Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 21 SEPTEMBER 1939

THURSDAY, 21 SEPTEMBER, 1939.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. E. J. Hanson, Buranda) took the chair at 10.30 a.m.

QUESTIONS.

PREMIER'S VISIT TO SYDNEY AND CANBERRA.

Mr. YEATES (East Toowoomba) asked the Premier—

"1. What mode of travel did he use on the forward and return journey, respectively, in connection with his recent trip to Canberra?

"2. Did his chauffeur take the official car to Canberra for his use on that occasion?"

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

"1. The journey was to Sydney and Canberra on official business—Premiers' Conference and conference regarding sale of sugar to Great Britain. The forward journey to Sydney was made by Airlines of Australia aeroplane. I left the House at 1.30 p.m. on Wednesday, and was in conference after dinner that evening with the Sugar Board, preparatory to meeting the representative of the British Government the following day. The journey from Sydney to Canberra and return to Sydney was made by official motor-car. The return journey from Sydney to Brisbane was made by Qantas Empire Airways seaplane.

"2. Yes; to Sydney and Canberra. This mode of travel was adopted in the public interest, as a saving of time was essential. I rejected the hon. member's application for a special rail motor in July last in the North because no public interest would be served by incurring the expense involved."

RUNNING OF BRISBANE-WALLANGARRA MAIL TRAIN.

Mr. YEATES (East Toowoomba) asked the Minister for Transport—

"1. What delay occurred in the running of the Brisbane-Wallangarra mail train (26 Up) between Brisbane and Toowoomba on Tuesday last?

"2. How much time was lost on the down trip, Wallangarra to Brisbane (37 Down) on the same day, between Warwick and Brisbane?

"3. What was the cause of each delay?

"4. Was one or more additional engines requisitioned to assist on either trip? If so, where was it obtained in each case?"

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Hon. J. Larcombe, Rockhampton) replied—

"1. Forty-eight minutes.

"2. Fifty-eight minutes.

"3. Engine trouble.

"4. One for each train—Lockyer and Forest Hill."

STEAM LOCOMOTIVES AND DIESEL TRAINS.

Mr. YEATES (East Toowoomba) asked the Minister for Transport—

"During the year ended 30 June last—

"1. How many locomotives were constructed, stating each class?

"2. How many locomotives were written off?

"3. What number of locomotives (stating class) were ordered or are now under construction since 30 June last?

"4. What is the number of Diesel light trains (or rail motors), stating horsepower, which were (*a*) constructed during 1938-39, (*b*) under construction or ordered for the ensuing year?"

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Hon. J. Larcombe, Rockhampton) replied—

"1. Six 'C17'; six 'B18¼.'

"2. Eight.

"3. Twenty—eighteen 'B18¼' and two 'D17.'

"4. (*a*) One of 102 h.p. and two trailers; (*b*) four of 102 h.p. and eight trailers, and one 150-h.p. Diesel locomotive."

INLAND DEFENCE ROAD.

Mr. MAHER (West Moreton), without notice, asked the Premier—

"Will he indicate to the House the proposed route of the inland defence road of which he has approved."

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

"Details of that matter will be published shortly. It will be dealt with by Cabinet to-morrow. It has been approved of by the engineers of the Main Roads Commission and the Commonwealth engineers."

PAPER.

The following paper was laid on the table:—

Order in Council, dated 14 September, 1939, under the Fauna Protection Act of 1937.

REDISTRIBUTION OF STATE ELECTORATES; COMPULSORY PREFERENTIAL VOTING.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Debate resumed from 14 September (see p. 427) on Mr. Maher's motion—

"That in the opinion of this House it is desirable that immediate action should be taken by the Government to bring about a more equitable distribution of the State electorates, having regard to community of interests, and the introduction of compulsory preferential voting in State and local authority elections."

