the seats. A man sometimes has a speech ready, or notes for a speech, but has to wait for two or three days before getting an opportunity to make that speech. His papers either lie about the floor or are taken into another room. Our surroundings would be much tidier and more dignified if such papers were kept in small drawers underneath our seats instead of being scattered all over the floor. A small desk could be provided on which our papers could be ready for use at any time. I ask the Chief Secretary to consider the matter

HON. G. POLLOCK (*Gregory*) [12.41 p.m.]: I have already given a great deal of consideration to the question of re-designing this Chamber to permit of members having desks in front of them. The Department of Public Works, to whom I gave a perfectly free hand in the matter of formulating such a scheme, was unable to arrive at any satisfactory conclusion. It is true that by removing the bar facing the Chair, taking away the partition behind the back cross benches, and putting the bar at the stained glass door, sufficient accommodation with desks could be provided for hon. members, but no allowance could be made to enable all members to sit with their respective parties, on, say, the right or left hand side of the Speaker. The great difficulty is that while by taking away the raised platforms on which the tiers of benches are placed and extending the area of the Chamber further back, sufficient accommodation could be provided for thirty-two hon. members on each side of the House, great difficulty would arise in the event of a party of overwhelming numbers occupying one side of the House. Some hon. members of the Government Party would have to be prepared to sit on the Opposition cross benches in order to make such a scheme practicable. The real truth is that this Chamber is too small for desk purposes. While I gave consideration to the question of providing a box for each hon. member, in which to keep his papers, I realised that unless those boxes were made of leather, there would be the continuous noise of opening and shutting them, and the place would probably be turned into something resembling "Bedlam." I am prepared to consider any suggestions. I have given careful attention to the matter, and have not been able to find anybody capable of designing a satisfactory system. If any one can do that, I am prepared to do the rest.

Item (Legislative Assembly) agreed to.

PREMIER AND CHIEF SECRETARY'S  
DEPARTMENT.

CHIEF OFFICE.

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

"That £12,425 be granted for 'Premier and Chief Secretary's Department—Chief Office.'"

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*) [12.45 p.m.]: The Premier did not give us any information as to the increase in this vote. I notice an increase of four clerk-typists and also a new departure, by way of a publicity officer at £525. It seems to me quite a new

idea for the Government to have a publicity officer and four typists to boost what the Government have done. Surely deeds ought to speak for themselves! Surely it should not be necessary to have a publicity officer merely for the purpose of giving a boost to the Government for every mortal thing that is done, and contributing to the Press throughout Queensland articles pointing out what an advantage it is to have a remarkable man like Mr. Forgan Smith as Premier!

The PREMIER: It is self-evident.

Mr. MOORE: If it is self-evident, why is it necessary to spend £525 on a publicity officer?

The PREMIER: It is not. That is just where you are making the mistake. That is not his job.

Mr. MOORE: I could understand if it were a question of defending the Secretary for Public Lands from the consequences of the statements he made, or from attacks on Ministers who used official cars for sending their families about on trips.

The PREMIER: You did that yourself. You ran your car for miles more than I have ever done.

Mr. MOORE: Only on business! But the hon. gentleman knows that I was not referring to him at all. He knows that publicity was given to the fact that one car was three or four times outside the State with the Minister's relatives. I am speaking, however, of the publicity officer and the increase in the number of clerk-typists. Presumably the latter are for the purpose of typing the effusions of the publicity officer.

The PREMIER: They are required entirely by reason of the fact that the Premier is also the Treasurer. You were not.

Mr. MOORE: The Treasurer's office still has its complement of typists as before. There is no reduction there.

The PREMIER: There is an increase in the amount of work.

Mr. MOORE: The Premier, in introducing this vote, did not give any explanation, and from my small knowledge of the department I assumed that there was not work for these extra clerk-typists unless they were to do that extra work for the publicity officer. To my mind it is a wrong principle, and I do not know whether it is done in other places. A suggestion was made that I should have a publicity officer, but I turned it down at once.

The PREMIER: Your idea is to forbid publicity.

Mr. MOORE: I was never afraid of publicity for anything that the Government did, but I did not think it was necessary to appoint a publicity officer—whose job is to give the people certain coloured information in a way that will be most useful for purposes of Government propaganda. Everybody knows what the Government are doing; we have a most alert Press, and all the facts are brought out in that way. This officer is apparently required for the purpose of giving unfavourable information in a favourable light in order that the people may get a wrong conception of what is actually being done, and for the purpose of boosting the Government. It seems rather a needless expenditure that the taxpayers of this

country should be called upon to meet. We have our publicity officers in the Tourist Bureau to advertise Queensland, and we have the ordinary expenditure of the Government in the public interests, but it is a different thing altogether to have an officer there in the Government's interest. I suppose the Premier would suggest that anything in the Government interest would be in the public interest, but we may differ on that point.

Mr. TAYLOR: The point is that the people do not differ, even though you might.

Mr. MOORE: Is it the duty of the publicity officer to place views before the people in such a way that they may gain the impression that the present Government are the most wonderful Government that ever were, that the members of the Government are the most wonderful and the most intelligent that ever controlled the destinies of Queensland? Hon. members opposite might appreciate that sort of boost, but I am just wondering where the value to the community comes in. The people ought to be able to judge for themselves as to the capacity and the capabilities of the Government, without the assistance of a publicity officer continually boosting them by saying what wonderful fellows they are.

Mr. TAYLOR: You are telling the story now that you should have told when you first got up.

Mr. MOORE: I am trying to get some information. I can imagine no other reason for the appointment of a publicity officer at £525 per annum than that he is there to say what a good Government we have in Queensland. He certainly would not be there to say that they were a poor Government, and their legislation was detrimental to the people of the State.

Mr. TAYLOR: You are stressing the obvious; why waste your time?

Mr. MOORE: If it is obvious that the Government are doing so well, then what is the object of paying a man £525 per annum to say so?

Mr. TAYLOR interjected.

Mr. MOORE: Does the hon. member mean the honest man? I should not have to go very far in this Chamber to find an honest man. I should be able to go anywhere in the Chamber, in broad daylight, and find quite a number—at least I hope that I could. I do not want to infer that hon. members opposite are not carrying out their duty. All that I want to know is why it should be necessary to appoint a special man to say that they are doing their job so well?

The PREMIER: I will tell you all about it later on.

Mr. MOORE: It certainly requires some explanation. An amount of £7,350 is required for European cablegrams, railway fares and freights, printing, stationery, etc., incidental and miscellaneous expenses. In answer to a question the other day the Premier said that his department had provided a special train for the purpose of conveying members of the Labour Convention from Maryborough to a picnic at Pialba. That was a very pleasing thing to do, but is there any reason why money contributed by the taxpayers to the Chief Secretary's Department for public purposes should be used to provide a special train to convey members of the Labour

*Mr. Moore*]

Convention to a picnic at Pialba? He certainly added that he would give consideration to a similar request from a body of sufficient importance in the future.

The PREMIER: The Government provided a special train for the sugar technologists.

Mr. MOORE: They were visitors.

The PREMIER: Not all of them.

Mr. MOORE: The sugar technologists were visitors from all over the world, and we were delighted to give them an opportunity to see Queensland. Nobody would cavil at public expenditure for that purpose. It is recognised when important visitors from the other side of the world visit Queensland the Government should extend hospitality to them. That is partly to advertise the State, to show them as much as possible, allow them to travel in comfort, so that when they leave Queensland they will become ambassadors for this State. The Premier extends the courtesy of free passes to such visitors. The sugar technologists were highly interested in the sugar industry. They were interested in the different methods of sugar cultivation and production. No one cavils at the hospitality extended to such visitors. But it is very different when a free picnic jaunt is organised for a party political convention, and a train is chartered for that special purpose! It was only done for the purpose of making the Premier and his Government popular with those people. Some years ago the delegates attending the annual conference of the Local Authorities' Association in Brisbane were taken down the bay on the "Lucinda" or "Kooopa" and entertained by the Home Secretary. That practice has been abandoned for a number of years on the score of expense, but whilst it was in existence that expense was incurred by the Government to entertain a number of voluntary workers in the important sphere of local government. Those delegates come from all parts of the State. The Government cannot see their way to entertain these delegates suitably to-day, yet they charter a special train to take the delegates attending the Labour-in-Politics Convention to a picnic at Pialba. It seems incongruous.

Then there is an increase in the vote, and no sugar technologists are coming to the State this year. This extra provision of £500 in incidental expenses is apparently going to be used for a further picnic. We can anticipate a little larger expenditure this year for that purpose. When that happens the publicity officer, in order to popularise the Government, will write up the gathering and dilate upon the delightfulness of the picnic, how the Ministers were conspicuous at the gathering, what wonderful speeches were made, and what a wonderful advantage Queensland derives from such a convention. It might all dovetail very nicely, but where is the advantage to the community? The Government should have no such position as a publicity officer; their administration should speak for itself. "Good wine needs no bush." Apparently the wine is a little inferior when £525 is needed for a publicity officer to tell the people outside not what is going on, but what the Government would like the people to think is going on, even though it may be a little different from the actual facts. Some reason should be given for appointing this official, and some explanation of the advantage the community is to

get out of it. I am not anxious to hear what advantage the Government will get out of it. I can understand that. In fact, I have seen some of the articles that have been written by this officer. Some of them are contributed to the Press with no name, as if they were written by some grateful constituents who had only just discovered what an excellent Government we have, and how pleased they are with it. Other articles are signed by the publicity officer. Some are quite good—in fact, the articles concerning the Barrier Reef as a tourist resort are very interesting—but those articles are only a side issue. The principal duty of this officer is to write up the various Ministers and the Government, to let the people see how fortunate they were at the last election in returning men who are so anxious to do everything in their power to meet their desires, and to show them that everything is being done in the best possible way.

Mr. O'KEEFE: What is wrong with that? There is nothing wrong with that.

Mr. MOORE: Not if you pay for it out of your own pocket. I have no objection if hon. members opposite put their hands into their pockets and pay a publicity officer £525 a year to boost their Government. The system of publicity agents conjures up rather horrifying possibilities. When the State publicity officer goes down to the Loan Council we read in the Press how Mr. Smith dominated the conference, and later on we find in the Sydney "Morning Herald," that Mr. Stevens dominated the conference. According to the reports it would appear that no other Premiers were there. This system of having publicity agents is new.

At 2 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

The PREMIER: Mr. Stevens paid me a lot of compliments.

Mr. MOORE: I think it was a case of, "You scratch my back and I will scratch yours." Each Minister indulges in publicity stunts. The Secretary for Public Lands has indulged in publicity by pointing out what he is doing, but the king of all the publicity agents is the Secretary for Agriculture. He advertises the same activity day after day and the people wonder where the money is coming from for all these enterprises. The Secretary for Labour and Industry does the same thing, and the Secretary for Public Works too.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: You are not too bad yourselves.

Mr. MOORE: We leave our actions to speak for themselves. The position of publicity officer really entails an unnecessary expenditure because so much publicity is given to the actions of Ministers through the Press; and I do not know that any advantage will be gained by the community having a publicity officer attached to the Chief Secretary's Office.

I desire to point out—and I do not know whether the Chief Secretary can do anything—that the various departmental reports are very late, and hon. members have not the necessary information to enable them to deal with the Estimates. Last year we did not get the report of the Department of Agriculture and Stock until after the session was ended. This year we have not got the Auditor-General's Report,

[Mr. Moore.

the report of the Department of Public Lands, or that of the Department of Public Works.

The PREMIER: The report of the Department of Public Works was tabled the other day.

Mr. MOORE: We have the report of the State Advances Corporation.

The PREMIER: If you look at yesterday morning's paper you will find an account of the activities of the Department of Public Works.

Mr. MOORE: We have not received it yet.

The PREMIER: One hon. member opposite appeared to have got the report of a commission before it was printed.

Mr. MOORE: At the commencement of the session Mr. Speaker said he anticipated we should get the Auditor-General's report about the same time as we got it last year, which was about 17th October. It would be of assistance to hon. members if they had the various departmental reports before the discussion on the Estimates took place.

The PREMIER: The Chief Secretary's Department does not publish a report.

Mr. MOORE: The Auditor-General comes within the Chief Secretary's Department.

The PREMIER: I have nothing to do with that report; that is made to Mr. Speaker, and not to me.

Mr. MOORE: I was not suggesting the Premier had anything to do with the compilation of that report, but the Audit Office comes under his department. I was only suggesting that if it were possible we should be supplied with the Auditor-General's report and the various departmental reports as soon as possible because it would be of great advantage when discussing the Estimates. The Treasurer's Tables and Estimates do not contain details. The Premier has the inside information when going through the Treasurer's Tables and looking through the trust accounts.

The PREMIER: I will give you all information on that when we come to it.

Mr. MOORE: I should like the information before we come to it. It is rather difficult for us. The Premier gives us that information in the Chamber, but we should have it before.

The PREMIER: You receive all the financial tables.

Mr. MOORE: There are no details. The items are shown in lump sums. Take for instance the Forestry and Lumbering Account, then take the Trust Account, and also the Loan Account under that heading, and endeavour to make a reconciliation. It is a most difficult thing to do if one desires to follow the position intelligently. We find that the Secretary for Public Lands has handed over to consolidated revenue the largest amount of timber receipts in the history of the State. On investigation we discover that the expenditure is more than the revenue as shown in the Trust Account. It is difficult to arrive at the correct position. Had we the opportunity of perusing the Auditor-General's report we could obtain some idea as to the true position. If the issue of the report could be speeded up it would be of the greatest assistance to members, particularly in any discussion on the Estimates.

I am aware that there are difficulties. I am not suggesting that they are being held back. It may be that all that is needed is a word to the departments concerned that other work should be put aside for the time being and attention concentrated on the reports, and that they be issued in time to allow of their being used in the discussion on the Estimates. Even from the point of view of the Ministers of the various departments it would be better were the Opposition to have the reports prior to the discussion of the relevant Estimate. It would be an advantage also to hon. members on the Government benches. With the reports at hand we should not be so liable to err as otherwise. It is important that we should have reports as soon as possible.

The PREMIER: I quite agree with you.

Mr. MOORE: I am hoping that the Auditor-General's report will be to hand this week. Mr. Speaker said that it would be provided about the same time as it was issued last year. That would be the current week. It is difficult to go through the intricate accounts of the various departments unless one is fortified with the intimate details given by the Auditor-General in his report.

The PREMIER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*) [2.8 p.m.]: The Leader of the Opposition has raised the question of the issue of the reports of the various departments, particularly that of the Auditor-General. I would remind the hon. gentleman that the Auditor-General's report is made to Parliament and not to the Premier or any member of the Government. Under the Audit Act the Auditor-General is an officer of Parliament and not of any department. No doubt the information given by Mr. Speaker recently is an indication as to when the report will be tabled. Perhaps it will be during the current or at the commencement of the following week.

The hon. gentleman raised the question of the appointment of a publicity officer and the provision for four typists on the Estimates of the Chief Secretary's Department. Dealing first of all with the four typists, these are not new appointments but this is the first year they have been charged to the Chief Secretary's Department. Hon. members know that I am Treasurer as well as Chief Secretary. The two departments are housed in different buildings, and it does not suit my convenience to pass between the Treasury Building and the Executive Building in the performance of the duties of my dual offices. The duties of Premier are distinct from those of Treasurer, but I find it necessary to do the Treasury work in the Chief Secretary's office. For example, take the deputations that I received in connection with loans to local authorities and other public bodies. Such deputations must be reported. I have the assistance of the Secretary for Public Instruction, who takes a fair number of these deputations, but the major ones I take myself. In dealing with Treasury matters it is absolutely necessary that complete details of the deputations be recorded, and particularly the replies made by the Treasurer. If this is not done there may be a controversy as to whether or not the Treasurer promised something or otherwise, particularly so when it is a question in connection with subsidy-loans. Every hon. member knows that we are no longer paying a 50 per cent. subsidy on new loans. When

*Hon. W. Forgan Smith.]*

the new policy was announced we pointed out that where promises of 50 per cent. subsidies had already been made, those promises would be honoured. If there were no records in my office of what I said to those deputations there might be many disputes as to the true position. A local authority comes to me for a loan. After getting approval, and only then, does it prepare plans and specifications. It may decide to call public tenders for the work, and in many cases I have known more than a year to elapse between the approval of the loan and the commencement of the work. So that I point out to hon. members generally that while these officers have been in the Chief Secretary's Department for a number of years, their salaries have been charged to the departments from which they were seconded. Some of those typists have been seconded from the Treasury and some from the Taxation Department, but all are officers of my department. This year we are appointing them definitely to the Chief Secretary's Department, and they will be officers of that department, but that has no connection with the appointment of a publicity officer. He has the use of a typist, just the same as the chief clerk or any other officer of the department.

The Leader of the Opposition tried to be facetious when dealing with the publicity officer. I was very pleased to see him in that humour. It is much better to see the Leader of the Opposition merry and bright than wilting under the conviction of his sins. However, be that as it may. The publicity officer for the Government was not appointed for the purpose of boosting the Government. He has numerous duties, comprising all the publicity work necessary for the State of Queensland. For example, the control of advertising in the State is in the Chief Secretary's Department. It is this publicity officer's duty to write advertisements for newspapers or periodicals. There has been an improvement in the style of those advertisements and there has been and will be a great reduction in costs. Where there is no reduction in costs we are gaining a better return for the same money. All that work is being done in the Chief Secretary's office by the publicity officer, whose primary duty it is to carry out that work and allocate the advertisements to the various newspapers throughout the State. In addition to that, he regularly writes articles dealing with the sugar and other industries that are vital to Queensland. The Leader of the Opposition said that we had a newspaper Press in Queensland that was quite capable of eliciting and stating facts! Newspapers are quite capable of publishing facts if they are aware of them, and I considered it would be a good thing to have an officer who was able to give the newspapers the facts so that when they write on any matter they may be able to present the facts in proper and true perspective. Many newspapers in Australia, however, are not concerned with the facts. They are concerned with the impression they desire to convey to the people. That applies equally to individuals. I would put it this way: many people are not so much concerned with establishing the truth as they are with establishing what they consider to be the truth of their own ideas. Frequently newspapers are misinformed or publish wrong or insufficient information because of that trait of character. The publicity

[*Hon. W. Forgan Smith.*]

officer does very valuable work in disseminating information about the activity of the various Government departments and preparing a case in respect of any matter that is a subject of controversy, especially in the Federal arena. Will anyone say it is not necessary to give the people the truth about these things? We read in the periodicals every week statements affecting Queensland that are very wide of the mark. I do not think that Queensland should continue to be misrepresented through either error or a desire to injure the State, and it is the function of the publicity officer to see that does not happen.

In addition to that, I am not satisfied that we are getting from the tourist traffic in Queensland the full result that we ought to get, nor am I fully satisfied that it was a wise move to transfer the whole control of the Tourist Bureau to the Railway Department. I am not satisfied that that change has effected economy or improved efficiency. I am not speaking against it, but I want to know exactly the position. Mr. Ferguson, the publicity officer, is at present engaged, first of all, on a thorough investigation of the Tourist Bureau and the results it has achieved, and he will report to the Government what improvements, if any, may be made.

Queensland is a wonderful State, and could be made a wonderful holiday resort. Take, for example, the riches that we have in the Barrier Reef, or in the Hinchinbrook Passage alone—that is bound to be a tourist paradise in the near future. As people get to know of these places they will go there in increasing numbers to get the benefit of the amenities that Queensland offers in such abundance. The tourist traffic in New Zealand is worth hundreds of thousands of pounds of the national income of that country, but we have done very little with our tourist traffic and the development and advertisement of the scenic beauties of our State. It is the Government's desire to place it on a sound basis so that we can get better results year by year.

So far as political publicity is concerned, I think the Leader of the Opposition will agree that I am quite capable of doing my own, and any statement I make to the Press on political affairs or matters of policy is dictated to the typist myself. I do not think that any member of the Opposition would accuse me of not being able to state such a case, whether they believe in its exactitude or not. Every Government in Australia, so far as I know, have a publicity department. The New South Wales Government have a very well organised one with a fairly large staff, so has Victoria, so has South Australia, and so has the Prime Minister, Mr. Lyons. The Prime Minister took a publicity officer with him to Great Britain and no doubt the people of Australia were thrilled at the news he used to send about the functions he attended and the dresses Mrs. Lyons wore; but the apotheosis of his principals was reached when the "Niagara," on which they were travelling, had a collision, and we were informed by that publicity officer that Mrs. Lyons distributed chocolates to her fellow-passengers and Joe went below for a shave. Wonderful work on the part of the publicity officer!

I assure the Leader of the Opposition that the publicity officer is not used for

those purposes, that he is employed with the object of giving the people the facts about Queensland. I make no apology for his appointment, confident that the results of his endeavours will be beneficial to the people. It is not a new practice. It is well known that Mr. Kidston, a former Premier, seriously considered the advisability of publishing a Government newspaper to place the facts before the people because of the attitude adopted by the Press towards his Government. We know that many newspapers that support the Opposition are not concerned with giving the people the facts, that they are concerned only with spreading propaganda for their own purposes. For example, the "Courier-Mail" recently published a statement intimating that departmental expenditure this year would be £2,000,000 greater than it was in 1932. Yesterday I pointed out that it had made an error of approximately £900,000. In its sub-leader this morning the newspaper mentions the expenditure from trust funds to justify the figure that it had already used, but why does it not also include expenditure from loan fund and thus make the figure bigger still? That shows the juggling that goes on in newspaper offices where they are at their wits' end to make a case for the Opposition against the Government. The Leader of the Opposition asked for an explanation as to why a publicity officer should have been appointed, and in my usual courteous manner I have given it to him in complete detail.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN (*Dalby*) [2.24 p.m.]: It was very refreshing to listen to the easy way in which the Premier made his explanation to the Leader of the Opposition. He has already explained that the number of typists in the Chief Office has been increased by four, because he combines the duties of Premier and Chief Secretary in his own person. He pointed out that this was the first year that these officers were to be paid by the Chief Secretary's Department, and that no additional appointments were involved. If four typists were transferred from the Treasury to the Chief Secretary's Department because there was less work there, one would naturally expect to find four typists fewer in the Treasury. Instead, we find that provision is actually made for four more than last year. I cannot see how the explanation of the Premier fits in with the facts. Provision is made for a further eight typists in the two departments. Probably, the Premier will be able to explain that the additional typists in the Treasury were obtained from some other department.

The title "Publicity Officer" should be changed to "Propaganda Officer"—we should give him his right title. There is no doubt that he was appointed for the purpose of placing the Premier and his Government in the most favourable light, especially when the hon. gentleman was attending conferences in the South. We read reports, no doubt emanating from this officer, informing us that the Premier was the big man at a conference, and that only he had anything to say or do. We have also read that when the Loan Council found itself in difficulties and the representatives of the States sat and stared at each other the Premier was the only one who knew what to do and just what resolution to

propose. A publicity officer is also engaged by Mr. Stevens, the Premier of New South Wales. After reading his reports one can come to no other conclusion than that Mr. Stevens was the "lock, stock and barrel" of the conference. If we then read the reports from the publicity officers who accompanied the Premiers of the other States, we see that it was their Premiers who were "the big lights." Whom are we to believe? One would naturally expect a publicity officer to stick to facts when issuing articles for publication. That is practically all that this party desires. The publicity officer does not always do that. Recently an article, which was in many respects a splendid one, appeared in the metropolitan Press dealing with the tourist traffic to the North. It stated that the credit for the highway that has been completed between Cairns and Daintree was due to the present Government, because they had proclaimed the road and commenced the work. As a matter of fact, I had the pleasure and the honour, if there is any honour attached to it, of causing the State highway between Cairns and Daintree to be proclaimed, and of opening the first section from Daintree to Mossman. That was under the Moore regime. A great deal of work was also completed on the other section. Why did the publicity officer give that credit to the present Government and not to the Moore Government? Either he knows nothing about the work or he was misinformed. I do not know the officer, but I would advise that when he is writing articles, even from a tourist point of view, he endeavour to stick to facts—not to engage in propaganda—and to give credit where credit is due.

The Premier said that he was not certain that the action in transferring the Tourist Bureau from the control of the Chief Secretary's Department to the Railway Department was correct. The results should decide that fact. If the Premier compares the results of the bureau prior to and after the transfer, he will find that the change has been amply justified. The Tourist Bureau to-day is a very live organisation. The amount of money that has passed through its hands has more than justified its transfer to the Railway Department. Previously no profits were being made, but when the Moore Government transferred it to the Railway Department it became a live and useful body.

We should exert ourselves to encourage people, not only in the Southern States but also in other parts of the world, to visit the beauty spots in Queensland. I have seen the tourist resorts in almost every State in Australia, but we have better ones in Queensland. Up to the present time the Tourist Bureau—

The CHAIRMAN: The vote embracing the Tourist Bureau is not before the Committee; it comes under another vote. The Premier referred to the Tourist Bureau transfer but he did not enter into a discussion on it.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: He referred to the fact that he was not satisfied that the transfer was the right and proper thing to do. I am endeavouring to show that results speak for themselves. I am not dealing with the matter from the point of view of the Moore Government. I desire

*Mr. Morgan.]*

to point out to the Premier if he goes into the matter thoroughly—

The PREMIER: We are going into it thoroughly. I am not doing anything without investigation. I do not wish to take it back unless that course would be helpful.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: It is our duty to endeavour to improve the Tourist Bureau and to do our utmost to encourage the people to visit this State.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*) [2.32 p.m.]: I do not consider it necessary to have a publicity officer attached to the Chief Secretary's Department. At the present time it often occurs that newspapers are aware of the intentions of the Government before the public. The Premier suggested that all newspapers were liars except those that supported Government policy. Nobody can truthfully say all the newspapers in this country deliberately lie, even though the owners of those newspapers have definite political views. There is no necessity for the State to spend money on a publicity officer whose chief work is to boost the Government. Publicity officers appear to exist in every department, and they could be more aptly termed "political officers." Every political party should be able to stand without help from a publicity officer whose salary is provided for out of general revenue contributed by the public. Hon. members and Ministers should be capable of placing their views before the public, and should not need publicity officers who are paid out of public funds to boost their cause, and very often put a case before the public that is not in accordance with fact. It is much better to leave the matter of publicity to the daily newspapers.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES interjected.

Mr. DEACON: The hon. gentleman gets a good deal of publicity from the daily newspapers; he cannot growl, because he has been treated very well. Why should the public be asked to pay for publicity officers to boost the Government. This man has been engaged especially for his ability to boost a Labour Government. On the coming into power of another Government, is it at all likely that they will keep him in his job? It is certain that an incoming Government would immediately sack the publicity officer of the previous Government for their own protection they would do so. They would not trust him. He is a political officer and public funds should not be used to pay political officers. No Government can be right in doing such a thing. It is immaterial what we say and what the Premier says. The whole question hinges on one thing—the need of the Premier of a publicity officer for advertising his Government. The present Government in this respect are in no different position from their predecessors. Surely they can stand on their own feet! Surely they can trust the Press to give them the publicity they deserve! The people obtain a fair and unbiased view from the articles published in the Press without the assistance of a Government publicity officer.

Mr. GAIR: They do not get it from the Tory Press.

Mr. DEACON: They do get it.

Mr. GAIR: Not in the "Gallery Notes."

[*Mr. Morgan.*]

Mr. DEACON: We on this side do not get it from the "Standard." The Opposition gets nothing from the "Standard."

In the "Gallery Notes" they all get what they deserve. I do not care what is said about me. If hon. members are so touchy why do they not write out their own notices and send them to the Press. (Laughter.) They could then publish their own opinions and some of them would be interesting. However, to return to the matter under discussion, it is wrong to take public funds for the purpose of paying political officers to advertise the Government. That is the sole duty of this man. That is his job.

The PREMIER: I told you it is not.

Mr. DEACON: The Premier told the Assembly much about it but at the same time he informed us that he could not get fair play from the other newspapers.

The PREMIER: I never used that term.

Mr. DEACON: It means the same thing, only it was in different words. That is what the Premier told us.

The PREMIER: I rise to a point of order. I pointed out that the publicity officer provided for in this vote was not appointed to do political work. I made that statement on more than one occasion. The hon. member for Cunningham persists in making an entirely wrong statement. I claim that under the Standing Orders he must accept my denial.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member for Cunningham to accept the denial of the Premier.

Mr. DEACON: Certainly, Mr. Hanson, I will accept the Premier's denial. However, if the publicity officer is not there to boost the Government, and the Premier says he is not, what is he there for? Why pay him? It is a waste of public money. Up to the present time the Governments of Queensland, Nationalist Governments included, have carried on without this officer. They experienced no difficulty. Why waste money in this regard? If the Premier desires to give one man a large sum for work that is not necessary—and it is plainly not necessary—why does he not pay it into the Unemployment Relief Fund? Why should £550 be spent to give one man a job when we have so many men unemployed? The Premier has not shown that a publicity officer is necessary. Let anyone read what the Premier said and assess its worth.

Mr. JESSON (*Kennedy*) [2.41 p.m.]: I must reply to the remarks made by the hon. member who has just resumed his seat. One firm alone in Queensland spends many thousands of pounds in advertising its goods. McWhirters' Ltd., Finney Isles Ltd., all business people advertise, and it is ridiculous for the hon. member to make such statements about the paltry sum of £500 that is spent in publicity in Queensland. The members of the Opposition have always decried anything done by a Labour Government. Let them hold the reins of office for a further three years and God help Queensland as a State. Their policy has done more damage to the State than any drought or flood. Why cannot members of the Opposition give us and the people of Queensland constructive ideas.

Mr. MAHER: That is your job.

Mr. JESSON: We are doing our job. The hon. member who has just resumed his seat was only carrying out the policy of his party of indulging in a tirade of abuse at anything the Government do. This money has been well spent. It would be well spent if it were double the amount. We should spend more money on advertising Queensland in the proper manner. The hon. member for Cunningham said that the expenditure of a paltry £500 on advertising in Queensland was a scandalous waste of money. It was a scandalous waste of time to listen to him speaking in such a way.

Mr. MAHER (*West Moreton*) [2.43 p.m.]: There is no doubt that it is a good thing, if—as the hon. member for Cunningham has been asked to accept as correct—Mr. Ferguson was appointed publicity officer for the genuine purpose of advancing the welfare of the State by giving proper publicity to its resources, and not for political purposes. Accepting the explanation of the Premier, it is, nevertheless, certain that the appointment of Mr. Ferguson was made just prior to the last State election. No doubt, his services were availed of in a political way during the election campaign. Furthermore, it is a well-established fact that he has accompanied the Premier on Southern missions affecting this State.

The PREMIER: When?

Mr. MAHER: I am not prepared to say when, but I have been informed that the Premier has been accompanied by the publicity officer, Mr. Ferguson, on one or other of his Southern trips—certainly to attend conferences that affect the State. It cannot be denied that even if the appointment was made for the purposes stated by the Premier this afternoon, there is nevertheless an obligation on the appointee to respect his patron. The whole of his future rests in the hollow of the Premier's hand, so to speak and the publicity officer would naturally feel an obligation—apart from writing up the Barrier Reef and the potentialities of Queensland—to justify his appointment and with one eye on the future possibilities do a certain amount of political propaganda in between times for the Government of the day.

The PREMIER: The Government only want him to let the people know the truth.

Mr. MAHER: The point is: what does the publicity officer do to justify his job? He is being paid £10 10s. a week or thereabouts, and then I suppose he travels about the State, which necessitates travelling expenses. Probably the increase in miscellaneous expenses by £500 provided for in this vote is in part necessary to defray the expenses of this officer. I venture to say that as we are placed to-day in Queensland—budgeting for falling revenue and increasing expenditure—the appointment of this officer is not justified. The work of publicity can be amply carried out, either on behalf of the State or the Government, by the responsible officers of the State.

Then again, as the Premier himself said, he does not give place to anybody in his ability to state a case for his Government or for himself. We do not challenge his statement; there is no question that the Premier is able to make out a very excellent case in support of his point of view whenever he pleases, his Ministers are capable of doing the same thing, and the depart-

mental officers when requested to do so can make out a case very advantageous to Queensland.

We have already the tourist bureau and publicity attached to the Railway Department. I recognise, Mr. Hanson, that that is a matter outside the bounds of this vote, but I mention in passing that the State is committed to a certain amount of expenditure there for publicity purposes, and in my opinion some very fine publicity work has been undertaken by that department. In all the circumstances it is hard to understand where the need for this publicity officer comes in. It is unfortunate that the State is up against it in a financial sense, and many men are looking for jobs, and very glad to accept the basic wage. Probably £1,000 per annum is required for the salary and expenses involved in this appointment, and in my opinion that sum is being wasted. The State is not getting a fair return for the money.

I should like to make reference whilst I have the opportunity to the question I directed to the Chief Secretary at an earlier stage of the present session in regard to the utilisation of taxpayers' money to give to the delegates attending the Labour Convention a free trip by special train from Maryborough to Pialba. I venture to say that if the Country-Progressive-National Party or the Douglas Social Credit Party, or any other political party asked the Premier for such a thing, they would be met with a very curt refusal—and rightly so. I do not think any political party in Queensland or any other body of men meeting in convention in Queensland has any right to presume to ask the Treasurer for a special train for a holiday excursion. The cost of that train must have been considerable. There are quite a number of taxpayers in this State who hold political views directly opposed to those of the present Government, yet all the taxpayers were called upon to foot the bill for this gay holiday at Pialba. The Premier has stated that on occasions hospitality is extended by the State to distinguished visitors, such as the sugar technologists and others. After all, there is such a thing as international hospitality, and if a distinguished body of Australians visited a foreign country it is very probable that hospitality would be freely extended to them. I have no complaint on that score at all, but here in our own country, if we are going to establish the precedent of recognising the right of a political Labour Convention to have a special train placed at its disposal, where is it going to end? The licensed victuallers in conference assembled, the local authorities, the graziers, the various church synods, or other public or semi-public bodies that may assemble in Brisbane or elsewhere throughout the State may reasonably expect to receive the same concession. The Government have established a precedent, and it is difficult to know where it will end. The delegates to the Labour Convention had no claim at all on the public purse.

The PREMIER: Your Government sent a special train on one occasion to Gladstone.

Mr. MAHER: I have no knowledge of any special train having been sent by the Moore Government, and in any case, if a special train had been despatched by my Government in circumstances that were

*Mr. Maher.]*

opposed to the best interests of the taxpayers of the country, and I had any say in it I should be in definite opposition to it. The taxpayers are entitled to some measure of respect in this connection. There was a time in the history of the Labour movement when its early pioneers would have considered it repugnant to their sense of right and their conception of their obligation to the taxpayers, if it were suggested that they should approach the Premier to provide a special train for their own recreation. Men in the past were too proud to accept such a favour, or even approach the Treasury for it. It is regrettable that there has developed in our young country a disposition to "get all you can for nothing, no matter who pays for it." That seems to be the idea in most favour to-day. We are entitled to lodge some protest against the use of public funds to give a holiday jaunt to delegates attending the Labour in Politics Convention at Maryborough. I hope the Premier will not extend similar generosity again to political bodies, especially when the State is passing through difficult times. Nobody after a close study of the Budget can deny that that is so. It shows that our expenditure is increasing beyond all bounds, and our revenue is falling. Yet this money is splashed about to give a good time to Labour delegates! It is very wrong. As it was on the eve of an election it savours almost of a political bribe. I voice my objection to it, and counsel the Premier to be more cautious and prudent in future by not extending such hospitality at the expense of taxpayers.

Mr. P. K. COPLEY (*Kurilpa*) [2.55 p.m.]: I should like to pay a tribute to the very fine services rendered by the Under Secretary and Clerk of the Executive Council (Mr. G. W. Watson), the Chief Clerk and Official Secretary to the Premier (Mr. T. Hope), and the Secretary to the Premier (Mr. R. McAllister). I feel I speak for every hon. member when I say that on every occasion it has been the duty of an hon. member to approach any one of these officials that he has received unflinching courtesy. I can say the same of the other officials of the department with whom we come into contact to a lesser extent. They have performed their onerous duties admirably in the last twelve months.

I was astounded at the statements made concerning the publicity officer. I can appreciate the view of hon. members opposite, because they cannot value the sincerity of purpose of the Government and assess at its true value what they are doing for Queensland. They look at every action of the Government from a sordid point of view for the purpose of seeing what political capital they can make from it. They cannot conceive of the Government's doing anything that is in the interests of the State or its people, for whom when they were in office they cared nothing. During the last few months we have had the privilege of reading some wonderful articles published in the Press by the publicity officer.

I was pleased to hear the Premier announce that he had delegated to this official the duty of making an investigation into the tourist traffic. Queensland possesses some of the greatest scenery in the world, but it is little known. No extensive publicity campaign has been carried on outside of Queensland. I suggest to the Premier that

[*Mr. Maher.*

Mr. Ferguson should not confine his inquiries to Queensland, but that he should also investigate the methods adopted by the various bureaux in the other States.

The PREMIER: I intend to do so.

Mr. P. K. COPLEY: I am pleased to have that interjection. Despite the very fine work performed by Mrs. T. J. Ryan in Melbourne as the representative of the Tourist Bureau, she is very severely handicapped because of its location and position of the offices. I only hope that the publicity officer, after making his investigations, will give an unbiased opinion as to what he considers is the right thing to do. Tourist traffic is worth catering for. New Zealand makes hundreds of thousands of pounds from it. We have in North Queensland scenery equal to that found in New Zealand, although not of the same kind. Our views are incomparable.

The hon. member for West Moreton indulged in a specious kind of political propaganda when he said that he "understood" that the publicity officer accompanied the Premier on his visits to the South. It is a scandalous state of affairs when hon. members make statements such as "I heard something of that description."

Mr. MAHER: Do you say he did not go?

Mr. P. K. COPLEY: I am only referring to the statement of the hon. member and criticising it. That is the type of whispering slander we are compelled to combat. Hon. members opposite listen to whispers and repeat those whispers on the floor of this Chamber in a way that is unbecoming. An hon. member should be prepared to make a definite statement on the floor of this Chamber. But these methods are typical of the propaganda of the Opposition. It is high time we had a publicity officer, not only to deal with matters that are now coming within the purview of this official, but also with statements made in this Chamber and the Tory Press to the disadvantage of Queensland. I hope the publicity officer will continue the good work he is doing. It is all very fine to hear the hon. member for West Moreton assert that the publicity officer is held by the Premier in the hollow of his hands, and that it would only be wise of him to give the Premier a pat on the back, as it might be to his advantage some time in the future. That is typical of the criticism of the Opposition. The people of Queensland know that Labour stands for complete freedom of thought. Officers of the public service are absolutely unhampered at the present time, but what was the position when the Opposition were in power? Was any employee in the Government service prepared to express his political opinion during the time when public servants were outlawed and robbed of access to the Industrial Court and when freedom of thought and action was denied to them? The hon. member for West Moreton thinks along one line, his mind runs in a groove, and he cannot conceive of an appointment, such as that of Mr. Ferguson, for the purpose of gaining advantage for the State, but must think he has been appointed in order to give the Premier a pat on the back. If such motives actuated the Moore Government in making appointments, he should not imagine that such sordid considerations govern appointments by the Labour Party. The intelligence of hon. members opposite is not even great

enough to enable them to appreciate the fact that other people do not think on the same lines as they do.

Distinguished visitors have often been granted many privileges in this State in the past, and such privileges were made available to the delegates to the Labour Convention at Maryborough. I congratulate the Premier upon making passes available for distinguished visitors in order that they may view our State.

Mr. MAHER: Why not let them pay their own fares?

Mr. P. K. COPLEY: Why did not the ex-Secretary for Railways adopt that attitude in regard to the train trip to Gladstone during the time the Moore Government were in power? It is just as well to remind hon. members opposite of these things. When you live in a glass house, you cannot afford to throw stones.

In regard to the suggestion that Mr. Ferguson would utilise his time in political propaganda for the Government, I desire to quote a paragraph that appears in the "Courier-Mail" of 20th July this year. This paragraph occupies about half a column and is headed, "No Panic on 'Niagara,'" with a sub-heading "Mrs. Lyons distributes Chocolates." It then states—

"In a radio message from the 'Niagara,' Mr. R. I. Douglas, Commonwealth Publicity Officer, gave a graphic account of the collision. . . . At the time of the collision Mr. and Mrs. Lyons were in their cabin, situated a few feet from where the 'King Egbert' struck the 'Niagara,' and both saw the ships draw apart. I was emerging from the dining-room when I saw the 'King Egbert' appear phantom-like. The next instant I was shaken by the shock of the impact."

I do not desire to draw any unreasonable inference, but the article states that Mr. and Mrs. Lyons were situated a few feet from where the "King Egbert" struck the "Niagara," and he (the Publicity Officer) was coming out of the dining-room, apparently some distance away, and to use his own words, "I was shaken by the shock of the impact." The account of the affair endeavours to place the Prime Minister and his wife on a pedestal.

Later on in the same paragraph a caption says—

"Mr. Lyons has his shave."

Surely this is a daily incident with Mr. Lyons. This is not the case of a publicity officer who is sent South to make inspections and report to the Government. This officer was sent across to the other side of the world, and when he sends out these reports they are published in the newspapers under heavy headlines—"Mr. Lyons has his daily shave!" (Government laughter.) That is the type of report sent out by a publicity officer employed by the Commonwealth Government. This is a publicity officer giving out to the world information about the Prime Minister of a nation! He is not dealing with the Premier of a State. He adds—

" . . . Mr. Lyons, unmoved by the shock of the collision, proceeded to shave and announced his intention shortly to retire to bed."

He tells the world that the Prime Minister is going to bed—

" . . . He advised others to do likewise, but no others followed his example."

According to Mr. Douglas, nobody else went to bed. He proceeds further, and I am not aware whether this was after the Hon. J. A. Lyons retired to bed—

" . . . Mrs. Lyons handed chocolates around."

That is the sort of thing we get from the publicity officer not of a Labour but of a Nationalist Administration; the publicity officer not of a State but of a nation. Hon. members opposite of the same political kidney as Lyons and Company stand up and have the audacity to attack the appointment of Mr. Ferguson as publicity officer. If Mr. Ferguson wrote an article like that regarding the Premier I should be one, as no doubt the Premier would, to say to him, "Ferguson, you are making a clown of yourself. Get out." Mr. Ferguson is there to do a specific job for the State. He is not there to make a fool of the Premier in the eyes of the world as Douglas made of Mr. and Mrs. Lyons.

Mr. WATERS (*Kelvin Grove*) [3.7 p.m.]: I deprecate the attack by hon. members opposite on the appointment of Mr. Ferguson to the position of State Publicity Officer. I have had the privilege of the gentleman's friendship for the last ten years. The base insinuations that have been hurled across this Chamber by members opposite are quite unfounded and unwarranted. After all, Governments and public departments have now to grapple with problems that did not confront them twenty or thirty years ago. Almost every Government in Australia at the present time has a publicity officer. It is a well known fact that the Opposition when in power heavily subsidised Nationalist newspapers throughout this State by way of large amounts for advertising purposes, which amounted to a direct grant from the Government funds. It is preposterous and absurd for them to raise a storm over the appointment of Mr. Ferguson. The worth of the gentleman can be judged by a perusal of his articles on the Barrier Reef. I am certain that the result of his investigation into the possibilities of the tourist trade will be something really worth while to this State. He is an accomplished man. He is highly honoured in his profession, and the State of Queensland is lucky to obtain the services of a man of his calibre. Hon. members opposite were certainly at a loss for something to say when they made an attack on this appointment, particularly in view of the fact that whilst they were in power they poured thousands of pounds into the Nationalist newspapers by way of advertisement in order to bolster up a very weak case.

Item (Chief Secretary's Department—Chief Office) agreed to.

#### AGENT-GENERAL FOR THE STATE.

The PREMIER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*) [3.9 p.m.]: I move—

"That £8,302 be granted for 'Agent-General for the State.'"

Mr. PLUNKETT (*Albert*) [3.9 p.m.]: I have had the opportunity of being in the office of the Agent-General for Queensland in England and seeing the work that is being done by Mr. Pike and hearing the

*Mr. Plunkett.]*

encomiums of the people of the high standard of the work he is doing in the interests of the State. I cannot let this opportunity pass of drawing the attention of hon. members to the high standard of Mr. Pike's work and the opinion of his work held by people in England. It is with a great deal of pleasure that I am able to say that I was very gratified indeed to hear the fine references made to his ability and tact and the way in which he worked on behalf of Queensland over there. It should be pleasing to all Queenslanders to know that our representative in England is held in the highest esteem.

Mr. NICKLIN (*Murrumba*) [3.11 p.m.]: I take this opportunity of congratulating the Acting Agent-General on his excellent report and the splendid work he has performed in the mother country on behalf of this State. It is pleasing to note from that report that increasing quantities of our primary products have been consumed by the British people during the period under review, despite the criticism we have heard of the British policy in this respect. We must realise the difficulty facing the British Government in carrying out their agricultural policy. When we look back over the war years and realise the difficulties the British Government had to face in providing food for their people, we must at least appreciate their viewpoint and admit that Britain is justified in doing her best to supply the needs of her people. We appreciate the fact that considerable preference is given to the British Dominions, as revealed by the gradually increased sales of our primary products in England during the past twelve months.

Another important feature of the activities of the Acting Agent-General during the period under review is the fact that he has visited various provincial centres in England in an endeavour to push our products. Too much effort had been centred in London in the past and insufficient consideration given to the outlying parts of the British Isles. It is pleasing to note that the Agent-General has visited the provincial centres of Great Britain where he undoubtedly found large markets available to our products.

It must be pleasing to everybody to learn from the report that there has been a considerable improvement in the standard of our products during the past twelve months. That has been the goal of our primary producers for many years and it is a cause for satisfaction that their efforts are bearing fruit. One particularly notable example is the sale of Queensland eggs in London. The Queensland Egg Board is to be congratulated on the high standard of its export egg pack. Unfortunately, we had an incident during the past twelve months where eggs from another State adversely affected the sale of eggs from the whole of Australia on the English market. It is gratifying to see that the excellent quality of the board's export pack was recognised on the London market with the result that the sale of Queensland eggs was not affected to any great extent. The board is to be congratulated for giving such an excellent lead to the whole of Australia.

There has been satisfactory progress in the sale of Queensland apples over the last three years. Unfortunately, the good work of the past two years could not be carried on during this season owing to the great

damage done by hail in the Stanthorpe district early this year. In common with other primary producers, the apple growers of Queensland have made every effort to improve the quality of their products and in recent years Queensland apples, particularly Granny Smiths, have topped the English market. Given favourable seasons in this State and freedom from hail and similar seasonal troubles, there is undoubtedly a future for the export of Queensland apples. We have the advantage of being able to put our apples on the British market a fortnight or three weeks before the Southern States can do so, and if that attention which has been given to the improvement of our standard of packing is continued there is no reason why Queensland apples should not play a very important part on the British market.

Another feature in the report to which I wish to refer is the fact that Queensland pineapples are finding an important place on the British market. For many years it has not been possible for Queensland pineapple growers to get their product on that market in any quantity, owing to severe competition from the cheaper product of Singapore. For that reason we concentrated our efforts mainly on the Canadian market, but owing to the effect of the Ottawa Agreement the canned pineapple market in Canada has been seriously affected, and it has been necessary for Queensland to turn her attention to the British market. It is pleasing to know that as a result of the very great improvement in the standard of the Queensland canned pineapple pack, the prospects on the British market are considerably improved. During the last few months the manager for the Committee of Direction of Fruit Marketing, Mr. Ranger, has been in England on behalf of the Queensland pineapple growers, and has largely increased the trade and secured an oversea market that will undoubtedly have a great bearing on the future of the industry. Unfortunately for our efforts to improve the marketing of Queensland pineapples in London, the present crop has been a very light one, and the quantity of fruit available for export has not been as great as one could wish.

Considering Mr. Pike's evidence on the whole, he is to be commended for his efforts on behalf of the State, and I have very much pleasure indeed in commending his report and his actions during the period under review.

Mr. CONROY (*Maranoa*) [3.17 p.m.]: It is pleasing indeed to hear the remarks of hon. members opposite in regard to this vote. It is particularly important at the present time that we should have a representative of this State in London. My reason for saying so will become apparent when I quote this extract from the report—

"The revolutionary schemes which are being applied to British agriculture are causing most serious anxiety to Dominion countries, and whether out of these changes, actual and prospective, some policy will be compounded which will not militate greatly against the interests of Dominion producers is at present a question of grave and considerable doubt.

"I have endeavoured from time to time to keep your Government informed on these matters, realising as I do their all-important bearing upon the

[*Mr. Plunkett.*

many problems your Government is endeavouring to solve in the proper development of our own State."

This is the most important part of this report—

"What should be emphasised here, perhaps, is the fact that the traditional British policy of buying necessities in the cheapest market—Empire or foreign—has been abandoned; now and hereafter, it has been determined, British agriculture must come within the orbit of that protection policy which was adopted prior to, and confirmed by, the Ottawa Conference."