Mr. BRASSINGTON (Fortitude Valley) (10.36 a.m.): When the debate on this subject was automatically suspended last Thursday I was pointing out that the late Hon. P. M. Glynn, former Attorney-General in the Commonwealth Government, had said in the Federal Parliament that he was not in favour of compulsory voting, that compulsory enrolment was bad enough, but that compulsory voting was far worse. That was the considered opinion of the then Attorney-General in the Hughes Government, but shortly after that statement was made the then Federal Government led by the same Prime Minister, Mr. Hughes, considered the system of compulsory preferential voting in their caucus, adopted it, passed it through Parliament, and placed it on the Commonwealth statute-book. One must naturally ask: what was the reason that actuated the Government in introducing that measure so shortly after the declaration by the then Commonwealth Attorney-General? I think the reason is clear to hon. members on both sides of this Chamber—that it was adopted because it favoured the Government then in power and was to the detriment of the Labour Party.

Looking back over the operations of that scheme, one is convinced that what I say cannot be refuted. It is apparent that such a system meant that all anti-labour votes would be grouped and that that would tend to defeat the Labour Party. Is there any hon. member who would dispute that contention? If we study the effects of the compulsory preferential voting system, particularly in the Senate elections, we find without exception that in the last analysis it has given the anti-Labour Party a privilege of grouping that has been to the detriment of the Labour Party. No doubt, the shrewd political heads behind the then Commonwealth Government realised that the introduction of this very complicated system of voting would cause confusion amongst many of the voters, and in the light of experience it is safe to say that it has resulted in considerable confusion and that it has led to an increased number of informal votes.

An examination of the operation of the system will reveal that the increase in the number of informal votes has been mainly amongst those who supported the Labour Party. Consequently, we can argue soundly that the operations of that scheme should not prompt the Government to accept the motion now before the Chamber, and apply the system of compulsory preferential voting in Queensland.

A further examination of the operations of the system will disclose that it has led to greater expense in holding elections, especially for the Senate, but, to some extent, for the House of Representatives also. Let me raise a point of democracy in this respect. Is it not a fact that sometimes months elapse before the final decision is arrived at as to who are the successful candidates in the Senate elections? The system, in the light of experience, has not been satisfactory to the people of Australia. It has been expensive and cumbersome and has been applied for the sole purpose of placing the Labour Party in an unsatisfactory position. Despite the arguments of hon. members opposite, no sound case has yet been made out that this system should be introduced in Queensland and that the motion of the Leader of the Opposition should be supported by this Parliament.

I might have been prepared to listen to the Leader of the Opposition had his motion favoured the principle of proportional representation. Whilst I am not in a position to discuss that important phase of political activity to-day, I will say this: its operation in Tasmania shows that at least it gives some rights to minorities, in contra-distinction to the preferential system of voting under the Commonwealth electoral laws. The latter gives no rights to minorities and at all times favours the anti-Labour sections of the community. If the proportional representation system of Tasmania has faults, it at least gives rights to minorities, and would be far preferable to the system advocated by the Leader of the Opposition.

My time is limited, but there is another aspect of the argument of the Leader of the Opposition that to my mind calls for some consideration. One of the main arguments advanced by the Leader of the Opposition last Thursday was that the Government administering the affairs of this State were a minority Government. He would endeavour to convince the people as well as mislead members of his own party and members of the Government party into believing that the present Government are in power on a minority of the votes cast by the electors.

Mr. Muller: That is correct.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: That is not a fact. Our contention can be proved by one or two illustrations taken from the voting at the last general election. Examination of the voting for the various parties in the metropolitan area discloses that the total number of primary votes cast for the Labour Party was 94,484, that the total number of primary votes cast for the United Australia Party was 63,210, that the total number of primary votes cast for the Protestant Labour Party was 33,020, and the total number of primary votes cast for the Social Credit and other independent parties was 4,895. Therefore, on the primary votes, the Labour Party obtained

an excellent majority and thereby won the majority of the seats.

Then let us consider the allocation of the preferences in the metropolitan area. Last Thursday I raised the point that under the contingent voting system the electors are given the right to express a free and untrammelled opinion. Those electors who after marking their No. 1 choice on the ballot paper did not use the contingent vote must be considered to have been well satisfied with the opportunity of voting for one candidate and one candidate only, and their failure to indicate their second preferences is in the nature of a further declaration in favour of this Government. It must be taken that they were satisfied with the Government now in power.

Now let us take those citizens who, after recording their No. 1 votes, did give preferences to the other candidates. The contingent vote was used in 20 electorates, 12 metropolitan and eight country. The total contingent vote for the Labour Party was 4,471 and for the United Australia Party 14,471, which made the effective voting totals for the metropolitan area—

Labour	.. .. ..	98,955
United Australia Party	..	77,681

The effective majority for Labour was approximately 21,000 in the metropolitan area alone. The same can be said of the country districts.