The prospects of our primary industries interested in the export trade are somewhat obscure. The meat industry has been stabilised to some extent, but we are extremely uncertain as to what may happen in other exporting primary industries. We note, perhaps with some concern, the increased quantities of butter, pork and mutton placed on the British market by this country, and I anticipate that serious difficulties will be encountered in the near future if the export of these products continues to increase and the British people, naturally, endeavour to protect their home industries. I sincerely hope that my fears are groundless. Other countries of the world, notably New Zealand, have also increased their export of these commodities, and the United States of America has also entered the pork export trade. The export of cheese has not increased to the same extent as that of butter and pork, but I fear that the destinies of these major exporting primary industries are at present in the lap of the gods. However, we shall have an alert, efficient officer in Mr. Pike to watch our interests and to inform the Government of vital changes from time to time.

In his report Mr. Pike also makes reference to the sugar industry. I was somewhat surprised to read his remarks concerning it. Apparently, the prospects of the Queensland sugar industry in Great Britain are not so favourable as I am sure many of us imagined. The report goes on to say that it was fortunate that the Premier should have arrived in London at the time he did, and that as a result of his visit considerable benefit will accrue to the sugar industry. It adds—

"The Premier was able to devote much of his time to a study and investigation of this many-phased problem. His presence in London was also fortuitous from the point of view of the Australian sugar industry, for at that time important developments were taking place in London in the reorganisation of certain Empire bodies with which the Queensland sugar authorities are affiliated. Moreover, the opportunity was taken by the Premier to assist in constituting the Inter-Dominion Sugar Committee as an official body, of which it was agreed I should act as chairman for the ensuing twelve months."

It will be welcome news to the people associated with the sugar industry that Mr. Pike is to be the chairman of the Inter-Dominion Sugar Committee during the ensuing twelve months. He will be in close touch with all matters bearing on this very important industry in this State.

The report contains much information of great importance. I take this opportunity

of commending to the Government that portion of it referring to the fur industry. For several years restrictions have been imposed on the gathering of opossum skins. I know that the reason was that large stocks of skins were held in Great Britain, which could not be disposed of at a reasonable price. It appears that the market has now become more favourable, for the Acting Agent-General states—

"Australian opossums were in fair supply, but offerings were largely made up of previous season's collections and very few fresh parcels were available, this being due to the fact that all States have been closed for trapping during the year. At the last sales, the exceptionally small collection was in keen request, the best blue selling particularly well and prices advanced 10 per cent.

"Brokers are of opinion that, had the season been open and the size of the catch normal, the demand for Queensland opossums would have been steady, especially for those originating in South Queensland and the better sections of Central Queensland, the demand throughout being for skins of good quality, size, and colour."

This industry provides a good deal of work for our people. It enables many men to add to their earnings during the short season that is usually proclaimed. I ask the Government to consider the opening of an opossum season next year. Like all other skins opossum skins when held for some time deteriorate in value and it is only natural that then there is no demand for them. If the recommendation of the Acting Agent-General is adopted, the Government could closely watch the results, and if that course was justified reopen the season in the following year. This is not what one would call a large industry, although it is a very important one.

Mr. WALKER: It is worth £500,000 a year.

Mr. CONROY: It provides some work for our people. There are many unemployed and the opening of an opossum season would enable many of these men to get away from the centres of population and earn some money.

Mr. WALKER (*Cooroora*) [3.29 p.m.]: I had the pleasure some time ago of visiting the office of the Agent-General, and after reading the next report of the Acting Agent-General I was firmly of opinion that if the Government intended to continue Mr. Pike as Acting Agent-General his time would be taken up on matters other than those of a commercial character. Men who have represented Queensland as Agents-General in London have told us that apart from investigating commercial matters, much of their time is taken up in travelling, attending conferences, and in social gatherings.

Any information that can be obtained in regard to markets in the old country will be of great help to the primary producers in this State. I remember on one occasion one of the representatives of our butter factories advised us that drought prevailed in a certain country and that we should be well advised to hold our butter for a little while. We acted on that advice and made £4,000. It is of great advantage to people concerned in the export of primary products

*Mr. Walker.]*

that they should be posted with information relating to markets and conditions abroad.

The PREMIER: The New Zealand Government held butter for a period and lost £2,000,000.

Mr. WALKER: That was the time the State handled it.

The PREMIER: No, it was controlled by boards.

Mr. WALKER: At the present time our dairy companies are comprised of men of good character and commercial ability. The Agent-General, or, as at present the Acting Agent-General, should be assisted by a commercial man who would be able to supply us with information regarding the likelihood of a rise in prices or, as the hon. member for Maranoa stated, any information as to the condition of the market for our commodities. I recollect that before the opossum season was opened on the last occasion certain information was obtained from the old country and the result was that £500,000 worth of skins were sold. At the present time if information is desired on a matter like that it has to be asked for. A commercial man acting in conjunction with the Acting Agent-General would be of great service to this State and the expenditure incurred by his appointment would be warranted. I should much prefer that the amount allocated for the employment of the publicity officer here should be utilised for the payment of a commercial man to assist the Acting Agent-General. I am sure the appointment of a person with commercial knowledge would result in an increased price for our primary products, and that much worry would thereby be saved to those people who are handling out exports. In the old days the butter and cheese factories had their agents, but we found that greater advantage could be gained by having men on the boards who were prepared to study matters relating to marketing. It would be of great assistance if we received information from the Agent-General's office in regard to droughts in competing countries or shortages of any commodity or the likelihood of a rise in price. It would be the duty of a commercial man appointed to assist the Acting Agent-General to provide that information.

During my tour abroad I visited the Agent-General's office, but there was no activity there. Mr. Fihelly, the ex-Agent-General, was on his way home, and nothing was being done at the Agent-General's office. There was a display of fish in the window at the time which was of no earthly value to Queensland, except from the museum point of view. It may be suggested that we have Mr. Bruce over there; but I would point out that Mr. Bruce is engaged in matters of Australian-wide interest and is handling subjects far removed from those on which we require information.

Mr. RUSSELL, (*Hamilton*) [3.35 p.m.]: The report of the Agent-General takes us only to the end of last year, but that is the usual practice. The Acting Agent-General certainly does very excellent work with the limited funds at his disposal, and I do not think the Government—and this is the view taken by previous Governments—would be wise in amalgamating the Queensland office with Australia House.

[*Mr. Walker.*

The PREMIER: I think it would be a retrograde step.

Mr. RUSSELL: I think it would be. While Australia House was established for the purpose of co-ordinating State activities, the High Commissioner seems to be totally occupied with national and international problems. The work of representing the States must, therefore, fall upon the agencies of the States. Of late years the tendency has been for each State to control its own commercial representation. The States of New South Wales, South Australia, and Victoria have specialised largely on the commercial activities of their Agents-General. Recently Sir Richard Linton, Agent-General for Victoria, made an extensive tour of the main centres of population beyond London and came into direct contact with the wholesalers, distributors and retailers of Australian commodities in order to make himself familiar with the conditions surrounding the sale of Victorian products chiefly. There is no doubt the information he gathered will be of inestimable value to Victorian exporters. New South Wales recently appointed Mr. Heath as a sort of commercial attache to the New South Wales office. He is doing similar work. He has been utilised by the New South Wales Government to attend conferences of a commercial nature. Generally speaking, his appointment has been justified. South Australia followed a similar practice. Mr. McCann, the present commercial representative of South Australia, is also employed chiefly on commercial work. Although Australia House is expected to look after the interests of all the States, those I have mentioned recognise that Australia House is so overburdened with national and international work that the interests of a given State might be overlooked. That is the reason why several of them have decided to utilise the services of commercial men to foster trade in their own exports. The movement has proved fairly successful.

Of course, anybody endeavouring to put a commercial line on the British market meets with tremendous obstacles. A vast amount of prejudice has to be overcome. People become accustomed to a certain commodity and a certain style of packing. It is very difficult to wean them from their allegiance to recognised brands of commodities. Nevertheless, by steady application and useful propaganda and constant canvassing amongst the vendors of the products concerned, a great deal of prejudice is being broken down and, judging from my own personal observation, there is no doubt that there is a very strong sentiment in Great Britain for all the Dominions. The British folk recognise that Australia has been willing at all times to do her part in the furtherance of Empire interests. As I have said on frequent occasions, that sentiment being such as it is, there is a big field for exploitation by Australian exporters.

It is just a question whether we should not increase the usefulness of the Queensland offices. I have a very great regard for Mr. Pike. I know the various activities in which he is engaged, and that he leads a very busy life. The results he has achieved with the comparatively small staff at his disposal speak well for his assiduity. We know that the tendency is for **primary**

producers and exporters to combine operations so that competition will be eliminated, and the expense of distribution minimised. We are all agreed that the days of insane competition and undue price cutting are coming to an end, and that every man engaged in industry is entitled to a fair reward for his labour. With the formation of such organisations, the task of disposing of our products in Great Britain becomes somewhat easier. We know the success with which the dairying industry has met in the United Kingdom as a result of amalgamation of interests, stabilising markets, and prevention of undue competition. There is a certain amount of competition between brand and brand, but in the main there is an understanding between sellers on the other side to keep the prices as high as possible in the interests of the Australian producer. That system has been applied with equal success to all other primary products. While I have every desire that Queensland should co-operate with other States in Australia that are exporting the same commodities, I feel that we must not be averse to any effort towards fostering trade for our own products. I should like to see some system introduced whereby the Agent-General could be brought into closer contact with the distributors in Great Britain of Queensland products, with whom he could co-operate in an effort to keep the market price at the highest level. We know that the Federal Government allot certain sums annually for propaganda purposes, and Queensland certainly must derive some benefit from that advertising, but there is a good deal to be done by our own representatives in London to see that Queensland goods bring better prices on the markets of Great Britain than they have been commanding. That is why I have always been of opinion that the commercial side of the Agent-General's office has been somewhat neglected—not by design, but because we have not given due recognition to the necessity for increasing the commercial staff of the London office.

I commend these views to the Premier. He has been over there himself, and may agree with me that something could be done so that we might, from motives of patriotism in respect of our own State, utilise all the agencies that we have to further the trade between Queensland and Great Britain. What the hon. member for Cooroora has said with regard to exports is practically true, but a great deal of attention has been paid by the publicity department of the Commonwealth office to fostering a greater trade in the north of England and the south of Scotland. To-day fairly large shipments are made to such centres as Glasgow, Liverpool, Avonmouth, and sometimes Manchester—all large centres of population. We have a great number of friends in those centres, and their activities should be co-ordinated for the purpose of boosting our own goods.

The Acting Agent-General has dealt with a great number of subjects, which shows the wide ramifications of his office. There is no doubt that in regard to many of those commodities Mr. Pike has gained a very particular knowledge that has been of great service to the State. I think we all admit that he did great work for us at Ottawa in connection with the sugar business, and in view of the fact that the

British Government to-day are resetting their programme we have to be alert to see that Queensland does not make a worse bargain than she did on the previous occasion. Judging by present indications, it would appear that there is a possibility of making an agreement with regard to sugar that will be as favourable to us as the previous one.

The PREMIER: Certain proposals are being considered now. There will be a conference on the matter in February.

Mr. RUSSELL: Quite so. I am sure that in Mr. Pike's hands our interests will be amply safeguarded. I was sorry indeed to see the reference in the report to the grading of timber, and I think the attention of the Sub-Department of Forestry should be drawn to this defect in our export regulations. We all know that the British market is a most exacting one. Its operators are the most particular buyers in the world. They are so well catered for that they can lay down terms in their contracts that no other nation could. It is a valuable market, however, and once we get their support it would be very hard for anyone else to get in. The Acting Agent-General makes reference to some defect in the grading of our timber, and evidently the certificate from the Sub-Department of Forestry is not enough. I am well acquainted with the conditions that apply in America: the different lumber associations have very strict grading rules, and anyone buying American or Canadian lumber knows that he will get timber true to specification. That is one reason why American timber is so well liked in the South. We shall have to do that with our shipments of timber, particularly plywood timbers. When I was over there I investigated the plywood business for myself, and there is no doubt that there was just cause for complaint. We have some beautiful woods that make very fine veneers, and it would be a pity to jeopardise the trade for the want of more careful supervision at the point of export. That is a matter that the Sub-Department of Forestry might well take up, because the people over here are very anxious indeed to keep their plywood mills going. In this way it would encourage the disposal of its veneer logs, and also foster employment of labour in the timber areas.

Mr. Pike is quite aware of the seriousness of the present situation in regard to Great Britain's agricultural policy. The matter has been the subject in Australia of a good deal of debate and no doubt some bickering. We do not know what will happen in the future, except that the British Government have firmly decided to encourage their agricultural industries to their fullest, as they are entitled to do. It is our duty to advocate an unrestricted market for our primary products, but much depends on the case we can put up. It is by the advocacy of such men as Mr. Pike, allied with other Australians in Great Britain and all the organisations engaged in selling our products, that we can make out a strong case to influence public opinion over there. An Imperial Conference is to take place in London next year for the purpose of remodelling the Ottawa Agreement. It will be our opportunity then to put up the best case we can in the hope that we may be able to make a much better deal than we did at Ottawa.

*Mr. Russell.]*

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*) [3.53 p.m.]: There is no doubt that Mr. Pike is carrying out his duties very satisfactorily. His report is a very illuminating one, clearly setting out the various factors that have a bearing on the marketing of Australian goods in general and those of Queensland in particular. In his interesting report, at page 4, he says—

“The interest rates in Great Britain have fallen to under a 3-per-cent. basis, and seem likely to fall further. This tendency has been a natural one, and has been made possible by the sound budgetary policy and the banking skill of London. It is now apparent that the banking centre of the world, which at one time seemed likely to move to America, has now definitely returned to London, and the Empire and the sterling countries have already taken advantage of this fact.

“While it is doubtful whether the coming year will witness any great advance in prices, owing to the heavy stocks in most commodities, it is fairly safe to assume that the example which Great Britain has given in restoring confidence will be followed by other countries, and that co-operation towards the lowering of trade barriers and the rehabilitation of international credit by sound finance will pave the way to better conditions throughout the world.”

He places his finger on the vital spot when he says that “The lowering of trade barriers and the rehabilitation of international credit by sound finances will pave the way to better conditions throughout the world.” We have observed the improvement in Australia that followed the adoption of these principles and it is pleasing to have confirmation from the Acting Agent-General in London in the paragraphs in which he stresses the advantages that have accrued and are likely to accrue from an observance of these vital factors. He offers some very interesting observations on the meat export industry, which are set out on page 8 of his report—

“The imports of frozen beef (in quarters and sides) into the United Kingdom in 1934 totalled 108,438 tons, an increase of 31,904 tons over the previous year. Australian shipments, amounting to 66,153 tons, exceeded those of 1933 by 18,796 tons. The imports from New Zealand were 34,862 tons, compared with 21,550 tons; and those from the Argentine were 4,858 tons, as against 5,695 tons in the previous year.”

This shows that the Ottawa Agreement had a very big influence upon the meat industry in Australia, and that we secured a much larger proportion of the Imperial market than before. To-day, owing to the dry season, we are unable to make up our quota. This report shows that trade is increasing, and that we are getting an expanding share of the valuable British meat market, and that there is a good outlook for the future.

In another portion of the report the Acting Agent-General talks about our possibilities in the export of pork.

“This rapid growth of pork imports was viewed with apprehension by the Imperial Government, having regard to their desire to protect home production, and in August last they announced that they desired to restrict the imports for

the latter half of 1934, as from 1st July, by 40 per cent. It was found, however, that owing to the large number of forward commitments made for the latter half of the year it was impossible to keep the figures down to the Government's wishes, but undoubtedly, in general, the spirit of those wishes was kept, and imports were less than they otherwise would have been. This scheme was on a voluntary basis, and the restrictions applied only to the United States and the Argentine.”

Our production of pork is expanding, and the expansion in export has been remarkable. That expansion has been noticeable ever since the abattoirs commenced operating. That factor is largely due to the very excellent work carried out at the abattoir in killing and dressing pork for export, the closeness of the inspection, and the desire of the abattoirs to get pigs of the best quality. The abattoirs have assisted in experimental feeding, and in the breeding of pigs of a class that will give pork of the quality required for export, in order to maintain the reputation that Queensland has justly won in the markets of Great Britain. As Mr. Pike points out, the Imperial Government viewed the rapid growth of pork imports with apprehension and imposed restrictions on imports from the United States of America and Argentina. That action is evidence of the sympathy of Great Britain with our efforts to secure a market for our products. That only goes to show that a great deal of the talk that was going on was only indulged in for the purpose of attempting to lead the people of Australia to believe that Australia was being neglected by Great Britain, and that her desire was to aid Argentina.

The PREMIER: That report was written up to the end of the calendar year. Since then various important conferences have been held.

Mr. MOORE: Page 9 of the report discloses that there has also been an expanding market for our mutton and lamb exports. I am only illustrating the sympathy of the British Government towards our endeavour to secure markets. This is fully illustrated in the remarks of the Acting Agent-General whose report shows that in spite of difficulties connected with the home market, at the end of June, 1934, Great Britain was prepared to consider favourably an expanding market for all our products. It is refreshing to have that fact pointed out by the Acting Agent-General. His report is an excellent one. It deals with the various products we export, such as sugar, meat, butter, and cheese. The prospects and the risks, including those of depreciation of prices, are set out clearly. Altogether, it is a most satisfactory report. I have heard it stated by hon. members that owing to the fact that the flotation of loans was dealt with by the Loan Council in Australia, and no material was being imported for the building of new railways, there was no occasion to have an Agent-General or an Agent-General's office representing Queensland; but this report provides conclusive proof that the Agent-General is doing very useful work for this State in placing before us the actual position in order that we may form our own conclusions. The Acting Agent-General is to be commended on the work he has carried out.

[*Mr. Moore.*]

Mr. BRAND (*Isis*) [4.2 p.m.]: I desire to congratulate Mr. Pike on the very excellent report he has compiled. Mr. Pike has been Acting Agent-General for a number of years, since Sir Edward Macartney left that office. He has a wide knowledge of the industries of Queensland, particularly the primary industries, and he is carrying out his duties to the entire satisfaction of the people of Queensland. I should like to see his position converted from that of Acting Agent-General to that of Agent-General because of the large quantity of our exports that are handled in London. Mr. Pike is an authority on the sugar industry of the world, and during his residence in London has rendered great assistance to the sugar industry of this State. He was sent from London to Ottawa by the Leader of the Opposition, who was then Premier of this State, to give the necessary information relating to sugar problems to the Australian delegation to the conference, and his services were very valuable. He has set out in this report that the prospects of the sugar industry on the market in London are not very bright. The hon. member for Maranoa this afternoon expressed surprise that the sugar industry was in such a deplorable condition so far as the London market was concerned. We all deplore the fact that the price received for sugar in London does not compensate the growers for the cost of production. The price for sugar there is lower than it has ever been in the history of the industry in Queensland, and consequently the producers are having an anxious time.

Mr. Pike's report also says the Government of Great Britain are giving greater attention to the sugar industry in the United Kingdom, and a royal commission was then taking evidence to report upon the beet sugar industry in England. I understand this report has been printed and is now available.

The PREMIER: Are you referring to the Greene report?

Mr. BRAND: Yes. I understand the recommendations are such as are not likely to favour the Queensland sugar industry, but the Dominion Committee, which took shape whilst the Premier was in London, is likely to be of service to it. It brings together representatives of all Dominions exporting sugar to Great Britain, and enables them to move unitedly. By this co-ordination of effort we should obtain a great advantage. I am very satisfied that we have such an able representative in London, and one who understands this subject thoroughly. We can rest assured that everything that can be done will be done.

I hope that Mr. Pike receives the full status of Agent-General for Queensland. It would be an advantage to Queensland to have him in that capacity. He is carrying out his work as efficiently as any of the State Agents-General. In co-operation with the office of High Commissioner for Australia he is furthering the interests of Queensland industries in particular. The many industries in Queensland that export their produce to England require the services of an Agent-General in London, but it is necessary that the office should be made a very active one, especially in securing markets for our

products. In Queensland the spirit of co-operative control has been recognised, and to a large extent the Government have given help to our many industries. All Governments recognise the wonderful standard of our primary products, but the great bugbear has been the difficulty in procuring markets. The hon. member for Coorooora occupied the office of Secretary for Agriculture a few years ago, and has travelled abroad. I support his remarks. After mature consideration he has recommended that we should develop in Great Britain the marketing side of our organisations. A great service would be rendered to our many industries if a larger market could be procured for their produce.

Mr. Pike has also referred to the cotton industry, which is capable of great expansion in Queensland, and could be the means of settling many people on the land and finding occupation for many other citizens. Queensland is in a position to develop that great industry, but its future depends entirely upon markets. In a very comprehensive way Mr. Pike has indicated the possibilities. He points out that America has recognised the wisdom of guaranteeing a certain price for her raw materials. That has had the effect of raising the price to the British manufacturers, and causing them to look for other sources of supply. He also points out that the British cotton manufacturers had to reconsider their position. He doubts whether Britain can return to her former greatness as a cotton spinning country. He states that the committee he mentions has already recommended that 10,000,000 of the 40,000,000 spindles in use should be scrapped, compensation for them being paid by those remaining in the industry. At all events, it is very interesting to watch the movements in that industry.

I commend Mr. Pike on his able report. I feel that as a result of his activities throughout the year he reviews a great deal of good will accrue to the people in this country who are so vitally concerned in the things he mentions. I hope the Government will recognise the advantages to be gained by having such a capable officer in London and that they will give him every support in trying to find better markets for our products.

Mr. MULLER (*Fassifern*) [4.12 p.m.]: I also wish to comment favourably on the report submitted by our Acting Agent-General. I very much regret that we were unable to get copies of this report until just before the vote was being discussed in this Committee. It contains a great deal of matter that is of interest to exporters of dairy products. We should show our appreciation of the fact that, as Queensland is a purely primary producing State, we should be properly represented not merely in Great Britain but in all parts of the world. The period under review is perhaps one of the most interesting and unique in the history of this State. Major Elliot, the British Minister for Agriculture, was forced to devise ways and means of protecting dairymen in Great Britain. One way was to set up a form of control of liquid and manufactured milk products. He set up a board similar to our Marketing Board in Australia. Had that board operated to any great extent, our position would have been very difficult. It is pleasing to note that we have been able to increase the exports of our dairy products.

*Mr. Muller.]*

I draw attention to paragraph 10 on page 12 of the Acting Agent-General's report—

“For the past three or four years the average price realised for butter on the British market has been unprofitable to producers, but supplies, instead of decreasing, have increased by over 33 per cent. The amount spent by British consumers on butter last year was £35,000,000. In 1930, when prices were at a reasonable post-war level, the figure was £46,000,000 for two-thirds of the quantity. This means that the British public obtained for £35,000,000 what would have cost £69,000,000 some four years ago, a saving of £34,000,000 in one year.”

At 4.15 p.m.,

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

Mr. MULLER: In view of those circumstances we cannot wonder that Britain has to resort to very extreme measures to protect her own primary producers. We have been enabled, through organisation on this side of the world and our representation in Great Britain, to maintain the export price.

In the last paragraph on page 13, referring to butter, the Acting Agent-General deals with a question very important to Queensland. Notwithstanding the fact that the quality of dairy produce exported from Queensland is not nearly so high as that from the Southern States, you will notice that in almost every competition, not merely in Australia but throughout the world, the exports from this State are outstanding. We read—

“At the competition for Dominion butter held in connection with the annual show of the British Dairy Farmers' Association in London last October, the first prize for salted butter was awarded to the Maryborough Co-operative Dairy Association, Kingaroy, and the second prize to the Esk Co-operative Dairy Association. The Queensland Farmers' Co-operative Association, Laidley, secured a 'Reserve' and five other factories were 'Highly Commended.'”

The paragraph goes on to give us some idea of the success we have achieved in the export of our dairy produce. To my mind, one of the more important duties of the Acting Agent-General is to boost the quality of the produce we are sending to that country.

We must bear in mind that great quantities of dairy produce were taken by Britain from Australia during this difficult period. This report deals with the last calendar year and the position has improved since then. Up to June, 1935, we exported from Australia something like 117,000 tons of butter, of which Britain took something like 107,000 tons. The Agent-General's office is to be congratulated upon assisting us in that direction.

Another point that has been mentioned this afternoon concerned advising us from time to time as to prospects of important markets. While there may be something in that contention I for one should not like to take any great risk on such a prophecy of conditions for a great primary product on a world market. The whole matter is of a speculative nature and it

{*Mr. Muller.*

would be difficult for any Agent-General, or anyone in the trade for that matter, to foretell what the markets may have in prospect for us. I for one should not expect the Agent-General to make such a forecast, and I should not at any time recommend a State to gamble on an anticipated market.

The report is very illuminating and very comprehensive, and I am delighted to hear the favourable comments from both sides of the Committee. This is not a party question, and if we are to do our best in the interests of the State—considering that we are a State of primary industries, and dependent upon them—one of our most important duties must be to see that our goods are advertised to the best advantage in every part of the world. Any money spent in that direction will be a sound investment.

The PREMIER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*) [4.20 p.m.]: It is quite refreshing to hear this debate. There is no doubt at all that Mr. Pike, the Acting Agent-General, is doing excellent work in Great Britain. I say quite confidently—having a knowledge of all the facts—that Queensland is better represented than all the other States of Australia, owing to the fact that Mr. Pike applies himself to the duties of his position with great industry, has a wide knowledge of all questions affecting this State, and enjoys an excellent reputation in London, which enables him to obtain entry to official circles. It has been suggested at Premiers' Conferences that the offices of Agents-General should be merged into Australia House.

Mr. MOORE: Some of the States agreed.

The PREMIER: Yes. Some of the States were inclined to coquet with the proposal, but upon mature reflection and with wider knowledge it was finally discarded. Whatever may be the future relations of the States with the central Government, it is essential that while the present Commonwealth Constitution remains the various States should have their own representatives in London. Inevitably, in a world torn by great difficulties, Australia House has to deal with big issues affecting Empire and Dominion policy, and the time of the High Commissioner is very largely taken up at conferences at Geneva and attention to diplomatic relations with Great Britain and other countries. He should be left entirely free to deal with those matters, and the States should look after their own business in their own way. That does not prevent, nor should it prevent, co-ordination of activities as between the States' Houses and Australia House, and I am happy to be able to state that the relationship between the Queensland office and Australia House is most cordial in character. Mr. Pike frequently meets the High Commissioner to discuss matters affecting the welfare of Queensland, and he is always called into consultation with that gentleman on such subjects. In addition, the various State Agents-General frequently meet to deal with matters of interest to all the States. Under the present Commonwealth Constitution the Commonwealth Government are the authority to approve of trade agreements with Great Britain or any other country. The Prime Minister has recently adopted the policy of consulting the States most interested in matters of overseas concern. I consider

that policy to be a good one, and if continued will be of benefit not only to the States but also to Australia.

Our great difficulty lies in the marketing problem. When I speak of markets, I must emphasise, as other hon. members have emphasised, that Great Britain is the best supplied market in the world. She can draw her supplies, including raw material, from every country in the world and consequently enjoys a very wide choice. No marketing policy can be permanently successful unless it is based on excellent quality and uniformity of standard or grade. Some people may be able to sell goods not up to standard once, but afterwards their market is destroyed and can never be regained. I would refer more particularly to the canned fruit and jam industries. Australian jam has a very bad reputation on the British market. That is because Colonial-made jams and jellies were sent in very large quantities to the troops in the great war. At that time anything that could be canned was sold. In many cases quality was lacking and the general get-up of canned fruit left very much to be desired. Tins arrived in leaky condition and grading was conspicuous by its absence. The consequence is that now, even though these defects have been remedied and grades for export have been laid down by the Commonwealth—I assume they are vigorously enforced—canned fruit and jam from Australia are now sold in London, not on their label, but on the basis of a 10 per cent. examination. The percentage found to be faulty on that examination is considered to be the percentage of faulty goods in the whole consignment. It takes a long time to eradicate this prejudice once it is created. As a result prices are seriously affected. Packs of Californian canned fruits are true to grade and are sold on their label. The same applies to the Hawaiian pineapple pack. People who have been in the habit of purchasing these packs find that they can reply upon them. They require a great deal of persuasion to try any new brand or commodity. I mention these things to indicate how important it is to see that all grades are rigorously maintained and that all goods exported are true to specification. In that way a reputation is built up, and markets once gained are not likely to be lost. It is only on the basis of general excellence and fidelity to brand, grade, and label that we can hope to build up a trade in such articles.

Reference has been made to the meat and sugar industries. Proposals are now being considered by the Commonwealth Government in regard to meat, and others in reference to sugar. Great Britain is pursuing a policy of building up her home industries. No one can offer any objection to that. It is the duty of the Government of any country to build up agriculture: A country that neglects agriculture has no future. No nation can ever become great unless its policy is based on a sound land and agricultural policy. Therefore, we in Australia can offer no objection to the effort being made in Britain to build up the agricultural industry. That policy finds employment for the people and makes the nation independent of external food supplies in times of difficulties. But what we have a right to object to is that any other country should be regarded on terms of equality with the Dominions. That is the basis of the dis-

pute at the present time. Take, for example, sugar. Cuba is a very large exporter of sugar. Cuba purchases only about £250,000 worth of goods from Great Britain annually, yet Britain buys a very large amount of Cuban sugar. Australia should not be called into conference with Cuba on a question of sugar quotas. We say that after the farmers of Britain have secured a market for their products preference should be given to the Dominions. We hold that if any quotas are to be imposed they should be imposed on foreign countries first. Competition from Australia is not with the British farmer, it is with the foreign producer; and it cannot be over-emphasised that Britain purchases more food-stuffs from foreign countries than she purchases from all the Dominions and the Crown Colonies combined. All we claim is an expanding share of the British market and the right to compete on equitable terms with foreign countries in that market.

Mr. WALKER: We are given a great advantage in regard to sugar.

The PREMIER: With sugar we have an advantage of 2s. 9d. a cwt., and the Chancellor of the Exchequer has intimated that no change will be made in that policy without due notice being given to the Dominions. The Crown Colonies receive an advantage in that respect of £1 a ton in excess of that granted to Dominion sugar. After the war Britain embarked upon a policy of a bounty-fed beet sugar industry. That has cost her a great deal of money. As a matter of fact she could have paid a considerable amount to the British farmers and bought sugar overseas and still shown a considerable saving. The Government over there are faced with the difficulty that has thus been created.

I was in Britain when the royal commission referred to by the Agent-General was set up, and one of the proposals that was canvassed in Britain is that the Tait and Lyle Company and other refineries be given sole marketing authority for a period of years and in return that they guarantee for a period of years a base price for sugar produced from beet grown in Great Britain. The Tait and Lyle Company and other concerns would be able to charge a price for sugar based on that agreement, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer would be free from the Budget difficulties that a large bounty brings about. Whether that course will be finally adopted is a matter of policy for the British Government. It is based on the idea that sugar should be paid for on the basis of what we would call a home consumption price. I can easily understand how a Treasurer would be glad to adopt such a policy in order to get rid of the charge on his revenue Budget of paying several million pounds per annum by way of bounty. Certain proposals are now being considered by the Governments of Australia, including the Queensland Government. The Chadbourne Agreement expires very shortly and the objective of the British Government is to secure a world policy in regard to sugar. Their proposals are based on that desire.

While I was in London I met the people who were interested in the Chadbourne Agreement and they said that Australia should become a signatory to that agreement. I pointed out that it would be no advantage to Australia to come under the Chadbourne

*Hon. W. Forgan Smith.*]

plan at all, and it was suggested that if the Chadbourne plan broke down and Java threw all its sugar upon the market, the market would be affected to a greater extent than it is to-day and Australia would be the loser. I replied, by intimating that it was obvious to me and to any other person who studied the question that they were not holding that sugar off the market out of love and affection for Australia. I pointed out that they would throw it on the market at any time it suited them, whether that time was or was not suitable to the interests of Queensland or Australia.

Another suggestion that is being considered is that prior to a world conference on sugar an Empire conference be held with the view of obtaining an Empire policy in relation to sugar. Provided the basis of consideration is sound and one that can be agreed to by the Australian producers, there is much to be said for its suggestion, but I am not in the position to disclose anything further than to intimate that the Queensland Government are au fait with the position, and are straining every nerve—and will continue to do so—to protect Queensland's interests in any agreement that may ultimately be made.

The whole difficulty, of course, is the capacity of the market to absorb a given quantity of imports. Irrespective of the ideas an individual may hold, there are certain basic facts that cannot be overlooked. If the individual overlooks these he is not only deceiving himself but also pursuing a policy that will lead to disaster. We talk a great deal about the right to an unrestricted market. We can put forward an excellent case for it, but we ourselves are consumers, and I claim it is good policy for us to buy from those who buy from us. That is what is done in ordinary business. Were I in business I would deal with those who traded with me. We all do that every day. On the larger scale Australia and Queensland, for the things they import should be the customers of those who buy from them. That principle must always guide us in any trade agreement that may be made with Great Britain or any other country. The policy I stand for is that we shall be customers of those who are customers of ours. Many things are imported into Australia from countries that purchase very little from us. The policy I advocate might be developed with advantage to Australia and to those who are our customers. These are things that have to be viewed in the light of the facts as they exist, and not from the point of view of any prejudices individuals may have. At all times trade must be two-way traffic, whether we like it or not. One cannot play with a double-headed penny indefinitely.

Mr. NIMMO: America is our biggest difficulty.

The PREMIER: I have America in mind. Australia, including Queensland, purchases a very large amount from America, but what America buys from us is a mere bagatelle. On one occasion at Tcowoomba a dairyman entered into conversation with me and remarked what a dreadful thing it was that there should ever have been a suggestion of Britain's placing a quota on Australian butter. He spoke very eloquently about it. He then stepped into his car. I said, "That's a very fine car you have got." He said, "Yes. I only bought it last week.

[Hon. W. Forgan Smith.

An American car." I asked him how much butter he sold to America. He had never thought of that before. And that is the logical implication involved in all these things. We cannot escape it, and future trade agreements with Britain or with any other country should be dealt with on the basis of goods for goods. That is my view of the position, it is the result of my experience, and it is an inexorable economic law.

It has been suggested that Mr. Pike should be appointed to the permanent position of Agent-General. That matter has been looked into by the Government, and there is this to be said: we are perfectly satisfied with Mr. Pike's services. The practice, however, since we have had representation in London, has always been to appoint an Agent-General for a specific period, generally for five years. Mr. Pike is a young man. Of what advantage would it be to him to be appointed for five years when, at the end of that period, there might be a Government in power who might desire to appoint one of their own nominees to that position? It is much better for him, in my opinion, to carry on in his present capacity. It in no way affects his standing in London, nor does it affect the excellence of his services to Queensland.

The suggestion has been made that a commercial representative should be appointed to that office. The term "commercial representative" is a very wide one indeed. What kind of commercial representative is he to be? What particular article of commerce is he to represent? We should have to pay a very great deal for a man who had a knowledge of all industries, and who could claim to be an expert in all the commerce that affects Queensland. Quite a number of difficulties would arise in that direction. Take the appointment of trade representatives by the Commonwealth. Men who are successful business men are not applicants for those positions. They want to look after their own businesses. However, the appointment of the trade representative in Canada has been a very successful one. I have met trade representatives who were recently appointed, and to me they are a likely looking bunch, and I am sure they will endeavour to do the best they can for Australia in the respective spheres to which they have been appointed. I am prepared to hear argument as to the appointment of a commercial representative to be associated with the Agent-General, but only on condition that he shall be subject to the control of the Agent-General. I should not mind a representative being appointed, but the ultimate authority must be with the Agent-General. Duplication cannot be of much advantage, and I do not see that any material gain would result from any appointment other than that I suggest.

A suggestion has been made that a Chamber of Commerce representing Queensland should be established in London. There is nothing to prevent such a Chamber of Commerce being established. That is a matter for the commercial people of this country to decide, but if that is done we would not agree that it should supplant or control the Queensland office. My experience is that a representative who has access to the Ministry and to the high officers of State is more likely to achieve success in

London than a man who is merely representing a commercial community. That is the view I take as a result of my own observation and experience.

Mr. NIMMO (*Oxley*) [4.44 p.m.]: I wish to pay a tribute to the Acting Agent-General in London. I think he has filled the position with dignity and efficiency. I have gone through his report fairly carefully and see that the interests of Queensland have been well looked after. I should like to say that I regret that while there has been free spending of money in Queensland, a cheese-paring policy has been adopted in regard to the Agent-General's office. The amount provided is £8,302, considerably less than used to be appropriated. I notice also that the salary attached to the position of Acting Agent-General is £750 a year, less the deduction. I do not know whether there is provision for extra emoluments not in the Estimates, but if that is all he draws, I think the amount should be increased. When the deductions take effect it amounts to only £13 a week, which is a rather ridiculously small salary for a man of Mr. Pike's capability in the very high position he holds.

I should like to see that office considerably enlarged. We are entitled to spend a little money there to push our goods. I would go so far as to put on a recognised commercial representative or traveller going to the big manufacturers looking for business. I believe that would be money well spent. We are so far away that we seem to think it is not possible to do that kind of thing, but I remember when I was over there I met, both in England and Germany, a man from Spain who was travelling round the tanneries and booking up quantities of hides from Spain. I believe that by doing the same thing we could get to know the requirements of trade there and build up a bigger business and possibly get better prices for our commodities than we are getting to-day. These are matters that should be investigated. It would be a good thing to have a little more publicity in England than we have had. We may be transgressing on the sphere of the Commonwealth, but whether or not the Commonwealth takes up this matter in the proper way, we are entitled to do a little of it ourselves.

I think Queensland's property in the Strand—Queensland House—could be better employed. More use should be made of the ground floor of that building; it should be made a display room for the exhibition and perhaps the sale of our primary products. In that way we could do a great deal for our primary producers.

More care should be taken to secure a continuity of supplies for overseas markets. There is room for much greater trade in our goods if we had some way of putting them on the market in certain regular quantities each month. I remember seeing canned peaches in England—the Premier referred to the same matter—and I noticed particularly that they sold well for the time they were there. The shops told me that the trouble was that they could only get supplies for about two months of the year. We should go in for building up a regular trade. Similarly, our butter is at times thrown on the English market in large quantities and at other periods of the year the supply is short, and then some other brand gets the trade.

Great Britain is a very heavy buyer of our primary products, purchasing 93 per cent. of our exported butter and 84 per cent. of our wheat. We should appreciate her action in buying those large quantities of our produce. I was delighted to hear the Premier say that there could not be one-way traffic in the export trade, that we should purchase from those people who purchased from us. We should endeavour to do more along those lines. I cannot agree with the remarks of the Premier concerning the purchase of goods from foreign countries. British statesmen must do all within their power to maintain their own export trade and this can be achieved only by the adoption of a two-way traffic—purchasing from those foreign countries that buy liberally in Great Britain. In these circumstances, Great Britain cannot be expected to purchase the whole of her requirements from the Dominions.

Whilst I am very pleased with the excellent work that is being done by the Acting Agent-General, I feel that he should be allowed greater scope and have greater financial help. For a man occupying such an important position the salary is very small, and I for one should be quite prepared to grant him an increase.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*) [4.52 p.m.]: In view of our almost absolute dependence on Great Britain for our livelihood, the office of Agent-General, and the Agent-General himself, are very important factors in our welfare. I know of no officer of greater importance to Queensland than the Agent-General. Nothing has a greater bearing on our welfare than the volume of trade between this country and the Old Land. I was pleased to hear the Premier say that it was to our mutual benefit to encourage trade with Great Britain. He expressed very much the sentiments of hon. members on this side, but I should very much like to hear similar sentiments expressed by the hon. member for Warrego.

Mr. BEDFORD: If it is confidential, you know—

Mr. DEACON: Exactly. I should like to hear those sentiments from the hon. member for Warrego just for my own satisfaction. The Premier pointed out that to a very large extent we must depend on Great Britain for the sale of our primary products and that we cannot expect a happy relationship to continue unless it is of mutual advantage to both countries.

Mr. BEDFORD: You do not think that Great Britain buys our products because of any love for Bill Deacon?

Mr. DEACON: She buys our products because she wants them. Great Britain must look to other countries for the sale of her manufactures—she cannot depend upon us for that. If she can dispose of some of her wares in this country, so much the better, but to-day we purchase manufactured goods from foreign countries and expect Great Britain to buy our primary products. It is to a large degree a one-way trade.

Mr. BEDFORD: You buy motor cars from America because they are the best cars.

Mr. DEACON: The Premier emphasised this matter in his speech. We not only buy a large number of motor cars from America but oil, agricultural machinery, and other

*Mr. Deacon.]*

things we can purchase just as cheaply from Britain or one of the other Dominions or colonies. Britain can buy and sell just as cheaply on the world's markets. It seems to me that we do not buy as much of her goods as we might.

Mr. BEDFORD: You buy Plume spirit from America.

Mr. DEACON: That is the trouble. We buy too much from America, and too little from the people who buy from us. It is not good business for us. The Acting Agent-General, who in his report, is able to show how we can sell our goods to the best advantage, should be able to point out how we can buy our requirements in Britain to the mutual advantage of Britain and Australia. The office of the Agent-General appears to be run very well. Mr. Pike has done his work excellently. The report shows that, and the Premier himself has expressed his satisfaction. We know that Mr. Pike is a capable man, therefore, why not permit him to show us not only how we can sell our goods to advantage but also how we can buy our requirements to advantage? It would pay us to purchase British goods to a greater extent than we do. We could then sell her more wheat and meat than we are doing. It is worth while for hon. members to read the debate that took place in the House of Commons in July last, and in particular the speech of the Minister of Agriculture, the Right Hon. Walter Elliot, in regard to the subsidy to livestock producers in Britain, the Government's long term policy, and the negotiations with the Dominions and Argentine Governments. In setting out the long term policy of Great Britain, Mr. Elliot said—

"(1) It was the firm intention of the British Government to safeguard the position of the United Kingdom livestock industry.

"(2) The policy the British Government desired to bring into operation as soon as they were in a position to do so, was to assist the United Kingdom livestock industry, according to the needs of the market, from the proceeds of a levy on imports, with a preference to the Dominions.

"Overseas producers were to be left free to regulate their exports to the United Kingdom market themselves. It was to be an ear-marked tariff on meat imports, the proceeds to go to the home industry and orderly marketing to be secured by general agreement."

We cannot quarrel with those sentiments. We put a tariff on the importation of goods from Britain so that we can encourage production in Australia. We cannot grow when Great Britain does the same thing. It is a reasonable policy, and one we can fit in with, as we can sell on the British market with a preference and more than hold our own with other countries. According to the debate I have quoted from, it will be about eighteen months before the British Government can bring such a tariff into operation. We shall have no great surplus quantity of meat either this year or next. The sheep and cattle industries have suffered heavy losses from drought, and after the requirements of the local market are supplied the exportable surplus will not be great. Therefore, we are not likely to suffer during the next two years

[Mr. Deacon.

from the policy of the British Government. The local meat trade can absorb all we can produce in that period, and in eighteen months' time there will be a general tariff imposed in Great Britain, with a preference to the Dominions. At any rate we should trust the Acting Agent-General to advise the Government of the position. The people in the district I represent are engaged in the production of butter, wheat, and meat, and they depend entirely on the overseas market to absorb what is left after the local market is satisfied.

I trust the view outlined by the Premier will continue to be the policy of the Government.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: (Hon. P. Pease, *Herbert*) [5.2 p.m.]: An hon. member opposite stated that Mr. Pike's salary was £750. For the information of hon. members I point out that Mr. Pike's salary as Secretary to the Agent-General is £750 per annum less 19 per cent., plus an allowance granted to him as Acting Agent-General of £750 less 19 per cent., plus an entertainment allowance of £60 per annum.

Item (Agent-General for the State) agreed to.

#### AUDIT OFFICE.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: (Hon. P. Pease, *Herbert*): I move—

"That £16,383 be granted for Audit Office."

Item agreed to.

#### IMMIGRATION.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: (Hon. P. Pease, *Herbert*): I move—

"That £1,670 be granted for 'Immigration.'"

Mr. BEDFORD (*Warrego*) [5.3 p.m.]: The small amount placed against this vote is not surprising, seeing the number of unemployed in the country, and the necessity for preventing any large influx of immigrants whom we could not place in occupations. The whole question of immigration should be considered from the point of view of the benefit of Australia primarily. It is no use having anything but a very hardheaded view as to what is best for Australia, without reference to any sentimental idea of relieving any other countries of their surplus population.

The great influx of population to this country occurred from 1851 till about 1888 or 1899 and the great volume of that immigration occurred immediately after the discovery of the goldfields. That in itself was sufficient encouragement to all the strong and discontented people of the world to come to this country—including people who were discontented with the opportunities they had in their own countries—aided as it was by the rebellion and revolt against the established order of things that were common throughout Britain and Europe.

The position has largely changed since then. The industrial history of Europe and Britain had not then produced the tremendous crop of misery and the large number of unemployables now to be found in those countries. There had not yet resulted the bad effects of a dole system throughout Europe. It has to be considered that, this being the best country in the world and being the youngest has made the fewest

mistakes, it should only have the best kind of people. It will be hopeless to think of keeping White Australia as an entity if we load up the country with mean whites. It is an extraordinary thing that these agitations for careless immigration, immigration without rigorous safeguards—the most rigorous safeguards, even equal to or better than those in force for admission of immigrants to America, safeguards such as would put the results beyond doubt—are recurrent. When I was a youngster there was a man, Lawrence Foley—known as Larry Foley, an excellent fighter for the duration of a pugilist's life and always a good Australian. Talking on what Australians were doing in sport, literature, and art, with Henry Lawson and Lionel Lindsay, he said that Australians ought to be world-beaters. They did not come through the Suez Canal in floating palaces. They came round the Cape in wind-jammers. Often a mother had a youngster at breast and a foal at foot. When they came to this country he said they found the finest climate and the longest period of sunshine in any day in the world. They got three meat feeds a day and if they were not world-beaters they should be. It is necessary that we should keep up that standard which produced for the last war the finest soldiers in the world. It may be that it is the imminence or the possibility of war that has given rise again to this question of immigration. It will be remembered that while Australia was exporting the finest men who took part in the last war their places were being filled by inferior immigrants who came from the country that was more directly at war than were we. We must avoid under any circumstances any such result as would have happened from the acceptance of portion of the £34,000,000 loan that was offered to this country for immigration. It was refused under the conditions incumbent on its acceptance, which produced, for instance, a number of valueless immigrants who came to Victoria where they had from the Government better treatment than any Australian-born ever had. In spite of this they returned to England to vilify this country. If a similar attempt is made again to populate this country, British in its origin, with such immigrants, then the country must still remain empty and comparatively unprotected, although not so unprotected as our enemies would like. We must see that immigrants are taken from the best people of the countries of the world. It is utterly impossible to think that the best immigration material in England is likely to be encouraged to come to the country after the demonstration put up by the immigrants repatriated from Victoria. They sent sandwich-men round the Strand in London vilifying this country. It is also unlikely that the best of the immigration material in London will be attracted to this country by such an ungrateful act as the Lancashire boycott of Australian goods.

The PREMIER: The best material would take no notice of the sandwich-men.

Mr. BEDFORD: Probably not, and I hope not. Here is an answer to the most recent migration proposals to be put forward in London by the Rt. Hon. J. H. Thomas, Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs. Sneaking on the £53 500 expended by Western Australia in repatriating migrants,

the Premier of that State, Mr. Collier, said:—

“The Government had found money to repatriate many migrants who would never make good in this country.”

The Premier of Western Australia went on to say that nearly all had come out under the group settlement scheme. He could produce hundreds of local doctors' certificates saying that it was inexplicable that the men should have been passed as migrants. The London doctors replied—

“Doctors chosen by Australia had gained nothing by passing unfit persons: the opinion expressed in overseas settlement circles in reply to Mr. P. Collier's criticism. It was stated that it was common knowledge that the medical examiners depend on the examinees for information regarding many obscure and recurrent ailments. Moreover, Mr. Collier was unfair in attacking the examination, since a different climate and food are likely to produce all manner of changes in the human system in a decade.”

Nobody is saying they were bribed, but, generally, there was carelessness in selecting those people and passing them, a carelessness that said, “Anything is good enough for Australia.”

An interstate conference in Sydney the other day of master plumbers advocated action by the health authorities against owners of properties with bad sanitation and poor water supply. At that conference Mr. G. Curtis said that the only way to eliminate slums was to make a law to force the people to keep clean. In Melbourne he had seen bathrooms used as fowl houses and as stores for wood. This is peculiarly an English habit, and you will find that in most cases the offenders against cleanliness are the migrants who have been brought in here to lower Australian conditions.

Mr. CLAYTON: It is hard to discover.