The facts I have just quoted dissipate the argument of hon. members opposite that this Government represent a minority of the people. It must be quite evident to every hon. member that their argument was based upon false premises.

A point I desire to make in connection with this important question is that if we accept the line of argument advanced by hon. members opposite, then at least six of them are here on a minority vote. I do not accuse them of being here on a minority vote.

Mr. Dart: You are the same.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: The hon. member is one of them. I merely say that after the people had exercised their untrammelled opinion, those gentlemen were elected by a majority, and consequently no-one can object to them. On the same basis they cannot object to the arguments adduced by us to prove that this Government very definitely represent the majority of the people of Queensland. Despite the statements of hon. members opposite, the fact remains that the Government won 44 seats, the Country Party 13, United Australia Party four, and Protestant Labour one. No matter how hard hon. members opposite may exercise their ingenuity they cannot adduce logical arguments to substantiate the statement made by the Leader of the Opposition that the Government were a minority Government.

During the last few days I have directed my mind to the question why the Leader of the Opposition introduced this motion. It has obtained the whole-hearted support of hon. members opposite, irrespective of the political party they represent. I produce something like 25 anonymous letters I have received containing a circular from certain groups outside calling on me to do certain things. The things I am asked to do in this Parliament by these people, who do not sign their names, are similar to the principles contained in the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. It is therefore apparent there has been an understanding among the anti-Labour groups outside this House, and the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition last week is merely the outcome of an agitation that has been carried on outside and has manifested itself in the letters that I place before hon. members.

Mr. Yeates: No connection.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: The hon. member says the two things have no connection whatsoever. I repeat again that it seems that all the anti-Labour forces are agreed that this Government should be placed in the wrong. The whole of the anti-Labour forces, irrespective of what they call themselves—the United Australia Party, Country Party, or Protestant Labour—have combined for the purpose of injuring the Government.

I have no objection to receiving these circulars, but I wish the people who have sent them had signed their names and thus given me the opportunity of discussing these points with them and dealing with them fairly. I do not relish, nor does any hon. member, the use of anonymous letters or circulars for the purpose of intimidation.

My mind reverts to the remarks made by the hon. member for Kelvin Grove last week. I point out that we in this country are facing a crisis. The time for bitter controversy has passed. There are definite issues before us; sectarian bitterness and division must make way for cleaner and more decent conduct. The time has come when we must realise this. Whether a man is a Protestant or a Roman Catholic, an atheist or a free-thinker, we must at this time face our problems as a united community. We must stand together in defence of the principle of democracy, realising that, in the final analysis, the welfare, the protection, and the happiness of all our people is all that counts.

The PREMIER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, Mackay) (10.52): I have carefully read the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition, and I have also read the majority of speeches that have been made for and against it. The motion is based very largely on what he believes to be the balance of advantage to his own party. His party is not concerned so much with equitable electoral laws or redistribution of seats as with a desire to get an advantage from the form in which the people vote and from an electoral redistribution, as they hoped to obtain an advantage in 1932.

The law under which we are operating has been the law for a considerable period. The distribution of seats, as it exists to-day, was

made under the law put on the statute-book by the Opposition when they were the Government. I call their minds back to the redistribution that was made in the time of the Moore Government. Ten seats were wiped out. Eight of those were Labour seats. It is obvious that the intention behind that reduction and the manner in which it was accomplished was to obtain for themselves the balance of advantage. It meant that in the 1932 election we had to win 18 seats to draw level; we had to hold all the seats we then held and win 18 even to draw level with the Moore Government party. It was a herculean task, but it was accomplished, with the good will of the people of this country.

I desire to say quite clearly and emphatically that the electoral laws of a State or country should be so devised as to give every person an opportunity to express his political views as freely as is humanly possible, and as simply as possible. Nothing that tends to confuse the elector or to cause his vote to become informal through lack of technical accuracy should be placed in any electoral law.

I repeat that the redistribution that exists to-day was brought about under the law passed by the Moore Government. Is anyone suggesting that the royal commission that operated under that Act was guilty of wrong practices?