Mr. BEDFORD: It is hard to discover, but I examined eighty houses in England, only six of which had operable baths, and two of those were boarded over for dress-makers' cutting-out tables, two were used for rubbish, and there were only two really available out of the eighty.

If we adopt the suggestions that are made that we should accept any kind of person from anywhere because this country is empty and therefore open to invasion, then we shall strengthen ourselves, by importing weakness. Our birth rate is not so bad as it is represented to be. For instance, the natural increase for the years 1925 to 1937 for the various countries is as follows:—

	Per cent.
Japan	1.48
Australia	1.60
England and Wales	.47
Scotland	.21
Ireland	.12
Belgium	.68
Denmark	.65
France	.53
Germany	.56
Italy	.88
Spain	.30

At 5.14 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

*Mr. Bedford.* }

Mr. BEDFORD: Japan is the country most held up to us as a bogey. In Australia, as shown by the last census, there are 1,930,000 males between the ages of 15 and 55. Seeing that the Boer War cost £300,000,000, took the lives of 30,000 men, and then cost another £30,000,000 to put the Boers on to their farms, and that England had invaded a country with only 46,000 men between the ages of 16 and 60, the bogey of invasion cannot be used to justify the introduction of the worst kind of immigrants to Australia.

I believe that just as soon as it is economically possible for Australia to keep a large population we should introduce immigrants, but they should be immigrants of that kind who pay their own way here. We cannot expect to get men who are already settled in good positions in other countries, but by a system of rigorous exclusion of the unfit we could get the best possible material, sound, healthy, good working people, from Britain—and from Europe—but not necessarily to take away from Australia the reproach that it is incapable of resisting invasion. The 1,900,000 men already mentioned between the ages of fifteen and fifty-five are, I think, a sufficient answer to that.

The PREMIER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Murkay*) [5.17 p.m.]: I was not here for much of the debate on immigration, but I think I should say something concerning it. I was called away by the Premier's Office to deal with some important business. This vote deals with an organisation that has been kept as a kind of skeleton staff since the period when migration as between Great Britain and Australia was suspended. Its activities are largely associated with the after-care of boys who were brought here during the period of Governments of which Mr. McCormack and Mr. Theodore were Premiers. The work it does in association with the New Settlers' League has been excellent indeed, and the boys concerned have achieved a success of approximately 95 per cent., according to the reports by both the department and the league. In other words, these boys have been absorbed into the population of Queensland and have become good Queensland and Australian citizens—the equal of any other citizens.

Mr. MOORE: Would the ten boy scouts be monthly or annually?

The PREMIER: Monthly, I understand. They have been brought over by the Boy Scouts Association and are not in any way a charge on the Government of Queensland. Obviously, however, the Government will help them.

Mr. MOORE: Will they come under the after-care of the Immigration Department?

The PREMIER: They will come under the New Settlers' League, really, and not under this department. What I desired to emphasise was that Queensland is a large country with great resources in land not yet taken up or developed. The serious thing from our point of view is the difficulty in getting our own native-born boys interested in land occupation. For example, last year we offered 200 scholarships under our juvenile employment scheme to boys in Queensland, under very favourable circumstances, and many of those positions have not been filled. Moreover, the New Settlers' League and the Department of Labour and Industry have regularly received applications

for boys, but again those positions cannot be filled. That appears to me to be very serious indeed, but if Queenslanders native-born will not settle the lands of our State, those lands must be settled by people from other countries. That is the view I take, and there is ample opportunity for boys of the type that I have mentioned.

The Prime Minister quite recently, and very aptly, pointed out that no Government would re-establish immigration while the problem of unemployment confronted the Commonwealth and all the States. But Australia cannot rest content with its present small population. The final title to land can be justified only by its successful settlement. Throughout history that is the only title that is recognised. It is regrettable that we are unable to foster a land sense and to promote land settlement by our own people. Parents are very largely to blame. Apparently many of them are satisfied to have their boys idle in the city, maintained by them, rather than allow them to engage in land occupations. The Department of Labour and Industry, the various churches, and the New Settlers' League have done everything they can by way of supplying information to the parents to make them aware of the opportunities that are available in this respect. Unfortunately, there has been little response and boys are not offering for the employment that is available. The department, the church organisations, and the New Settlers' League are able immediately to find positions for a large number of boys under decent conditions. Educationists and other people who are able to influence public thought should give serious attention to this phase of our national life.

I do not believe in mass migration, nor do I think it is likely to succeed. That view is confirmed by the experience of Victoria and Western Australia. When families migrate from Great Britain to commence life again in settlements in Australia they are less likely to be absorbed permanently into the population than they would be if they were working among people already settled here. The change in conditions between England and Australia is very great indeed, and if migrants are settled together they are homesick together, their womenfolk are often discontented and unlikely to become good settlers. The form of immigration that I support is the nomination system involving the careful selection of suitable types. I think it was Dr. Johnson who once said that you could do almost anything with a Scotchman if you caught him young enough, and the same thing applies to immigrants to this country.

The hon. member for Warrego referred to the physique of many of the immigrants who came to this country under the system of assisted settlement. Under that system many expedients were adopted in order to pass the necessary medical examination. I can recall one occasion, when I was about eighteen years of age, doing a sign outside a building in a large city in Great Britain. At that time the Queensland Government, in common with other Governments, were advertising for agricultural labourers, gardeners, and men with experience of the land, intimating that they would be transported to Australia on the payment of £1. I saw the applicants for these positions entering the various offices and I

[*Mr. Bedford*]

noticed that they comprised largely men who had had no experience on the land, no association with horticulture—men who had never done any real hard labouring work in their lives. The conditions were very lax when the time arrived for the intended migrant to pass the doctor. For example, it was possible—I observed it myself when working in the dockyards in London—for a man to secure papers and present himself for medical inspection on behalf of his brother or friend. Unless the system has since been tightened up, a somewhat similar procedure took place in regard to the amount of money required by an alien before he could embark for America or Canada. If this alien was required to possess £50, one of the number, who possessed that amount of money, would pass it round amongst many individuals.

Any system that may be adopted in the future must have adequate safeguards. Personally, I believe that care must be exercised in any scheme that may be adopted to get the immigrants young, and to ensure careful selection. If conditions in Australia are made good enough, then men of an adventurous type who are likely to be successful selectors, may be induced to come to Australia. No wholesale system of migration is likely to be encouraged by any Government, no matter what party that Government represent.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Nanango*) [5.27 p.m.]: I congratulate the Premier on the speech he has just made. It is absolutely fair, except in one particular. He has taken the Committee into his confidence as to the methods adopted by the New Settlers' League, the churches, and the Government to induce boys from the large centres of population, not only to go on the land but also to stay on the land. While I have no desire to begin a controversy I suggest to the Premier the desirability of looking very carefully into the policy of the Government of which he is the head. If he does, he will find that much of the difficulty he complains of is to be found there. I have talked with many boys who have come from overseas—I have watched them grow up—and I want to tell the hon. member for Warrego that they will compare very favourably with the people who came out here in the old wind-jammers. These lads have put up a wonderful record. As the Premier pointed out, 95 per cent. of them have made good. I have seen them go to situations in the bush and endure pretty solid difficulties and great hardships. They have stuck at their jobs, and have grown up under those conditions. Some of these lads to-day can be classed amongst our best settlers. They accepted work offering to them with one definite object in view, and that was to become settlers and one day own selections of their own. These boys set out with the purpose of saving sufficient money to take up land. Many of them succeeded in their objective, and the Government and other people who have been responsible for their coming to Australia deserve the thanks of the community.

In regard to our Queensland boys, in many instances they appear to be educated against going on the land or thinking that a career on the land is an objective worth while. In most cases when our boys go out it is with the definite objective of earning a few pounds and returning to the city where

they may be able to take advantage of the opportunities afforded there for amusement, which are absent in the country.

I agree with the Premier in his statement that this is a huge country and should carry a vast population. The system of group settlement has always been a failure. It was a failure in the case of the returned soldiers and, as the Premier pointed out, it is a greater failure when applied to strangers from overseas. Ten or twenty immigrants are sent to a good district and if one becomes discontented who has a persuasive personality, he will cause the remainder to become discontented. When they do so, they sit at their gates and talk about their hard times and think out schemes to induce the Government to come to their assistance. Sometimes it happens that a body of men are working quite contentedly and one who has the gift of the gab comes along and in half an hour is able to make these men discontented with their lot. The group settlement schemes inaugurated in Victoria and Western Australia have not been successful. I have not full information in regard to the Victorian settlement, but I understand the group settlers were placed on an area of land known as the North-Western Mallee. If that is the area, it is no wonder those settlers failed. It is regrettable that immigrants should be put on country of that class, where it would be impossible for them to succeed. Such discontented immigrants are a bad advertisement for Australia.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: You would break their heart and spirit.

Mr. EDWARDS: It would break anyone's heart. I am familiar with that country and the conditions the settlers would have to put up with. When a sand-storm sweeps that country the sand covers the fences and renders the country useless for years. That should be avoided. We should give all the encouragement possible to the right class of carefully-chosen migrants. But it should be done in this way: we should first rectify our own difficulties and show to intending migrants that conditions in Queensland are sound and stable enough for them to make good. If this was done there would be very little necessity to provide help in the way of cash. The right class of migrant will be attracted if conditions are good.

Mr. POWER: But you do not believe in good conditions.

Mr. EDWARDS: The interjection of the hon. member is not worth replying to. We are dealing with a serious problem in the interests of this great State of Queensland. If what I suggest was put into effect there is no doubt we should obtain a stream of desirable immigrants from Great Britain and other countries. In the past, when it was an easy matter to obtain land, when taxation was not so high, and when the mining fields were booming we had not to make use of public advertisements in order to encourage immigrants to our shores. They came of their own volition. They went into the backblocks and developed the country. We are certainly proud of these people.

People should be flocking to Queensland. The country is now opened up and the State is the best in Australia. There must be a deep-seated reason why we cannot

*Mr. Edwards.]*

attract immigration. An overseas visitor with a world-wide experience stated that Queensland was one of the best countries in the world. That being so why should we not obtain migrants without having to attract them with financial help? Queensland should also be attracting settlers from the South, where the people are literally tramping on one another's toes, and paying £100 an acre for land that could be purchased in Queensland for about £10. All that is necessary is that we should be in a position to prove to would-be settlers that Queensland conditions are such as will enable them to make good.

Mr. MAHER (*West Moreton*) [5.34 p.m.]: I am glad to hear the Premier's remarks on this subject this evening; it is not the first time I have heard the Premier speak in this strain. At the Gatton Agricultural College on diploma day last year the Premier delivered a very sensible address on similar lines. The hon. member for Nanango has located the trouble in regard to the difficulty in securing farm boys, as he indicated when he spoke just now. It is most regrettable that the policy of the Government is concentrated in the direction of providing the most attractive conditions for the residents of the metropolitan area, and the large provincial cities, their great vote catching areas. Everything is out of balance as between our country and city life.

The PREMIER: If that it so why does Dr. Earle Page point out that we have more farmers than either Victoria or New South Wales?

Mr. MAHER: That is because of the geographical area of Queensland. One has only to look at the map and notice the smallness of Victoria and New South Wales as compared with Queensland. The condition Dr. Earle Page noted is accounted for by the size of the State, and the enormous area of fine land suitable for farming. But the Premier knows full well, as does every other thinking member of the Labour Party, that conditions are made so attractive in the city—what with Industrial Court awards granting short hours and high wages in comparison with those our primary producers are able to pay—that the country is not attractive to boys. Obviously, the parents who reside in the city areas feel that it is better to keep their boys in the city with the chance of securing well-paid positions with short hours and more attractive conditions than to send them into the country districts, where the economic conditions of the dairying, wheat, fruit, cattle, and wool industries make it impossible to grant the wages and conditions of employment that in any way approximate those obtaining in the city areas.

The whole cause of the existing trouble lies in the policy pursued by the present Premier and his supporters. It is no use blaming the parents. They see the position as it is. When they are faced with the chance of the boy getting a job at £2 a week in a city factory or business house and the prospect of going up on classified increases, as prescribed by Industrial Court awards, and hours constantly tending downwards, they will naturally struggle hard to secure that position for the boy. They will not be attracted by the prospect of his getting 15s. or £1 a week and keep on a farm and only uncertainty in the future. That is the cause of the whole trouble,

[*Mr. Edwards.*

and we have to meet conditions as they are.

The question, therefore, is, "What is the best thing to do?" If our own boys are not attracted to farming life because of those things—and the demand is still there for the farming boys—the farmers still require assistance—there is an obligation upon us to try to satisfy that demand. If we cannot get our own Queensland or Australian boys to accept the vacancies that are there, is it not best to move through some of the religious organisations, the New Settlers' League or any other responsible body to introduce boys from Great Britain? They have a plentitude of boys in Great Britain who are anxious to take up farming life under our Queensland conditions. Why not bring these boys out? I am satisfied we could absorb 5,000 young boys from Great Britain without any difficulty.

Mr. TAYLOR: Under what conditions?

Mr. MAHER: Under the conditions prevailing in our primary producing districts. The farmer is not the ogre that some hon. members would paint him. Modern Queensland farmers build attractive homes and give good accommodation to employees. The employees have any amount of attractive life in our country districts to-day. The position in the country is entirely different from what it was a quarter of a century ago, when we were pioneering the State. The boy who has a liking for the land is very well treated by Queensland farmers to-day. The conditions of employment and social life for these boys have improved far above what they were a quarter of a century ago.

Mr. O'KEEFE: We see that all our boys get those improved conditions.

Mr. MAHER: I have no objection to the hon. member's seeing that the boys get them. I think it is desirable that the boys get good homes on the farms and ample opportunity for social life. I know many boys who came from my electorate to Brisbane and got positions, who frequently tell me that they had better social conditions and happier times amongst the boys and girls in the country districts. Everybody who is acquainted with country conditions knows how very lonely a big city can be, where he does not know people, and neighbours are more or less indifferent. The boys do pine for the happy social life on the farms. Things are changed in that respect, and the average farmer to-day is willing to pay a good honest boy a good honest wage and to treat him as one of the household and to give him every opportunity to learn the farming work in all its phases and let that boy enjoy himself reasonably, too.

Another matter to which I should like to refer is the shortage of domestic girls. It is a problem to secure help in the household. I have been told that the payment of the dole to girls has a bearing on this matter. Whether that is so or not I am not sure, but the fact remains that any household in Brisbane who wants to secure a girl for household help finds it difficult. You can offer good homes and good money and attractive conditions and then find it hard to get girls of a suitable type. I think any member who has had experience could bear me out if he liked to speak the truth. There is scope in Queensland to-day for 5,000 for domestic service.

The tendency is for women to be attracted more and more into industry, not only in the business offices at shorthand and type-writing, especially in the Government service, but also in the factories and other secondary industries. There is an unmistakable demand for female labour, and the trend is for girls to find reasonably attractive employment in those places. The number of girls available for domestic service is becoming very small indeed. Whatever the causes, the fact remains that it is almost impossible, even when householders offer extravagant wages and good homes and conditions, to get the right type of girl for domestic service. I submit that fact for the very serious consideration of the Hon. the Premier.

I think there is room in Queensland to-day for 5,000 boys for farm work and for 5,000 girls for domestic service, from overseas. No doubt large numbers of boys and girls brought into our country in that way would have a good effect in Queensland generally and they would become good Queenslanders as they matured. The Government should give serious consideration to something of this sort. As the Premier says, mass movements of population from one country to another may be undesirable, and group movements for reasons he indicated may cause discontent. However, boys and girls who come here in their early years will settle down and develop into good Queenslanders who, in the course of time, will be very helpful in the development of our State.

Mr. POWER (*Baroona*) [5.49 p.m.]: I do not agree with the remarks of the hon. member who has just resumed his seat that the Government should give consideration to bringing out girls from overseas for domestic employment in this State. There are quite a number of girls unemployed to-day who would be prepared to take on domestic employment if given a decent wage and a decent standard of living. I know of many instances where girls have gone to labour agencies and have been sent out as domestic servants at a wage of 10s. a week to places where they are compelled not only to do the cooking and washing and scrubbing, but to go back at night and wait on the table and prepare supper for their employers when they return from the theatres. The trouble in connection with domestic employment in Queensland is that employers are not prepared to pay the girls a decent wage and give them a decent standard of living. I should like to see the girls organise along proper lines and apply to the Industrial Court for proper wages and conditions. There would then be no need for anybody to seek in vain for girls to engage in domestic employment.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*) [5.51 p.m.]: It is true that there are vacancies for boys and girls in the country under good conditions, and that they cannot be filled by drawing on the cities. I do not know of one unemployed boy in my district. They can get work and they take it. Certainly they seek the highest wage offering, but they take whatever is going. How it will ever be possible to induce boys and girls to go from the city to the country, I do not know. At the present time they refuse to go. Every day we hear the complaint in the city that people are unable to obtain domestic servants. I know that there are

plenty of people in the country who require girls for domestic service and any number of farmers who can provide employment for boys. They do not bother so much now to look for the boys because they know it is impossible to get them. Time and time again I am asked if it is possible to obtain a boy from the State Children Department. He has a better chance to-day of getting on in life than lads who have parents. He is able to obtain work and the State sees to it that he enjoys decent conditions. It is true that the wages are not high, but he has a decent boss, a decent home, and gets good treatment. And they get on. In the city there are any numbers of boys growing to manhood without any occupation at all because they insist upon regular jobs carrying a wage prescribed by the Industrial Court. The hon. member for Baroona would like to see the wages of domestic servants fixed by the Industrial Court. Well, go ahead and do it! It will simply mean that there will then be no jobs available. Go ahead and fix a wage for farm labourers, as was done during a previous Labour regime. There were then no jobs available, simply because industry could not pay the wages. It had to go without hired labour. I know that when the first rural award was introduced into my district there were sixty men out of work within a week. It could not be helped.

Mr. H. H. COLLINS: To whom did the award apply?

Mr. DEACON: It applied to farm hands. The hon. member for Cook should remember that this award was issued by the court during the time of the McCormack Government.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It did not apply to dairymen, and you know it.

Mr. DEACON: It did apply to them in certain circumstances. In a very short time very few hands were employed in the district, while those who were employed were working for a lower wage "under the cushion." The award was ignored. The men themselves recognised it was impossible for the farmers to pay the wage fixed by the award.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is discussing a matter far removed from the question under discussion.

Mr. DEACON: I apologise, Mr. Hanson, for having been led off the track. Immigrant boys can be placed in positions in the rural centres at wages the industry can afford, and under conditions that are better than those they are living under now. Living conditions in the country are better than those in the cities. It is a pity that we cannot place our own lads in some of the vacancies and give them the same opportunities as the immigrant boys. It is a pity they will not go to the country. Jobs are offered to them. It is to be regretted that we should be giving consideration to the introduction of lads from overseas when we have so many lads in our cities and towns without employment who could fill these jobs and have better prospects for the future than they possess to-day.

Mr. NIMMO (*Oxley*) [5.57 p.m.]: I was very pleased to hear the speech of the Premier respecting the settling of cadets or scouts on farms. It is a tragedy that boys from the city will not adopt a life in the country. There must be some reason for it.

*Mr. Nimmo.]*

Possibly the conditions in the country are not sufficiently attractive. We should make them more attractive. A boy living in a small town on the railway who desires to visit a neighbouring settlement is compelled to pay railway fares in excess of the amount demanded in the cities for travelling a similar distance. That is one matter that tends to make conditions in the country less attractive. Even if only a small number of boys are brought from overseas, the very fact of their coming here might instil in the minds of our own boys a desire to go out into the country. It would improve their physique and health. The good conditions they would work under would broaden their outlook on life. If the boys could only realise these facts there would be a continual drift from the cities and towns to the country. We frequently hear hon. members, like the hon. member for Baroona, making statements that only inflame the minds of boys who might otherwise go into the country and lead them to believe that conditions in the country are awful. I have gone through the country a good deal and have seen these boys on farms. They were quite happy, having a good time, and contented with their lot. Naturally, if an agitator or an organiser happened to come along and tell them that their conditions were not as good as those of the men in the tramways or some other calling, they would become discontented. We should endeavour to build up conditions that will make home life in the country happy and check the drift from the farms. We have many instances where settlers have reared large families, and developed farms that are now practically deserted. Our efforts should be to give encouragement to boys to go on the land in the directions we have indicated.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*) [7 p.m.]: A very real difficulty exists at the present time and has existed for some time in regard to the scarcity of labour in the country districts. Only a fortnight ago I was in my own electorate and I found that the shortage was very apparent. As the Premier stated, the difficulty in regard to the local boys is that you cannot get them to go out. If you could get them to go out and stick to it for a month or two they would stay on. The trouble is to get them to go and to induce the parents to encourage them to go. I have had a good deal of experience of immigrant boys and they are very satisfactory. They are not so quick to learn as the Queensland boys, but they are conscientious and trustworthy; and they have not a mother here to write to who will tell them to come home if they are not quite satisfied. They remain on the land and become good citizens. I know several who have settled down and own small farms and others who are doing well at share farming.

The Public Service Commissioner has something to say on this subject in his report, which is very much to the point. The passage I refer to reads:—

“Though the producer may growl, he has a lot about which to growl; possibly no section is more the victim of circumstances. The public servant is sure of his fortnightly pay; the producer is not sure of a fortnightly cheque. Employees have the protection of carefully considered and strictly administered awards; the producer has to depend upon nature and, in a large measure, upon overseas

[*Mr. Nimmo.*

prices. Awards cannot control nature; industrial conferences cannot influence the seasons; and overseas prices are beyond the determination of local juntas. A five-day week is not for the producer; even the scriptural six-day week can be honoured only in the spirit.”

There are many compensations for living in the country, which are not taken into account by the people in the towns. The amusements afforded in the country are just as attractive, in fact more so, and far less costly; and it is much easier to save money in the country because living expenses are far less than they are in the city.

Mr. JESSON: There are plenty of attractions in the country?

Mr. MOORE: There are. The idea appears to be prevalent that there is no chance of advancement for a boy or a man who goes to the country to earn a living; but there are no reasonable grounds for it. Some of the most successful farmers started with practically nothing. One of the most successful farmers on the Downs was at one time a drayman in Brisbane with a wife and family who had no experience of farming work. He left the city and took up a block of prickly-pear land which had been vacant for some years. His success was due to the fact that he possessed characteristics that are lacking in many people—he had any amount of courage and industry. He left that farm and secured a large one and eventually became the owner of 3,000 acres in the Dalby district. It is not because opportunity is lacking in the country but because success often depends on the strength of will, the industry, and the enterprise of the individual who commences farming and these traits are sometimes lacking.

After gaining experience the immigrant boys become enamoured of the work on the farm and settle down, recognising that there is a living to be made on the land. As the member for Kennedy said, they recognise there are ample opportunities for amusement, and they become useful citizens.

Mr. GAIR: Do you think they are more suitable than Australian boys?

Mr. MOORE: They are not more suitable, nor are they so adaptable, or so speedily taught. But they stick at it because their parents are not close at hand. It is well known that a boy gets lonely during the first week or two away from home. He writes to his mother and tells her so. The natural thing is for the mother to tell him to come home. That is not so easy when the mother is 12,000 miles away. Thus he sticks to the work, and in the course of time enjoys it. A great deal of the trouble is due to the fact that parents are not willing to allow their sons to go on to farms. I do not think one could obtain a lad quicker to learn than the Australian-born. He is both adaptable and quick. If one can get the Australian lad to stay on the farm one cannot get a better employee, but the difficulty is to get him to stay there. The point is that so many become enamoured of the idea of working in the cities with the five-day week and the fixed working hours. And then we have the country boy who appears to have the ambition to become a policeman! (Laughter.) Hon. members may laugh, but unfortunately that is the fact. He sees the policeman in his district,

and as a rule in a country district a policeman appears to be having an easy time. After all, that does not lead that boy anywhere. The boy who goes on the farm has the better opportunity. The Public Service Commissioner also says—

“This lead suggests a scheme of farmlets for landless youths who have some agricultural training and practical experience, but little financial means or backing. The main activity might be pig-raising and fattening, with dairying as an adjunct. The youths, preferably, might work their farmlets, co-operatively, in groups of three or four. To the youth of grit and ambition, the farmlet would lead in time to the man-sized farm; assuming good land, good stock, reasonably assured prices, and fair opportunities, the young fellow should be able to make wages, and a little over. He would have the satisfaction, too, of working for himself, fending for himself, and practising that self-help which begets independence.”

The last portion is, perhaps, the most attractive of all—working and fending for himself, knowing his efforts will be of benefit to himself. It is a tragedy in the development of Queensland that the owners of farms have to curtail their operations because of the lack of suitable boys. It is admitted that there is a tremendous shortage. The Secretary for Agriculture is aware of it. He has a continual stream of applications for boys, which he is unable to fill. I myself know the difficulty of securing the necessary help. It is all very fine to say that if the conditions were governed by an industrial award with fixed wages and hours farmers would be able to secure the necessary help. If the prices for their commodities were fixed farmers would be able, perhaps, to pay the award rates and grant award conditions. But unfortunately, as Mr. Story has pointed out, awards do not take any account of nature or seasons. They have no regard to overseas prices. Consequently the farmer has to cut his coat according to his cloth. He cannot pay out more than he gets in.

It must not be forgotten that it is the return to the farmer for his exportable produce that enables the standard of living conditions in the city to be maintained. It is the country that maintains the city, and it is a tragedy that a State the size of Queensland, with its very fine country lands, cannot be developed because of insufficiency of farming labour. The New Settlers' League has advertised for local boys to go on farms. It cannot get them. The Secretary for Agriculture says the same thing. In the circumstances we should take advantage of the opportunity of securing boys who have proved themselves capable of doing this class of work, and who will eventually become good settlers. Certainly they are comparatively young when they come to Queensland, but they are looked after by the New Settlers' League and societies under the auspices of the Church of England and others.

The Immigration Department also has a welfare section to see that these boys are properly treated and generally keep a fatherly eye upon them until they are of an age to look after themselves properly. It does not seem a reasonable thing to bang the door and say, “We will not allow

any of these boys to come in,” because there are unemployed in Queensland, when those unemployed will not take the work that is offering.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Nobody has suggested banging the door.

Mr. MOORE: Nobody has suggested that the door should be thrown wide open for anybody to come in and accept this employment. When we have proof that the boys who do come in—very often brought out under the auspices of the New Settlers' League or by the Immigration Department—are successful and have become quite good citizens in many cases, it seems that the principle should be extended a little further. We should again open the door and see if we cannot bring in a sufficient number of these boys to enable the country to develop and farming operations to be carried on. I can find many cases within a narrow avenue where operations have had to be curtailed because of the shortage of labour. There is no occasion for those operations to be curtailed. Every immigrant who comes here and performs useful work is an asset to the country both as a producer and a consumer.

Mr. H. H. COLLINS: What do they do when they become of age?

Mr. MOORE: What do they do now?

The PREMIER: Many of them are on farms of their own.

Mr. MOORE: Many are on farms of their own and many are on share farms. I know three who are on share farms and doing quite well. One is saving up to purchase the farm he is on. Once these boys get into the habit of staying on the land they will not want to come to the city. The boys who will not go out are our greatest difficulty. We find that although the opportunities are there and numbers of applications are coming in for boys, the Government are unable to meet the demand, with the result that the farmers curtail their operations.

It would make a tremendous difference to this country if that labour were procurable. Many men find that they are unable to carry on. Only a few weeks ago I happened to be travelling between Dalby and Bowenville and I called on some people I know—a man and his wife—who had 81 cows. They have had no help whatever since 10th December last. They have advertised and sent to various labour agencies but failed to get assistance. They wanted a boy and a girl, but could not get anybody. The man said to me, “The only thing we can do is to sell half the herd, because we cannot carry on like this. There is too much for the two of us to do and it is impossible for us to carry on. We have not got help in the house, we have not got help outside, and we cannot get it.” That is the big trouble to-day. If boys were coming out the farmers would know that if they could not get them this month they would be able to get them next month, and would carry on until the assistance arrived. Now, they are generally disgruntled, sick of the whole business, and putting the farms on the market for sale. The Government's immigration policy should be extended to a great deal more than ten a month. They should endeavour to make

Mr. Moore]

arrangements for a sufficient number to come out to supply the demand that is here. It is recognised by the Government and various welfare societies interested in immigration that the demand exists.

It was supposed when the depression came that a large number of those boys would come into the city and go on the dole. I do not think one per cent. of them did that. The way in which they kept their jobs, or secured others, is remarkable. They have been carefully looked after by the New Settlers' League, and also by the Immigration Department, who send an officer round every now and again to see the conditions they are working under and find out how they are getting on. I think the boys appreciate that. They are certainly an asset to the State, and it is a great pity that the stream is so limited when the requirements of the country are so great.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Enoggera*) [7.16 p.m.]: The discussion this evening has been on a very serious question. There is no doubt that if our country is not settled within the next quarter of a century, some of the other nations bordering the Pacific will come here. The time has arrived when the best that can be done must be done. Youths in the city are not developing the true Australian spirit of the youths of my day. We had to go to the country to get work—the cities did not offer the inducements they offer to-day. After all, it does one no harm to knock around the country for the early part of one's life. One may not gain much financially, but it develops a sound knowledge of life, and stimulates one's natural logical sense, and that is an asset for anyone to carry through life. We should be fostering that earlier spirit in the youths of our day so that they will desire to take up this natural vocation of the Australian-born citizen. Our country offers better prospects to the youth to-day than it did fifty or sixty years ago. Although there may be over production in some primary industries, that will not exist for ever.

A phase of the matter to which hon. members opposite might give some consideration is the fact that some of them are always pointing out in this House—and the Press and members of other Houses of Parliament do likewise—that people on the land have very hard times—that they are up with the morning star and go to bed with the moon. That kind of thing creates a complex in the minds of our citizens, so that they will not allow their boys to go to the country as they should.

Mr. MOORE: There is nothing wrong about being up early.

Mr. TAYLOR: Not a bit, but why always talk about the awful conditions of the men on the land? You cannot expect a mother to acquire such an outlook as will allow her to send her boy to the country if she continually hears propaganda of that kind. That is the underlying reason why mothers in this State refuse to allow their sons to go on the land. I know that one swallow does not make a summer, nor does the existence of one bad farmer-employer indicate that no farmer would treat his hands in a reasonable way. I have had experience in farming districts. If, after working for a farmer for three or four weeks, I was convinced that it would be impossible for me to get on amicably with him I went

elsewhere and probably accepted a job travelling stock for twelve or eighteen months. It is not always possible to "hit it off" with your employer. The human element will always enter into the question.

Science has materially improved working conditions in the country. The radio, the aeroplane, and fast moving trains and motor cars have brought it nearer civilisation than it was thirty or forty years ago. To-day it is merely a question of convincing the parents that their boys should seek employment on the land instead of entering the Government service or endeavouring to become artisans under the aegis of the Apprenticeship Committee. One of the greatest difficulties that a city member of Parliament has to overcome to-day is the repeated requests from parents to place their boys in trades and professions in the city. Let us have a look at ourselves in the mirror, and consider whether the propaganda that emanates from hon. members opposite to the effect that farmers labour under awful conditions, live hard, enjoy no comforts, and work for nothing, is not having a serious effect on the employment of our youths.

There are thousands of youths in Australia to-day who would make competent farmers and excellent bush workers, if given the opportunity. There is no need to import boys from overseas. I do not think that a concerted effort has been made to induce parents to allow their sons to engage in land occupations. Since I have been a member of Parliament I have had many requests from mothers to assist them in placing their sons in positions in the city. On more than one occasion I have suggested to the mother that she should allow her boy to go to work on a farm, and in some cases, after discussing the matter for perhaps half an hour, I have been able to convince her that the boy could do worse than that. On other occasions the mother has said, "I do not want my boy to live under those awful conditions that politicians allege farmers have to endure." I think we should consider whether the propaganda that emanates from this Chamber has not been responsible, to some extent, for the regrettable position that exists to-day in connection with the employment of boys on the land.

Dealing with the question of overseas immigrants, I should prefer honest British immigrants to the immigrants of any other race on the face of the earth. It would be a good idea if the British Government would undertake to contribute a proportion of the expense involved in transporting and settling immigrants in this country. In this way the British Government would be assisted to cope with one of its own serious social problems, whilst Australia would also benefit. That reminds me that a few days ago a Bill was introduced into this Chamber empowering the Government to co-operate with the Governments of Western Australia and the Commonwealth with the object of carrying out a survey of Northern Australia. It is proposed to spend £150,000 for the purpose, but the proposal was violently resisted by the hon. member for Coorooora and other hon. members opposite. This survey may materially assist the Governments to carry out a beneficial land settlement scheme. These are factors that should be considered by hon. members opposite who are anxious that Australia should be fully developed. When they rise in their

[*Mr. Moore.*

places in this Chamber to discuss these important problems, they should consider just how much damage they may do by their careless utterances.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN (*Dalby*) [7.25 p.m.]: Judging from the remarks of the Premier this debate will do a tremendous amount of good. He has no objection to boys coming into this State from overseas, especially from the British Isles, to undertake farm work. We must recognise that such a policy possesses many advantages. We who have spent a lifetime in breeding stud stock know the advantage gained every now and again from importing, especially from Great Britain, new sires to improve the breed and stamina of our stock. Australia is a young country situated more or less in the tropics. We suffer from extreme heat during a period of the year. That is why our stock deteriorates. I think that also applies to the human being. That is what I want to point out to hon. members. If Australia were isolated we should find in 100 years' time that her people showed considerable deterioration.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: That is a damaging statement.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: It is not. There is scarcely an hon. member who is not connected with stock in some way or other. I suppose that some hon. member's parents came from other parts of the world. My father and mother came from Great Britain.

Mr. POWER: You are not blaming Great Britain for that, are you?

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I am not. The point I want to make is this: Australians by continually intermarrying with one another will deteriorate in physique just as our stud stock deteriorates from interbreeding. It is an accepted fact that boys introduced from Great Britain will be a wonderful asset to Australia. Some hon. members may not agree with me, but there is not much difference in the results of breeding stock and breeding human beings.

Mr. KEOGH: Do you say that the Morgan family has deteriorated?

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I do not know whether the hon. member's family has deteriorated. I happen to be a very good sire and that might be the reason why the Morgan family has not deteriorated. We who engage in the breeding of stud horses know that there is a demand for the stock of imported animals. That particularly applies to the first generation; the demand is not so great for the second generation.

Mr. JESSON: There is no comparison between a human being and an animal.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: If there is no comparison then why is it that breeders in Great Britain have not had to import stock for many hundreds of years; yet breeders in every country in the world look to Great Britain for stock to replenish their studs? We in Australia claim that our foundations were laid by the British.

Mr. O'KEEFE: You have not slipped since Dan Morgan the bushranger went out?

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Perhaps I have improved a little. No doubt Morgan the bushranger had many good qualities. Mr. McKenna, the Director of Education, asked the children at a school in my electorate if they knew Mr. Morgan. They all

put up their hands, and said, "Yes." Mr. McKenna then said to them, "What does Mr. Morgan do?" Two or three pupils put up their hands, and one of them said, "Please, sir, he is a bushranger." (Laughter.)

Judging by the speeches delivered by Government members on this matter, they are inclined to view it in a reasonable way, knowing it is impossible to get local boys to go to the country. The Secretary for Agriculture is interested in this matter, and his views on the question would be valuable. Judging by some of the Press reports, the Minister has found great difficulty in getting boys to go to the farming centres. The hon. gentleman stated on many occasions that the parents were to blame because they would not allow their boys to take positions that are offering on farms. If we cannot induce local boys to go to the country centres, it is our duty to endeavour to get boys from Great Britain. I agree with the hon. member who has just resumed his seat that British boys would be preferable to boys from a foreign country. Australia is a British Dominion, and the great bulk of its population are of British descent, and proud of it. Even people who came from the little island the hon. member for Merthyr came from have been of much benefit to Australia, although the hon. member may not have done much.

Mr. KEOGH: Why pick me?

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I desire to point out that it would be of benefit to Australia if the boys came from Ireland or any other part of the British Isles.

In my opinion, the Federal Government should arrange for the migration of the number of boys from Britain that are required by the different States. When they arrived in this country they could be drafted to the various States, and to the various farms where work was available for them. If a position in Brisbane for a boy under sixteen years was advertised in the local papers there would be hundreds of applicants; but that does not apply in regard to positions in the farming districts. I was born and bred in the country, and I am proud of the fact. I reared my family in the country, and I am proud of that fact, too, and the majority of my children are living in the country at the present time. There is no better life for a young man than farm life. Country life may not offer the same educational facilities for children as the city; but, generally speaking, it enables them to get a fair education. If I were starting out in life I should prefer to go to the country to live and rear my family, notwithstanding some drawbacks that may exist. A boy loses nothing because he has lived in the country until he has reached maturity. He really gains. Generally speaking, it will be found that the young man who has spent his youth in the country is better able to battle and fend for himself when he comes to the city than those who have been born and spent their lives in the city.

I commend to the Premier and hon. members opposite the suggestion that we should get together with a view to seeing whether a larger number of boys should not be brought out to Queensland. A commencement could be made with, perhaps, fifteen or twenty. If that number was not

*Mr. Morgan.]*

sufficient a larger number could be taken and eventually it might be found expedient to bring out all the boys necessary for the work that is available. Queensland should have those boys. They would assist the primary producers in producing the wealth that is necessary for the maintenance of the cities, as was pointed out by the Leader of the Opposition. Irrespective of their political views hon. members should get together with a view to putting into operation some such system. If some great catastrophe was to happen and the country districts were wiped out, what would become of the inhabitants of the city? They are dependent on the country.

Mr. TAYLOR: Are they not inter-dependent?

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: To a certain point I agree that they are, but whereas the people in the country could live without the cities and towns the people in the cities and towns could not live for any appreciable length of time without the primary producers. The city folk are dependent to a greater extent on the country people than are the latter on the former.

The HOME SECRETARY: Without the cities people would live in the country.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Except on mining fields I have never known of towns springing up suddenly in the country in this State. The towns follow the settlers. First of all land is opened up and selected. Then more settlers group themselves round the pioneers. Trades people then realise that there is some call for their services and thus we have the birth of a town.

The HOME SECRETARY: Towns and cities are merely the servants of the community.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Exactly. There is no doubt about that. So far as life in the country is concerned, I have my own personal experience. I have gone through the stages and I should know.

Mr. JESSON: Did you carry your swag?

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: No, I did not carry a swag, but a man can go through hardships without doing that. I am acquainted with the hardships of pioneering. I pioneered in Victoria.

Mr. JESSON: You were not born with a silver spoon in your mouth?

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Fortunately for me I was not. My first occupation was delivering papers in the street. Then I swept out a printing office and became a printer's devil. With this brief history of my boyhood, hon. members can be assured that I was born with no silver spoon in my mouth. And I am very pleased I was not. Many of the men who have been born in the lap of luxury have not made a success in life, whereas those who have had to battle from childhood have done so. That has certainly been my experience.

The opportunities that existed in Australia fifty or sixty years ago are offering in Queensland to-day to a greater extent than in any other State in the Commonwealth. It is just a matter of whether a boy has determination and is prepared to endure a little hardship. If he is he will eventually become successful and provide some comforts for his old age. The average man does not mind what work he undertakes so long as he accumulates a "nest egg" for his old age, because he dislikes taking the old-age pension or going to

{Mr. Morgan.

Dunwich. A boy with that spirit of determination will get on in Queensland. They are doing it every day. I have taken boys from Brisbane and put them on farms. For the first three or four weeks they were home sick and wanted to return to Brisbane, but they eventually got over that. They made new chums amongst neighbouring farmers, had their sports on Saturday or Sunday, and eventually came to Brisbane to see their parents, after having saved a few pounds. They were not in Brisbane more than a fortnight before they wanted to go back to the country. After experiencing both city and country conditions, they wanted to get back to the country because they realised that the opportunities were better there than in the city!

I hope that this debate will result in the Premier's announcing that the Government are prepared to allow an increasing number of boys to come in from Great Britain until the demand here is satisfied. As another hon. member has said, if we do not populate Australia some other nation will do it for us.

Mr. FOLEY (*Normanby*) [7.43 p.m.]: The discussion on this question has been very interesting, but I am afraid that most hon. members have been looking at the matter from the point of view of the conditions of some years ago instead of those existing now. In common with other young men, I had the experience of going out on to a station or farm for 10s. a week, being fed mostly on corned junk and damper for the greater part of the year, and at the end of twelve months, after having paid for boots and clothes, being lucky if I left that station or farm with a cheque for £5 or £10. Much better conditions than those are offering to-day. The Government have introduced scholarships and are endeavouring to do away with "daylight to dark" conditions so that we shall have a shorter working day on the farm.

The Leader of the Opposition pointed out the average farmer's difficulty in offering conditions such as will induce the average city lad—who has a different outlook from that which existed when we were boys—to take on farming. Some hon. members have suggested that all the factors causing this state of affairs were political, but that is not so. The position of farming is the same nearly all over the world—that is, it is individualistic, and therefore out of step with the rest of industry. It has not kept pace with the development of labour-saving methods, and has not reorganised as have secondary industries. With the growth of cartel, monopoly and trust, the latter can so regulate the amount of raw material required and its price that farmers all over the world are facing low prices. Wherever farming is carried on under the individualistic system—as in Australia—farmers are in difficulties. Only where farming is conducted on large tracts with the most scientific methods have the farmers been able to weather the conditions prevailing during the last few years. The average individual farmer has the same overhead expenses as when he was getting a good price for his products, and he finds himself unable to meet all his commitments and pay a price for the labour he requires in order to carry on development.

We have a state of affairs in some of the new farming areas that is not very

attractive to the average city boy. I refer hon. members to the Callide and Upper Burnett districts, portion of which is in my electorate and portion in that of the hon. member for Port Curtis. In that area, which has been settled for the last ten years, the bulk of the farmers after taking up the land, falling the scrub and farming for some years are still unable to meet their obligations to the Crown and the store-keeper. That is not the result of any harsh conditions imposed by legislative action, but purely the result of the low prices for the products they are growing. What inducement is there for the average city boy to go out, learn farming at fifteen shillings a week, and take up a farm of his own under such conditions.

The Public Service Commissioner has suggested in his report the possibility of arranging a system of settling boys on the land under a co-operative system. What he is really endeavouring to suggest to hon. members is that he realises that the collective system of farming is the only system that can be conducted with success under existing social conditions. He suggests that groups of three or four should conduct farming operations on a co-operative basis in accordance with modern thought, thereby reducing the overhead costs of individual farms, enabling them to pay reasonable wages and provide fair conditions for their employees and enjoy a margin of profit even with the prevailing low price levels.

Mr. MOORE: He suggested that only as a means to an end.

Mr. FOLEY: I do not think so. I am sure that Mr. Story, with his breadth of vision and his vast experience, realises that it is impossible under the individualistic system of farming that prevails to-day to improve the economic conditions of the farmers sufficiently to enable them to offer wages and conditions attractive enough to induce city boys to work for them. It has been proved the world over that individualism in farming is extremely unprofitable. The farmers in Poland, Austria, France, United States of America—or in any other country in the world you like to name—are in a worse economic position than they are even in Australia because individualism in farming occupations is less efficient than the system adopted in other industries.

The problem must be tackled from a different angle. We have the youths and we have the land, and apparently all that is required is to modernise our methods of production so as to be able to make a profit even with the present low prices prevailing throughout the world. Only by the adoption of this method shall we be able to attract youths from the city to the farms. One has only to look round to realise the uneconomic methods that are adopted in farming areas. There are thousands of dairymen and mixed farmers, each with his individual fences, each producing his own water supply, where one could supply the requirements of perhaps three or four, and each one building his own set of cow bails for thirty, forty, or fifty cows, when probably one set would be sufficient to handle 200 to 300 cows. (Opposition laughter.) That is the position.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I am afraid that the hon. member is getting very wide of the vote, which is "Immigration."

Mr. FOLEY: I differ from you, Mr. Hanson, with all due respect to your position in the chair. I am pointing out that there is no need to bring immigrants to this country to settle on the land when we have boys of our own available.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I admit that the question of settling boys on the land can be associated with the subject of immigration, but at the present time the vote under discussion is "Immigration."

Mr. FOLEY: The debate has centred around the subject raised by the first speaker who discussed the vote. I am pointing out that there is no need to bring lads from overseas whilst native-born boys are available. If we are to cope effectively with the problem of settling our land then we shall have to adopt new conditions, and to me there is no alternative than to modernise our methods, thereby eliminating the waste and inefficiency that exist in farming operations to-day. The farmer will then be able to provide better working conditions for his employees and show a greater margin of profit even with the existing low price level. This new set of conditions would induce boys to go on farms. If inducement could be offered to our own boys to go on the land, the necessity of bringing immigrant boys from other parts of the world would be obviated.

Mr. RUSSELL (*Hamilton*) [7.55 p.m.]: Some of the theories expounded by the hon. member for Normanby are very impracticable. My experience of farmers has taught me that they are the greatest individualists in the country. It is very wrong for the hon. member to contend that farming operations in this State are not conducted with modernised methods. We possess some of the finest farms in the world, equipped with the most up-to-date machinery. However, the hon. member did not touch on the point at issue and I do not intend to follow his example.

One paragraph in the annual report of the Public Service Commissioner calls for some comment. It says—

"The prospect of such a career for their son is not alluring to many a town father and mother, and hence their reluctance to permit the boy to take a job in the country even though he may feel the call of the land."

The Australian boy is showing no aptitude for country life. The other day the hon. member for Enoggera chided the Opposition, termed them the "stinking fish party," and said they were always bemoaning the lot of the farmer. We always endeavour to place the facts before the people. On the other hand, the hon. member and his party always speak a good deal of the washer-woman, the baby, and so on. They are the biggest examples of that quality in this Chamber.

I do not agree with the remarks of the hon. member for Dalby that the Australian race will gradually become extinct unless there is an infusion of imported blood. The present generation of boys and girls are the finest example of their kind this continent has seen. We are producing under the Southern Cross a race of men and women without parallel. The hon. member for Dalby may be a good judge of horses, but his remarks were wide of the mark so far as the human race is concerned.

*Mr. Russell.]*

It is refreshing to note the change of front on the part of Labour members. Twenty or twenty-five years ago there was a very strong agitation in Labour ranks against immigration to these shores. The unions were afraid that newcomers would compete with their members for the jobs offering and naturally set their faces against their introduction. Up to the present all Governments have been very reluctant to encourage a flow of immigration to these shores because they are afraid new arrivals might displace those in positions to-day and thus the unemployment market would be flooded. That is a very reasonable view to take of the situation. To-day, all must admit that with the falling birth rate in Australia some method must be adopted to accelerate the pace of our population. The other day it was said that in twenty years' time the population of Australia would commence to stagnate and many eminent authorities have supported that opinion. At any rate, at the present rate of increase in the population that position might arise in twenty years. It is a serious outlook for this country. It behoves us to give the matter serious consideration to see if something cannot be done. It is essential that we should have the population here in the case of a crisis and if we were called upon to defend our own shores. Let us hope that occasion will never arise; but "Forewarned is forearmed," and we should take immediate steps to insure that our population will increase at a greater rate than at the present time.

Last year I had the opportunity of attending a meeting of the Migration Committee of the House of Commons. I was asked by an association called the Empire of the North Development League, who were interested in the settlement of Northern Australia, to meet this committee and ascertain whether it was prepared to father the project in Great Britain. This committee was presided over by Sir Henry Page Crofts, and I had the pleasure of meeting as well Commissioner Lamb, of the Salvation Army, and several other eminent gentlemen. The first question I was asked was this: supposing we find the migrants and supposing we find the money to finance the scheme, what guarantee have we that the Australian Governments, particularly the Queensland Government, will provide suitable land on which to settle these migrants? I ventured the opinion that a scheme to send a large number of British migrants to the Northern Territory would only end in failure, because reports are conflicting as to the suitability of the Northern Territory for the introduction of British migrants. To play the game by our friends on the other side we should endeavour to settle these people in a more temperate zone than Northern Australia. The question directed to me was a very awkward one. I had not any authority to make any promise, nor could I give any indication what the policy of the Government might be; but I had in mind those vast tracts of country in North Queensland that are practically undeveloped, which would afford a very suitable home for a large number of these British migrants. The question then arose: if these people produced on a large scale products that are already being produced in Northern Queensland, how would this production affect our market? The chairman stated that they thought that if we could overcome the difficulty in regard to the land

[Mr. Russell.

they could safely promise they would agree to accept the products that were produced by those migrants. If such a scheme can be brought about I do not think there would be much difficulty in getting a sufficient number of migrants of a good type who would settle in that country, where they would have a chance of building homes and carving out their destiny, and have the guarantee of a market for their products. Such a scheme deserves earnest consideration. I know the difficulty is in finding suitable land for the purpose of settlement and whether the Queensland Government would be prepared to lease or sell the land on easy terms. The committee I refer to has not brought its scheme to fruition, although I believe it is still working on that project. It would be a very suitable thing to get these people to come here on the terms indicated at the meeting of the Migration Committee that I attended at the House of Commons.