Mr. Maher: We can only look at the results.

Mr. Deacon: The figures and the boundaries.

The PREMIER: My reply to that is: "Look at the figures, the results, and the boundaries under the redistribution by the Moore Government." Anything that hon. members may have in their minds with relation to those things applies with equal force to the redistribution that took place prior to this Government's attaining office.

Mr. Maher: Oh, no!

The PREMIER: The Leader of the Opposition always wants to have it both ways. He is like the butcher's dog on a certain classic occasion, which you probably know about, Mr. Speaker. In life, however, things do not work out that way—people cannot have it both ways—and the redistribution effected under the Moore Government was effected under their law, and so was the redistribution that followed. I was Leader of the Opposition when that Bill was before the House, and I remember that I recommended that there be a permanent commission in control of electoral redistribution, that the chairman should be a judge of the Supreme Court, and that the Surveyor-General and the Chief Electoral Officer should be the other two members. I moved an amendment accordingly. The hon. members of my party supported the amendment, but every hon. member of the Opposition who was then in the House voted against it. Here was an opportunity for Parliament to place the Electoral Redistribution Commission, like Caesar's wife, entirely above suspicion——

Mr. Daniel: Why do you not do it?

The PREMIER: And the Government of the day, and their cohorts, turned it down. In reply to the hon. member for Keppel I say that we will do such things as we think proper at the time we think proper. We do not propose to hand the legislative functions of this Parliament over to a minority; we are in charge of the legislation that will be introduced into this House and we shall remain in charge while the people continue to support us.

The hon. member, instead of asking me questions, should ask his colleagues who were then in the House why they rejected such a public-spirited amendment.

Mr. Daniel: I think they are sorry for it now.

The PREMIER: I think they are. (Laughter.)

It shows how far-seeing I was in those days. If at any time we feel it necessary to amend the law, no doubt the principles we espoused then will continue to weigh with us.

Mr. Muller: Why not be consistent and put that idea into practice?

The PREMIER: The hon. member has the idea that he can be rather funny this morning. I am not proposing to amend the electoral law of this State. It is the Leader of the Opposition who wants to do that. We will do it when the public interest requires it; that is a sufficient answer.

The real reason, of course, for the Leader of the Opposition's motion is the result of the recent by-elections at Townsville and Charters Towers. The report of Mr. McDonald to the Northern section of his party recommended certain things, and said that unless they were done the so-called Protestant Labour Party would wipe out the Country Party. The idea was that progress was being made in certain directions, and if it was allowed to continue, the Country Party would be annihilated. The report from this official refers to the by-elections in Townsville and Charters Towers, and comment is also made about Gregory. Let me quote from it—

> "On Friday, 5 May, the Townsville campaign was officially opened by Mr. Skerman and myself, and at this and all other meetings we received attentive and patient hearings.
>
> "Intrusion of Protestant Labour.
>
> "The Protestant Labour Party had not fared too well at the recent municipal elections, and it was thought that they would have difficulty in securing candidates for the by-elections.
>
> "This party was a menace right from the start, and their methods are worthy of some attention. The United Protestant Association is a non-political body, and in

the by-election held in the Griffith electorate their official organ 'The Protestant Clarion' advised all Protestants to vote according to their particular political belief and to give their second preference to the other Protestant standing. With this method one cannot disagree, but in North Queensland the candidates and the members of the Protestant Labour Party were invited to attend United Protestant Association meetings and deliver addresses condemning the other parties and their leaders, and no such privilege was extended to the candidates representing our party.''

That is, the Country Party.

''This is regrettable and shows that the Protestant Labour Party has definitely used the non-party organisation of the United Protestant Association for the advancement of their own political ends.''

Furthermore, on page 2 of the same document it is stated—

''The intrusion of Protestant Labour into the political life of Queensland means that the forces opposed to Labour are being divided, and if the Labour Party abolish contingent voting—which is practically certain—it will mean the wrecking of the parties opposed to the Smith Government and cause endless confusion.''

There we have the reason for this motion. The report goes on to say—

''This brings us to the question of tactics to be adopted to combat the Protestant Labour Party and I think we have got to fight as we have never fought before and show up this party and the type of men whom it attracts. I say without hesitation that I would much rather trust the Labour Government led by Forgan Smith with all its faults rather than hand over the control to a party led by adventurers and men whose reputation cannot bear investigation.''