There is an association in London that conducts the Fairbridge Farm Project, and finds farm boys for Western Australia. It has been a successful venture, and the movement is supported by a number of important people in Great Britain who find the money to finance the scheme. Work is found for these boys in Western Australia, and the majority of them have turned out very good settlers indeed. When I was over there I was struck with the great number of lads, especially in the large cities, who to my way of thinking have a very dreary future indeed. Coming from the Derby at Epsom Downs, thirty miles from London I saw the roadway lined on both sides with many thousands of boys—and a very fine stamp of lad they were, but the thought struck me as to what must be the destiny of all these lads who at that time and now have before them a very uncertain future. I feel certain that if we could evolve a scheme for the employment of these boys in Queensland we should have no difficulty in obtaining all we desire. They were of a fine stamp physically, and they would find good homes in Queensland. As the Leader of the Opposition has stated, adequate measures could be taken to see that the boys were not unduly exploited by their employers.

I quite agree with the hon. member for Enoggera that we must make country conditions more pleasant. All members of the Chamber should co-operate in any movement that will make for better conditions in the country. It is apparent that the boys of the city of Brisbane are unwilling to leave the parental roof, and to go out and rough it, as they would have to do in many of the country districts. It seems to me that in order to make country life attractive to these boys, and also to make it more attractive to the farmers of Queensland, we must support every movement that will extend to the country areas many of the amenities enjoyed in the centres of population. Any movement that has for its objective the extension of such facilities should be fostered. Every effort should be made to decrease the drudgery of farm life. If every farmer could be supplied with electric light and power for his house and farm, and have the blessing of the radio, and if the boys that went to the farms were able to journey to the country centres and there enjoy some of the privileges that they would

have in the city, we should have a better chance of inducing the boys to move out of the towns. But it seems to me that while the boys, fortified by the unwillingness of their parents, are loth to leave the cities and rough it in the country, we should do the next best thing—we should encourage the boys in Great Britain who are prepared to come here and take their chance to do so. If they are looked after and afforded some of the amenities of life there may be some chance of a successful migration movement that will bring increased population to our shores.

Although I give the hon. member for Normanby every credit for being sincere in his advocacy of communal farms, I am inclined to think that the farmer, situated as he is to-day, could not work in with such a system. At the same time, we could encourage the growth of the co-operative movement. There is no reason why farmers, and particularly those boys that we would bring out, should not be allowed to work their farms in a co-operative manner. In fact, it is being done already. In many parts of Queensland farmers combine to help one another.

Owing to the interest that has been displayed in this important question, I hope that something will be done by all the Governments of Australia in conjunction with the Commonwealth Government to bring about some scheme whereby we can stimulate a steady flow of migrants of a suitable type to fill the empty spaces of Australia, and thus give us the necessary protection against foreign aggression.

Mr. BELL (*Stanley*) [8.16 p.m.]: The Premier is to be complimented upon what, to my mind, is one of the best speeches he has ever made in this Chamber. I feel he realises the problem facing Australia to-day, and I congratulate him for the lead he has given hon. members on this important immigration question. As the member for Nanango pointed out, the only weak point is that he did not go quite far enough and admit the reason why we have so many unemployed boys. I think the member for Enoggera certainly gave a lead to his party also on this most important matter. The only point on which I find fault with the member for Enoggera is that he attacked Opposition members for putting plain facts concerning the farming community before the Committee. He accused us of using political propaganda, but with all due respect to the hon. gentleman, I feel sure that if he asked the members of his own party to refrain from accusing all employers of being exploiters we should have a much better opportunity of getting boys on to the land.

The speech made by the hon. member for Normanby is one of the most theoretical and impracticable he has delivered for a long time.

Mr. FOLEY: It was not theoretical. It is actual practice. Throughout the world the only farmers who have survived are the big farmers.

Mr. BELL: Then I am sure the hon. member for Normanby will have no difficulty in inducing three or four men to follow his advice, and we shall see how far they will get. After hearing the hon. member's speech, one would imagine that

every man has exactly the same amount of money in his pocket and the same number of milkers, and that mentally he is like everybody else and has the same initiative as everybody else. Human nature is not made that way.

Mr. P. K. COPLEY: That was buried twenty years ago. Do not fire that one again.

Mr. BELL: It is true. We must encourage the boys to go into the country and also encourage their mothers to allow them to do so. Conditions are not as bad as they are painted by certain hon. members on the Government side. When a young boy goes out into the country he has to shoulder responsibility, and will develop into a much finer citizen than he would if he were hanging about the streets of Brisbane, regardless of the amount of money he receives. Many of us started on a small wage, and it does not hurt anybody to prove his worth. He will receive his just reward in due course. The Government are not encouraging mothers to allow their sons to endure a few of the hardships with which we have to contend in the country. This is a most important matter, and, as the hon. member for Enoggera pointed out, if we do not populate this country, we shall have to face difficulties in the near future that we cannot forestall, no matter what is said in this Chamber. For that reason alone, I sincerely trust that the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition, the Premier, and the hon. member for Enoggera will bear fruit.

Item (Immigration) agreed to.

#### MUSEUM.

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

“That £3,202 be granted for ‘Museum.’”

Mr. TAYLOR (*Enoggera*) [8.16 p.m.]: I think the Museum vote is being spent in the interests of preserving the flora and fauna of this country, and probably if times were better it would be a good idea to expand it. At the same time I realise that in its expenditure the greatest consideration must be given to getting the best results. For a number of years no action has been taken by the Director of the Museum, Mr. Longman, to secure any up-to-date specimens from the northern portion of the State. Some years ago a field officer went out periodically to secure specimens of Queensland's flora and fauna and these have proved of very great interest to people of the cities and visitors to Brisbane from the South. We should take seriously into consideration the opinions expressed by the gentleman who was asked some twelve months ago to report on the Museum. It may be necessary at some future date to augment the exhibits there and to give effect to some of the recommendations contained in his report.

I notice in the Estimates that the artificer and modeller is receiving £400 and the taxidermist £380. Both positions should be held by specialists. It has come to my knowledge that whenever show cases have to be repaired or any work of that kind done, a cabinet-maker from the Department of Public Works has to go to the Museum to do it. The artificer should be able to do it. If he is only a modeller and nothing more, he should be paid as such, and a man should

*Mr. Taylor.*]

be kept in the Museum to see that the cases are vermin-proof, so that the vermin will not destroy the very valuable exhibits there. After all, why a modeller should be classed as superior in profession to a taxidermist is hard to understand. I believe that some consideration might be given to the question whether the work performed by the gentleman who is classified as an artificer is in accordance with his description and his salary in the Estimates. I raise that question because I know that the Department of Public Works has had to do the show-cases up during the past financial year and that, I think, is the artificer's job.

Item (Museum) agreed to.

PARLIAMENTARY DRAFTSMAN.

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

“That £1,425 be granted for ‘Parliamentary Draftsman.’”

Item agreed to.

PUBLIC LIBRARY OF QUEENSLAND.

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

“That £2,433 be granted for ‘Public Library of Queensland.’”

Mr. WATERS (*Kelvin Grove*) [8.21 p.m.]: When this vote was under consideration last year I pointed out that there was need for a more up to date public library in this city and that a greater number of modern books should be purchased. I am glad to note that the appropriation for books and periodicals is to be increased from £500 to £660. I am also gratified to know that it is part of the Government's building programme to erect a modern library building in the city, but I urge that the project be hastened. A city is judged by several standards, and its cultural standards have an important bearing on its advancement and welfare. No one who is acquainted with the existing public library can claim that it is in keeping with a city of the size of Brisbane. There are very fine public libraries in Sydney and other capital cities, some of them constructed, in part, out of endowments made available to Governments by public spirited citizens in those States. Now that the Government have decided to construct a model public library they should search for the most efficient librarian. They will require the services of a very efficient man. With the assistance of the Brisbane City Council, who should assume some responsibility in the matter, the Government should be able to construct a library that will be the best of its kind in Australia.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Do you not think that the Brisbane City Council could maintain an up-to-date library?

Mr. WATERS: The Brisbane City Council should assume some responsibility in the matter, but it is a national institution and the Government are justified in subsidising it because of its importance, particularly from the point of view of encouraging students. If it was modernly equipped it would include technical works that are required by students. A public library should create a desire on the part of our citizens to study. Knowledge is a national asset and from this point of view alone the

project is worthy of a large measure of Government support.

Mr. Munn, of the Carnegie Trust, who investigated the public libraries of the Commonwealth, was very caustic in his criticism of our public library. Anyone acquainted with it must agree substantially with his views. The Government have intimated their intention to proceed with the erection of a new public library, for which the people of this city will be very grateful. I urge the Government to hasten with that work and construct the building at the earliest possible moment.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN (*Dalby*) [8.26 p.m.]: The responsibility of building a public library is not a responsibility of the State but of the Brisbane City Council. If the Government intend to proceed with the erection of the public library in Brisbane, then why should they not build a similar institution in Toowoomba, or in all cities and large towns? I should like the Government to spend £2,000 on the construction of a public library in Dalby in order that the people there might have an opportunity of improving their vocational training. It would be a help to them in many ways. It is not right and proper that the whole of the State should be taxed to build a library for the use of a comparatively few people. If this principle is to be established, why not establish similar institutions in Townsville, Rockhampton, Maryborough, and Ipswich? I do not object to public libraries, provided that they are constructed by the people of the centres that want them, with the aid of subsidies from the Government. The people in my electorate will not have the privilege of using the public library in Brisbane and why should they be taxed to provide such a convenience for Brisbane? The matter is one for the Brisbane City Council. The Government should subsidise the cost of erecting the building and equipping it with books and literature.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Your Government reduced the subsidy for schools of arts.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: If the Government I was associated with reduced that subsidy when things were bad it is only natural that when they improve the subsidy should be restored. I recognise the importance of such institutions in cities, towns, and country districts. Many people in the country districts put their hands in their pockets and by the payment of annual subscriptions assist to erect and equip public libraries. The schools of arts in the country are somewhat similar institutions to the public library in Brisbane. If the people of Brisbane want a public library, the Government should not be asked to build it for them. They would not supply us with books and the necessary conveniences, and I consider a school of arts is on the same basis as a library. The Government should provide the Brisbane City Council with a block of land and allow it to control the library; and at some future date, if the Government find they have sufficient funds, a certain sum could be set down in the Estimates each year to provide a subsidy for the various schools of arts according to the amount of funds each school of arts had raised. I strongly object to the people of Queensland being asked to provide money for the building of an expensive library building in the city of Brisbane and furnishing it with books.

[*Mr. Taylor.*

The PREMIER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*) [8.41 p.m.]: The proposal to establish a public library is one that has engaged the attention of every thoughtful man in the community. The public library in Queensland is at present inadequate to the needs of the people. It occupies a valuable site and has done very useful work for people who are able to use it, and there are many valuable books there—a better selection of books than many people understand who have never been in it. What the Government have in mind is that a public library and national art gallery shall at some future date be built on a suitable site. One of the sites that have been suggested is up on Wickham terrace on land at present held by the municipality. The municipality in return for the use of that land might be granted the right to carry Adelaide street through to the North Quay, an improvement that has been required for many years.

I deprecate the idea that a library or art gallery built in Brisbane should be regarded purely from the Brisbane point of view. National Galleries in London are national in character, and are rightly so regarded by the people. My idea is that when a new public library and art gallery is built it should be treated from the national point of view and should belong to the people. In order to accomplish that objective it will be necessary for the library authorities to control what may be termed a circulating library. For example, at the present time there are schools of arts in almost every centre of population throughout Queensland. Everyone knows that the number of new books that those local libraries can buy in each year is limited by their finances, and anybody who is a member of one of them for a while may find that he has read pretty well all the books in which he is interested in that library, and that there is a tremendous demand among the members for the new books that are bought. In Queensland and Australia generally, the cost of books is far too high, owing largely to the tariff. In my opinion it is a very bad thing to impose a tax on knowledge, and it is through books that we obtain a good deal of our knowledge. A person who can read and think can get into the company of all the best minds of all ages. Books should be made available to all the people at as low a cost as possible. The idea I have is that the central library should be a national one and that the books should circulate all over the State. Books could be sent from Brisbane to Toowoomba, from Toowoomba to Dalby, and so on. Instead of having shelves upon shelves of books in a library or school of arts that are scarcely read, we could pass them on from town to town and the people of Queensland thus would enjoy an opportunity of reading and studying books they would not otherwise see.

The same remarks apply to an art gallery. There is nothing wrong with sending to the various centres of population pictures from the National Art Gallery. There is no reason why in each town there should not be an exhibition of pictures sent from a central art gallery. People who have not the opportunity of visiting the capital cities would then have the opportunity of seeing the best works of art owned by the State.

I deprecate the view that a public library should be regarded solely as if it would be a Brisbane institution, and the hon. member who has just resumed his seat dealt with it from that standpoint. Brisbane is the capital city of the State, and should be thought of as such. There is no more reason why a public library should be erected in Toowoomba, Rockhampton, etc., than that a parliamentary building should be there. The needs of the people would be met if the library was national in character, and the circulation of books would enable the people in the bush and the centres of population outside Brisbane to enjoy the benefits of access to books, which is necessary for their wellbeing.

Mr. NIMMO (*Oxley*) [8.37 p.m.]: While I quite agree that there should be a public library in Brisbane, I do not know how the proposed system of circulating books from that library all over the State is to be carried out. The problem is a difficult one, and I think that such a practice would defeat the object of having the public library in the capital city. Each capital city in Australia has a public library. That is a wise provision. The Premier has stated a public library in Brisbane would enable the people to read and study the books that they require. For that reason it is necessary that an up-to-date public library should be provided in the city. Country residents when in the capital could visit the public library and obtain the information they desired. On the other hand, they could ask a Brisbane resident or a friend visiting the city to visit the library and obtain the information. It is very necessary that there should be a public library, but I am of opinion that it would not be wise to compete with those people who have established circulating libraries throughout the country. If the Premier intends to embark on such a policy he will find that his object of providing an up-to-date library for the benefit of the people of Queensland will be defeated.

Mr. BRASSINGTON (*Fortitude Valley*) [8.39 p.m.]: The Government are to be commended for giving this matter urgent consideration. One of the finest of public assets is the possession of an up-to-date library. There is no gainsaying the great value such a library would be to Brisbane. It should be a place the citizens should be proud of, a place of recreation and a source of information and knowledge on the subjects that interest a people. I welcome the Government's desire to move forward in this matter, and I hope the day is not far distant when this library will be an established fact.

The hon. member for Dalby certainly put forward a rather remarkable suggestion. He objects to the establishment of a public library in this city and argues that that should be the responsibility of the municipality. Let us carry the hon. member's argument a little further. Does the municipality controlling the town of Dalby subsidise and maintain the school of arts in that town? I think I can answer that question for the hon. member by saying "No." A public library should be regarded as a public utility in the same way as we look upon universities, hospitals, and other institutions of public benefit. We are proud to point out our buildings of interest and note to visitors from other States and overseas.

*Mr. Brassington.]*

If it is a pleasure to point out our wonderful General Hospital and other public buildings, it should be an equal pleasure to be able to point out a most up-to-date public library. It is as much the responsibility of all citizens to build, maintain, and stock an up-to-date library as to build hospitals, universities, and other places of interest and education. We have many thousands of young boys and girls growing up to whom an up-to-date public library in which they could study various subjects and equip themselves as useful citizens of this State would be invaluable. I regret the attitude of the hon. member for Dalby and I repeat that the sooner the Government establish this very important public institution the sooner will benefits be conferred upon the people of Queensland.

Item (Public Library of Queensland) agreed to.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSIONER.

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

“That £6,264 be granted for ‘Public Service Commissioner.’”

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*) [8.43 p.m.]: I always find the report by the Public Service Commissioner a very interesting document. He traverses much ground and states his ideas so concisely as to be easily understood by anyone. I have a great opinion of the Public Service Commissioner for the way in which he carries out his work. I do not know how he manages to perform so many duties. Not satisfied with doing the actual work required of him as Public Service Commissioner, he makes various suggestions to the Government for the alleviation of unemployment and better settlement on the land. He takes out most careful calculations and places most concise reports before the Government. He has very important tasks to perform that have much influence on the State of Queensland. He appears in the Industrial Court on behalf of the Government. When one sees in his report such statements as this:—

“I also furnished a carefully prepared estimate showing that the salaries-wages claims of the unions, if granted, would involve an increased cost of approximately £1,323,000 per annum,”

one realises what a case the Public Service Commissioner has to work up on behalf of the community.

At 8.45 p.m.,

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

Mr. MOORE: It is not on behalf of the Government, because it is the community that has to pay for the public service. I should like hon. members to take particular notice of what Mr. Story said in opposing the claims—

“(a) That the reductions under ‘The Financial Emergency Acts’ have been less drastic in Queensland than in the other States.”

After all the talk of hon. members on that side, it is rather remarkable that the first and foremost reason given by the Public Service Commissioner before the court as a basis for his opposition to the claim was that the reductions under the Financial

Emergency Acts were less in Queensland than in any other State.

Mr. TAYLOR: That is because you did not get the opportunity of making that second cut.

Mr. MOORE: We had that opportunity. I am only pointing out that the statements made by hon. members opposite are not in consonance with the facts. It goes to show that the public service was treated better in this State than in any other State.

Mr. TAYLOR: You were just getting ready to get in the solar plexus punch when the people intervened.

Mr. MOORE: That may be used for propaganda purposes, but it is not much use otherwise. We have had a professional member of the House on that side saying that it was necessary to come with proof of facts before you made an assertion. I should like the hon. member who interjected to obey that injunction, because a wild statement gets us nowhere.

One thing that is likely to affect us very much is the suggestion in the Commissioner's Report, concerning the frequent applications for a five-day week in the public service.

Mr. TAYLOR: A very good idea, too.

Mr. MOORE: Very good for some people—very good for the people who are employed.

Mr. JESSON: You advocated a 36-hour week on the hustings.

Mr. MOORE: We were quite agreeable to two 36-hour shifts by agreement. Why should they not work two shifts in a factory instead of one? I can see nothing wrong in it, but I can see very grave disabilities for the people when it comes to a five-day week in the public service. It would mean tremendous inconvenience for many of them. At the time Mr. Muhldorff said that “Too much respect was being given to the farmer . . . Why should his view be considered when the advancement and improvement of industrial conditions were being sought?”

Mr. JESSON: He denied that statement.

Mr. MOORE: He may have denied it, but it is reported verbatim in the paper. I do not take any notice of the denial. When the leading article was written about him he tried to wriggle out of it. We know quite well that it may be in the interests of the public service, but it is not in the interests of the community. It is Mr. Muhldorff's job as president of the organisation to look after his members. Our job is to look after ourselves and see that we are not victimised.

The PREMIER: Your job is to look after the people of this country.

Mr. MOORE: That is, ourselves. We are the people of this country.

Mr. JESSON: If he does not do his job, how do you account for the fact that any clerk of petty sessions or public servant in a country town can get a send-off by public subscription?

Mr. MOORE: I have seen the most unpopular policeman in the district voted a public subscription, and the people only too glad to get rid of him. I have seen them go round and say, “Will you subscribe for the send-off of this chap?” and get the reply, “My word I will.”

Mr. JESSON: I know a chap who got a sanitary contract and got a send-off.

[*Mr. Brassington.*]

Mr. MOORE: I have not had any experience of that; I do not mix with that section of the people myself. Some of the statements that are made seem rather extraordinary. We find that at the beginning of 1932 the Premier got no sleep for weeks for thinking of the brutal and callous treatment meted out to the public servants—how they had been brutally outlawed, and had no opportunity to put their case before the Industrial Court.

The PREMIER: The cynical and callous brutality of the Moore Government.

Mr. MOORE: Oh, yes. But for 822 nights after that he slept calmly in his bed, not caring whether the public servants had an opportunity to state their case before the court or not. He did not care how callous or brutal he was then. It was only just before the elections that he suffered the agonies of sleepless nights, worrying about the public servants. For 822 nights thereafter he slept quite peacefully and then suddenly decided that they could go to the court because another election was close. That may be all right for political purposes but it does not carry a ring of sincerity. I suppose it is one of the tricks of the trade—politics is a trade with some members—that we become accustomed to after a time. After we have been in Parliament for a number of years we become used to humbug and hypocrisy and recognise that certain things are done merely to secure votes and that those responsible are not in earnest in any other direction.

Mr. JESSON: You are only in the apprenticeship class.

Mr. MOORE: If I am only in the apprenticeship class after twenty years' service, then I have little chance of becoming a journeyman. I suggest that the hon. member for Kennedy read the reports by Mr. Story, extending over a few years. He will glean a lot of useful information containing very valuable and helpful suggestions, carefully and concisely stated. In my opinion, Mr. Story has worn himself out by overwork. When I was Premier I urged him time and time again to take a holiday, but he always put forward the plea that he had something important to do, not for himself but for the Government and in the interests of the State. I really began to fear that he would not be able to stand the strain and that eventually he would break down.

Mr. JESSON: That was during the Moore regime.

Mr. MOORE: Exactly the same thing is happening to-day. Mr. Story is a remarkably industrious individual who continues to do more than his fair share of work, all on behalf of the State. I do not suppose that there is any other public servant who has been more conscientious than Mr. Story. I can quite believe that the present Premier has received extraordinarily valuable assistance from him.

The PREMIER: There is no doubt about that.

Mr. MOORE: He has provided the Premier with valuable information, often voluntarily given, and he deserves every credit for the painstaking way that he has carried out his arduous duties. A number of people

are dissatisfied with some of his decisions, but no person could occupy the position of Public Service Commissioner without coming up against difficulties—somebody is bound to be dissatisfied—but he has worked conscientiously and in very few instances has his decision been upset on appeal. He is most careful in his inquiries before appointments are made to the public service. The qualifications, rights, and privileges of every applicant for a position are considered very carefully indeed. We have been extraordinarily fortunate in having the assistance of such an efficient Public Service Commissioner's Department.

Mr. POWER: He cannot be blamed if his decisions are reversed, because the appointments are made on the recommendations of the head of the department to him.

Mr. MOORE: That may be the case. It would be extraordinary if no mistakes were made. I do not blame Mr. Story in the slightest degree. I recognise that he has done his work and done it well, and that the officers of his department have also carried out their work in a very efficient manner. He has frequently appointed officers of his department, including Mr. Dignan and Mr. George, to inquire into the administration of the various departments, with a view to reorganising them so as to secure the maximum service. What better service could be given to the community? His reports are models of conciseness, clear-sightedness, and clear thinking, and show a complete understanding of the position, which enables him to obtain the best return for the Government. Mr. Story in his reports sets out a statement of the facts clearly and succinctly so that everyone can understand him. The report contains no redundancies. Every word means something. Everyone associated with the cases he is called upon to adjudicate on or prepare knows what his position is. The fact that he has been able to satisfy various Governments, and that he has held his high position for such a long time, should cause him a glow of pride. I am aware that he has not given universal satisfaction to the public service—no one can do that—but the service recognises that Mr. Story is fair.

Mr. KANE: You are saying so much in praise of him that one would think he was dead.

Mr. MOORE: I have a great opinion of Mr. Story. I do not think that a man should have to die before we express appreciation of his services. I am giving him the meed of praise I believe from the experience I have had of his work is due to him. Mr. Story knows my opinion of him. The reports and work of his department disclose the fact that he possesses remarkable gifts. He must possess such gifts to have discharged the duties of his difficult position over so many years. His report this year gives us all the information we require. It gives the number of increases in the various departments, together with the decreases, the total salaries and wages paid, and the increases and decreases from 1930 onwards. As an hon. member reminds me, he places all that information before us in his report without resorting to propaganda. It is of immense value to this Committee and the community.

*Mr. Moore*]

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*) [8.57 p.m.]: I am glad that the Leader of the Opposition alluded to the sterling qualities of the Public Service Commissioner. I regret that this official has arrived at a stage in his life when by reason of a regulation, or the policy of the party in power, he may shortly retire, notwithstanding his ability and capacity for organisation. Public service and experience count for nothing! That policy is a cruel one. Men of the ability of Mr. Story and other officers in the public service have had a wonderful experience over a number of years, and now, because of the existence of a regulation, are to be rewarded by being thrown on the industrial scrap-heap. Mr. Story is a gentleman whose ability is undoubted, whose courtesy is unvarying, and who has distinguished himself in the public service. I realise that it may be said that this policy has been carried out by previous Governments, including the Government with which I was associated; nevertheless, that does not alter my opinion. I never agreed to the application of that policy; and I am very glad it has never been introduced into our business life.

The PREMIER: Your party introduced a Bill providing that no man could be a director of a company after he reached the age of seventy years.

Mr. MAXWELL: That does not alter my opinion. No one will suggest that Mr. T. C. Beirne, who is one of the most brilliant business men in this city, is unfit to attend to his business. Any man possessing his business capacity and experience is a distinct acquisition to a business community. It is regrettable that when a man reaches a certain age he is compelled to get out and make room for somebody else. It means that on Saturday a man may be worth £1,000 a year and on the following Monday is worth nothing. Some hon. members opposite are laughing, but their time will come, and they will not laugh then.

I draw the attention of hon. members to an article that was written by Robert Blatchford, the Socialist, entitled, "Sacked." It is one of the finest articles I have read dealing with this subject. In it he points out the absurdity of putting people off when they have reached a certain age. Several illustrations are given in this article, and he points out that some of the greatest achievements in the history of mankind have been performed by men over seventy years of age. A competent experienced man should be retained in the service of the community irrespective of his age, in order that his ability may be used in the interests of his country. Employees should be remunerated according to their experience and ability. I enter an emphatic protest against the treatment that is likely to be meted out to Mr. J. D. Story and other individuals in the public service. The Government will have great difficulty in finding a man possessing the experience and ability of Mr. Story. I endorse the sentiments expressed by the Leader of the Opposition.

I draw the attention of hon. members to paragraph 16 (a) of Mr. Story's report, which reads—

"That the reductions under the Financial Emergency Acts had been less drastic in Queensland than in other States."

[*Mr. Maxwell.*

That supports the statement made by the Leader of the Opposition, and refutes the statements made by hon. members opposite. Paragraph 16 (b) of Mr. Story's report reads—

"That the Government had restored the annual salary increments as quickly as possible, consistently with its capacity to pay."

The statement makes the qualification "consistently with its capacity to pay." This statement by the Public Service Commissioner removes from the Moore Government a stigma placed upon it by Labour.

Mr. JESSON interjected.

Mr. MAXWELL: I would remind the hon. member that he has not been a member of this Assembly long enough to understand the position. He has merely the soap-box oratory of candidates for Parliament. When in the Chamber he imagines he is talking to someone in a crowd that will swallow such dope. There is the statement that has been made by the Public Service Commissioner.

At 9.6 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. MAXWELL: I endorse the sentiment expressed by the Leader of the Opposition. I also heard somewhat similar expressions uttered by the Premier. The Premier and ex-Premier have been associated with this gentleman, and they are aware of the work he has done. He appears to have a wonderful brain. He is a wonderful organiser. I emphasise the fact that his retirement from his office will be an undoubted loss to the Government and the people of the State. If he is removed from his position, as he may be, the loss will be incalculable. The present report of the Public Service Commissioner may be the last issued by Mr. Story.

The PREMIER: You are not justified in saying that.

Mr. MAXWELL: There is the possibility that the Public Service Commissioner, having arrived at a certain age, will be retired.

The PREMIER: Under the Act the retiring age of the Public Service Commissioner is seventy.

Mr. MAXWELL: Undoubtedly, and that shows the inconsistency of making a provision to which effect is not likely to be given. I welcome that idea. Considering the organising capacity of Mr. Story and his other attributes, his services should be recognised.

Mr. O'KEEFE: What will we do if he should die?

Mr. MAXWELL: I know there is a saying that there are as many good fish in the sea as ever came out of it. Hon. members are aware of the tact and diplomacy essential for the successful handling of a body of men. Mr. Story has both. I welcome the statement that has been made by the Premier that although the regulation is there they have the power to extend it. I would remind the hon. gentleman that this has already been done. I do not object to that. Some people have been heard to ask why a certain thing was done with one of our ex-members. The action taken was quite right. The man had devoted the best years of his life to the service of his country. It may be asked why members of Parliament should not retire at sixty-five. The people are the judges of the capacity of a man to

represent them in Parliament. A man of sixty-five may be considered a fit and proper person to represent them in this Assembly.

The PREMIER: You seem to be very concerned about the age of sixty-five years.

Mr. MAXWELL: My attitude now is consistent with the attitude I have always taken up. It is not a personal matter with me; I have always adopted that attitude.

Mr. WATERS: How old are you?

Mr. MAXWELL: Old enough to have more sense than the hon. member. On page 28 of his report there is a statement that shows the type of gentleman the Public Service Commissioner is, and what an acquisition he is to the people and the Government of Queensland. That statement is—

“In adversity I have not failed the service. In prosperity, more than once I have urged the moderation in the making of claims; I do so again. Confidence is ousting depression gradually; in the service, realised hope is supplanting deferred hope; increases have replaced decreases; gloom is passing. But the history of the service shows that depressions run in cycles; so depressions may come again. The service expects moderation and fair play in retrenchment periods—a reasonable expectation. In advancement periods the same spirit should prevail, and there should be moderation in service demands upon the exchequer.”

That is really good advice. There should be moderation in service demands upon the exchequer. I have read an article by the president of the State Service Union, as published in its journal. I am quite certain that statement must have been made; otherwise it would not have been published in that journal. That statement shows the venom and spleen of the Labour Government and their supporters. They adopt the attitude,

“If you do not do certain things we have the power to put you out, and we will put you out.”

And they do it!

Mr. TAYLOR: We put you out.

Mr. MAXWELL: Yes, and I shall live to see the day when the hon. member will go out, too. I have seen some of the finest men in the world at the top of the ladder one day, and at the bottom two or three days after.

The Public Service Commissioner referred to the capacity of the Government to pay. He said that reductions were restored when the Government could pay. That statement disposes of the arguments by hon. members on the Government side and their friends who, for political purposes, led the people to believe that the Moore Government had the money, but refused to pay. In (b) he says—

“The Government had restored the annual salary increments as quickly as possible, consistently with its capacity to pay.”

It is most peculiar that although the Labour Government had the money for two and a-half years, they did not restore the cuts until within a few months of the election, hoping, of course, that the public servants

would vote for them. I regret that there was the possibility of the Public Service Commissioner's having to retire, but I welcome the statement made by the Premier, and I associate myself with the Leader of the Opposition's remarks concerning Mr. Story.

The PREMIER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*) [9.15 p.m.]: The Leader of the Opposition and the member who has just resumed his seat did well to speak as they have done concerning the Public Service Commissioner. There is no doubt at all that Mr. J. D. Story and his staff are very valuable servants to the Government and, through the Government, to the people. Mr. J. D. Story is a man of extraordinary mental power. In addition he is able to concentrate on a vast amount of work. Like the Leader of the Opposition, I have often suggested to Mr. Story that he should not work so intensely. He puts in a very large number of hours every week, and I have known him to go back to his office on Sunday afternoon on work he is preparing for the Premier or for other Ministers. No one could be more assiduous in his duties than he is, and his efforts on behalf of the State have been very valuable indeed. When he was Under Secretary for Public Instruction he did a very great deal to build up the educational system in Queensland, and many generations of people in this State have enjoyed the advantage of the system which he was responsible for instituting. Mr. Story is much more than a Public Service Commissioner. If he confined himself to the duties of a Public Service Commissioner alone he would have a much easier time than he has, but he does special work for the Government in making investigations and reports that have been invaluable in many ways. In addition to that he looks after the Government's interests on the Senate of the University, his association with which has been of tremendous benefit to that institution.

The hon. member for Toowong spoke as if he were delivering a valedictory. There is no occasion for that, I hope. There is in the Public Service Act provision for the continuance of the Public Service Commissioner in office till he is seventy years of age, the same as a judge. This Government desire him to continue for the full period. Mr. Story's services are valuable and we cannot afford to lose him, and I appreciate the fact that hon. members generally on both sides of the Committee realise the value of having a public servant like him. The term “public servant,” used in its fullest sense, is the term that properly describes this officer.

Mr. MAHER (*West Moreton*) [9.19 p.m.]: I am very pleased indeed to hear the fine tribute of the Premier, supporting the remarks made by the Leader of the Opposition and other members on this side of the Committee, as to the sterling qualities of so splendid a public officer as Mr. Story. He has undoubtedly a very fine conception of public duty, and no sacrifice is too great for him so that he may serve the State. He serves all Governments with equal devotion. I hope, Mr. Hanson, that men of Mr. Story's type are not altogether of the past. He belongs to a generation, a type, of which there are very few left, but I sincerely hope that the public service of Queensland will continue to evolve men of equal quality.

*Mr. Maher.]*

There are one or two phases of the Commissioner's report that I think are worthy of passing reference. It is interesting to note on page 16 of his report the progressive increase in the number of public servants paid from the Consolidated Revenue Fund, trust funds, and loan funds. The total number of Government employees, excluding employees of the Railway Department at 30th June were—

1930	...	...	...	...	14,606
1931	..	...	...	...	13,517
1932	...	...	...	...	13,538
1933	...	...	...	...	14,433
1934	...	...	...	...	16,491
1935	...	...	...	...	18,403

The increase has been progressive, and over a period of three years it was 4,865. I admit that there has been a considerable increase in the work of public departments in connection with the expenditure of loan funds, and that probably accounts for the greatest increase in the number of employees. Nevertheless, it is inescapable that there has been a great increase under the three headings. An increase of 4,865 in three years is phenomenal in view of the fact that three years ago 13,538 employees were sufficient to carry out the work of the departments.

Apart from the increase in the number of the employees there has not been the discrimination that one would expect. I have not the slightest doubt that large bodies of men have been pitchforked into the public service regardless of their worth, largely because they were friends of the party in power.

Mr. O'KEEFE: That is nonsense.

Mr. MAHER: It is not nonsense. We have the case of our old friend, Mr. George Barber, who was a member of this Parliament for many years. I do not want to say anything detrimental to that fine old gentleman—I hold him in the highest respect. Still, a principle is involved. The public servants have every reason to complain of the appointment of a man over seventy years of age to a position in the Sub-Department of Forestry when public servants are retired at sixty-five years of age. I do not object to Mr. Barber being given the position. He is not involved, but a principle is at stake. Is it right that a man over seventy years of age should be appointed to a position in the public service whilst other public officers have to retire at sixty-five years of age? There is one case of the pitchforking of a friend of the Government into the public service, and many others could be cited in which the Government have shown favours to their political friends. To that extent the public service has been swollen to a point that makes it dangerous for the old employees. We are not going to float along for all time in the happy sea of loan expenditure that we enjoy to-day.

I can without any trouble visualise great difficulties confronting the Treasurer at some future time—I do not necessarily mean the present Treasurer—in financing the public service. It is only right that the public service should comprise the men needed to discharge the functions of the public service, and that they should be protected against the risk of retrenchment or reduction of salary through the inflation of the service beyond present needs. That is

[Mr. Maher.

what is happening. Can anyone tell me that an addition of 4,865 employees in the past three years is justifiable? If on the 30th June, 1932, 13,538 employees were capable of carrying out the functions of the public service, that same number should be capable of performing those duties to-day. The work and needs of the public service have not so expanded in the last three years as to necessitate almost 5,000 extra hands. I say clearly there has been an inflation of the public service beyond its needs. While I propose to be fair and admit that the expenditure of loan funds necessitates the employment of additional hands, nevertheless it does not necessitate the employment of an additional 5,000. The greatest danger of the public service is this inflation of its personnel because when the tightening up process comes eventually, when loan funds dry up and revenue falls below the requirements of the service, someone will get hurt. Is it fair that the men really needed should suffer either retrenchment or cuts in salaries because the present Government, to gain popularity, decided to inflate the service beyond its needs? These figures speak eloquently of the attitude of the Government. They are prepared to appoint to the public service their friends and others ad lib. in order to secure a little temporary popularity.

Another feature of this matter is referred to by the Public Service Commissioner in his report. He suggests, although he does not mention it in the way I am going to do, that the industrial work devolving upon him during the year was specially heavy. He states that attendance in the court involved seventeen days and that there were forty-seven conferences, apparently with union officials. The Industrial Court has been appointed to decide these issues. One notices time after time that high public officials have their time needlessly taken up by union officials.

Mr. POWER: If you understood the principles of arbitration you would understand that the Industrial Court frequently orders parties before it to confer.

Mr. MAHER: That is all very well when the parties confer at the instigation of the court, but in my visits to the various departments I have seen many union officials making appointments with and taking up the time of our high public servants. Some of the conferences mentioned by Mr. Story may have been necessary, but he has apparently gone out of his way in his report to comment on the fact that the industrial work during the year was especially heavy. Thus a great deal of his time is taken up, not only the actual time he spends in conference with them but the time it is necessary to spend beforehand in dealing with these matters. Perhaps the midnight oil has to be burned by him and many others.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: It has to be remembered that your Government outlawed Crown employees for three years.

Mr. MAHER: I am dealing with the position as it exists. I do not wish to say anything that is unfair or unreasonable, but I do think a great deal of time is wasted by public officials in listening to complaints, granting interviews, and holding conferences with union officials, much of which is unnecessary work. It would not be an injustice if some restriction were placed on

the activities of union officials in this respect. They should not feel that they have the right to come in and make appointments at any time—appointments that may inconvenience the general public and take up the valuable time of men to whom the State pays large salaries to carry on the public service. Not only in the Government service, but in private industry men have to be specially engaged to look after awards, which is an extra charge on industry and raises the cost of production.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to confine his attention to the vote before the Committee.

Mr. MAHER: I recognise that I digressed slightly. I was just mentioning that a great deal of the time of the Public Service Commissioner was wasted in listening to complaints and holding conferences with union officials.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Is that in the report?

Mr. MAHER: No, but the Commissioner said that industrial work during the year was especially heavy, and we can understand what the Commissioner means by that.

I commend the points I have raised to the consideration of the Premier and the Government.

The PREMIER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, Mackay) [9.33 p.m.]: The hon. member who has just resumed his seat has an extraordinarily distorted mind. He commenced his speech by commending the Public Service Commissioner and intimating how valuable an officer he is. He then proceeded in the middle of his speech to indicate—if his statement were true—that the Public Service Commissioner is not capable of doing his job. He said that members of the Government Party had carried out the policy of inflation of employment in the public service with a view to the appointment of their own friends. That is the most serious reflection that could be passed on the Public Service Commissioner; because under the Public Service Act the Commissioner has certain powers and during my whole experience as a member of the Government, extending over a period of years, has always exercised them.

The appointees to the public service, cadets and youths, are recommended by the Public Service Commissioner. Every individ-

ual junior was individually recommended by the Public Service Commissioner. The majority of them had passed the Senior University examination and all of them had passed at least the Junior University examination. During the three years of the Moore Government no increases were made in the public service and consequently many boys who had passed the relevant examination had not obtained employment. With the improvement in conditions and with the view of setting an example to private enterprise we set out on a policy of employing more youths and 348 admissions were made to the public service in various capacities. But every one of these appointees was on the direct recommendation of the Public Service Commissioner and none other.

Then, again following the tortuous course of his extraordinarily distorted mind, the hon. member states that 4,865 additional persons were appointed to the public service. When one talks of the public service, dealing with the term properly and intelligently, one speaks about the people who are employed under the Public Service Act. The impression the hon. member sought to give was that the public service under the Public Service Act had been increased by that number.

Mr. MAHER: That is not so.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MAHER: The Premier is distorting what I said. I made it very clear indeed that in the Public Service Commissioner's report—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must state his point of order.

Mr. MAHER: I rise to a point of order. I showed the number under three headings, consolidated revenue, trust funds, and loan funds. I made that specifically clear and I did not seek to give to the Assembly the impression the hon. gentleman mentions. I ask the Premier to accept my denial.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is no point of order. The inference drawn from the remarks of the hon. member by the Premier is consistent with my own.

The PREMIER: No other inference could have been drawn from the remarks of the hon. member. I propose to quote the whole of the section of the report with which the hon. member was dealing, and not part—

Salaries-Wages paid from--	Number of Employees as at—					
	30th June, 1930.	30th June, 1931.	30th June, 1932.	30th June, 1933.	30th June, 1934.	30th June, 1935.
Consolidated Revenue Fund .. ..	11,168	10,678	10,643	10,656	10,755	11,103
Trust Funds .. .. .	3,054	2,626	2,687	3,005	3,978	4,530
Loan Funds .. .. .	384	213	208	772	1,758	2,770
Totals.. .. .	14,606	13,517	13,538	14,433	16,491	18,403

Mr. MAHER: What a great jump?

The PREMIER: That is a very fitting interjection from the hon. member. It jumped because of the revival policy of this Government. (Opposition laughter.)

Hon members may laugh, but they cannot laugh away the fact that those figures indicate very clearly that increased unemployment was given because of the public works

policy of this Government. We stand for that policy; we were elected upon it, and it has its direct reflection in increased employment. More important still, let me quote paragraph 44 immediately following, which says—

“The main increases for 1934-35 in the numbers of employees paid from trust and loan funds were in the main

*Hon. W. Forgan Smith.]*

roads, forestry, public estate improvement, mining operations, and public works construction sections, and were due to extended activities in conformity with the Government's policy for the relief of unemployment. Of the increase of 348 in the numbers of employees paid from consolidated revenue, many were juniors appointed under the Government's revival employment scheme for youths."

That is a complete answer to the extraordinary distorted statements made by the hon. member for West Moreton. We are proud of the fact that as a result of our policy we are able to employ more men. If the hon. member's statements as to what he calls the inflation of the public service were allowed to go unchallenged, the impression would be conveyed to the people that the number under the Public Service Act had been increased to that extent; whereas, the increases included men on road construction work—navvies—building construction labourers, painters, carpenters, plumbers—all classes of trade and labouring work are included under that heading. Those increases are due to the increased funds made available by the Government for the direct purpose of employing more men to develop this State. That is a complete refutation of the statements made by the hon. member. It is strange indeed for an hon. member to get up in this Chamber and commence with a eulogy of the Public Service Commissioner and then suggest that he is a mere creature of the Government of the day! Would the hon. member like to prepare a table showing all the demands made by hon. members opposite to get men into the service during the period they were in power?

The hon. member waxed indignant at the time of the Public Service Commissioner being taken up by conferences. In that he displays a complete ignorance of the industrial law and the procedure of the Industrial Court. Let me inform the hon. member, so that he will not wittingly fall into such a grievous error in future, that in every case set down for hearing before the Industrial Court, the first step is that the judges of the court order the parties into conference to see how much of the claim and counter-claim can be dealt with by agreement between them. The conferences that the hon. member claims to be a waste of time were all conferences ordered by the Industrial Court. So far from wasting time and enhancing the cost of the public service, they save costs and time. Obviously, to the extent of agreements arrived at in conference as between the parties, the time of the court and the Public Service Commissioner is saved. It means so much less argument in open court.

Mr. MAHER: Do they ever agree?

The PREMIER: Very frequently, on many issues. It is only on matters on which they do not agree that the matter is referred again to the court and dealt with by the court arbitrarily by the making of an award. The hon. member should make some study of the procedure of the court and spend some of his spare time finding out how the machinery of that organisation works.

What I have said indicates the position. It was necessary for me immediately to

[Hon. W. Forgan Smith.

correct the misleading statements made by an hon. member of this Committee that would end in his misleading the people outside.

Mr. P. K. COPLEY (*Kurilpa*) [9.46 p.m.]: I very much appreciate the remarks of the Premier in relation to the Public Service Commissioner, whose ability, without doubt, is outstanding. I feel that any additional words of praise on my part would be a waste of time, but hon. members of this House should realise that not only does he carry out his own work but also does the work of many other departments. I do not want to disparage the work of Under Secretaries of other departments, but he has frequently been entrusted with the work of making a report on matters concerning some of them. As a matter of fact, during industrial crises it is not the Railway Commissioner—and again I do not disparage him—but the Public Service Commissioner who handles the matter. It may no doubt be desirable to have such a wily tactician as Mr. Story in such a position. To find Mr. Story handling the railway unions in a railway dispute is an eloquent testimony to his ability.

During my few remarks I may give the hon. member for West Moreton some information concerning the relations of the Public Service Commissioner with the State Service Union. I speak as ex-president of that union. Our friend has stated that a lot of time is wasted with conferences. He asked, too, "Do they ever agree?" Wherever the Public Service Commissioner has a discretion he has always exercised it in a very fair and impartial manner. Of course, when he is given a brief to carry out Government policy, he is firm and solid, he stands by the Government's decision, will not budge an inch, and always makes out a very good case. Matters have frequently been referred to conference by an Industrial Court, and I remember particularly the 1924 award. I say that 80 per cent. of the claims, particularly in regard to individual classifications of officers, were agreed to in conference. The hon. member for West Moreton, had he the slightest knowledge of public service conditions, would not have made such a statement as he has made.

It is very easy to deal with the question of the increase in the number of public servants. I am very pleased to see that the hon. the Premier dealt with it. A child in fourth class looking at that table on page 16 would not make the mistake that the hon. member did.

Mr. MAHER: I made no mistake.

Mr. P. K. COPLEY: It is quite apparent that anyone looking at a figure of 11,168 for 1930 and comparing it with the present number of 11,103 public servants proper, would see a decrease of 65. If the hon. member did not make a mistake he is showing blatant ignorance of the actual conditions applying to the public service. In regard to trust and loan fund figures, you will see there are 3,054 under trust funds. You will notice it is only when a Labour Government took over in 1932 that the figure went back to 3,000 again. Under the Moore regime, it decreased by 400. There was an even greater decrease in the number of employees paid from the Loan Fund Account.

Mr. MAHER: Do not skip the trust funds.

Mr. P. K. COPLEY: I definitely mentioned that during the Moore regime the number had been reduced by 400. The hon. member should not go to sleep while I am talking. He should pay attention, or at least not interject. It was only when the Labour Government were returned to power in 1932 that the number rose again to 3,000 and it has now increased to 4,500. The present Government believe in giving the boys and girls of Queensland an opportunity of passing the public service examination, and of entering avenues of employment in the public service. They do not believe in abolishing public service examinations and then resorting to nepotism—appointing sisters, sisters-in-law, cousins, and aunts to positions in the service. The figures show that at 30th June, 1930, the number of employees paid from Consolidated Revenue Fund was 11,168 and that at 30th June, 1931, it had been reduced to 10,678, or a reduction of approximately 500.

The Premier has offered to place certain applications for employment in the public service before the Chamber. I do not think that any hon. member opposite would like to see the names of the appointees admitted to the service during the period he mentioned. I say advisedly that 500 of the permanent employees were taken off the list and the relatives of hon. members opposite were actually appointed to the service, and in that statement I do not exempt the hon. member for West Moreton. He knows what I am talking about.

Mr. MAHER: Bring it out.

Mr. P. K. COPLEY: The hon member knows very well, and the Secretary for Public Instruction can bear me out. Much has been said about the salaries paid in the public service, and in that connection I should like to refer to page 5 of the report of the Public Service Commissioner. The Salaries Act of 1930 came into operation on 15th September, 1930, and the reductions in salaries and wages imposed under that Act were:—

	From 15th Sept., 1930.	From 1st July, 1931.
	Per cent.	Per cent.
£400 and under ...	10	15
Over £400 and up to £600 ...	11	16
£600 to £800 ...	12	17
£800 to £1,100 ...	13	18
£1,100 to £1,500 ...	14	19
Over £1,500 ...	15	20

In 1934, that is, under a Labour Administration, a judgment of the court dated 26th November increased the salaries of officers receiving £400 per annum so that the percentage reduction was 11¼ per cent. The salaries of officers receiving over £400 and not over £500 were increased, their percentage reduction being reduced to 12 per cent. I sincerely regret that the increases have not been of a greater amount.

The hon. member for Toowong made certain remarks regarding the ability of the Government to pay. That may be all right, but as far as the Labour Government is concerned their policy is to consider public servants. They are always prepared to do what they possibly can for them. Had the Moore Administration not frittered away the finances of the State and lent money to the

Southern States, there would not have been the necessity for the drastic cuts they inflicted on the public service. The public service know that very well, and its members showed their confidence in the present Government at the 1932 election, and a renewal of that confidence at the 1935 election.

The PREMIER: They also knew that had the Moore Government got back there was another 10 per cent. cut awaiting them.

Mr. MAXWELL: That is not true. You should not say that.

Mr. P. K. COPLEY: I have no desire to go into the contents of the documents of a Premier's Conference.

At 9.55 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN: Under the provisions of Sessional Orders agreed to by the House on 28th August and 16th October, I shall now leave the chair and make my report to the House.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported progress and asked leave to sit again.

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

The House adjourned at 9.56 p.m.