Then we have other interesting things in the document bearing on the electoral laws, including this—

''On the 16th May Mr. E. B. Maher arrived and that night held a meeting in Townsville. Mr. Maher was very disappointing, lacked fire and rather depressed all his supporters at his first meeting in Townsville. He improved at a later date, but was not by any means as forceful as useful.''

That is candid comment from one of the organisers of his own party, who goes on to say—

''I think this campaign will always be remembered by me as a campaign of extortion. Earlier in the campaign I had occasion to complain of the lack of space in the newspapers and a deputation consisting of the president, Mr. Hopkins, Mr. Skerman, and myself went along to the 'Bulletin' and interviewed Mr. Green. He did not give us a great deal of hope of more publicity and a week after the deputation refused to send a reporter to any meetings or to allow us to submit a report.''

Then the report goes on to refer to the assistance given by Mr. R. J. Baker and Mr. Littler, the private secretary to the Leader of the Opposition, comes in for a special pat on the back.

Then it says—

''Charters Towers and Townsville are really hopeless seats.''

Then it refers to the serious reverses that they had had. It goes on to say—

''It is my honest opinion that we have our backs to the wall and that Protestant Labour will intrude into all our electorates''——

That is, the Country Party electorates.

''and the result will be a division of the votes of those who are opposed to Labour. With the abolition of contingent voting it it apparent to anyone who cares to analyse the position . . . .''

There again we have the motive behind the motion and that is to have the system of compulsory preferential voting placed on the statute-book. The report continues—

''We must vigorously attack the Protestant Labour Party and try and hold the electorates that are now represented by the Country Party in the State or Federal Houses. Any other tactics are only a waste of time until this sectarian madness is relegated to the background of our political life.

''The position is really alarming and warrants the most close and searching examination by everyone who takes an interest in politics. Protestant Labour is running under false colours. They never put to the forefront their objective of a 40-hour week.

''Our electors swallow all their bunk and vote for an alleged Protestant Party, forgetting about all the other things that are essential to a successful party, men of honesty and ability in command. They will wreck democracy by their condemnation of our judiciary.

''Their only reason for appealing to the elections tribunal is to try and create an atmosphere of bias against the judges and all other sections of the community.''

You will see, Mr. Speaker, from the extracts I have given from that valuable report the real reason why this motion has been moved. The Leader of the Opposition wants compulsory preferential voting for the purpose not of helping the electors but of helping his party to dish the other political parties.

My opinion is that no amount of political legerdemain will ever save a political party at the hands of the people if that political party has earned the opprobrium of the people. That was proved in 1932, and it has been proved ever since when an effort has been made to combine political forces of various kinds against the Labour Party.

Many things that were regarded as revolutionary some years ago when they were first advocated by the Labour Party, have become commonplaces of the present day. I, myself, in the last 25 years have introduced Bills that were bitterly opposed by hon. members of the Country Party and the Opposition of the day, but no-one to-day would propose their repeal. I have even noted that some people who voted against such a Bill claimed to have initiated the idea. I am not concerned at that, for it is the results—results that benefit the people—that count.

Another evidence of their regret is contained in this paragraph of Mr. McDonald's report—

"Its strength is in the fact"—

referring to the Protestant Labour Party—

> "that it can and does mislead the people that the Roman Catholic influence is responsible for the large number of Roman Catholics in the Government service. This statement and their figures have been challenged by the Labour Party speakers. So contradictory are the statements that I think we should ask for a royal commission to investigate every phase of this question, and the reason for such large numbers of one particular denomination getting into the public service. If such a commission were granted I think the explanation would be that the Roman Catholic schools cater for admission to the civil service and the Protestant schools neglect this important avenue of employment for those who desire to enter the safe and sheltered avenue of the Government service. If this contention of mine is correct it would effectively cut the ground from under the feet of the Protestant Labour Party."

Mr. Maher: You realise, of course, that this is the report of a paid officer of the organisation. You are giving too much value to his opinion.

The PREMIER: All those extracts I have read indicate very clearly the reason that has spurred the Opposition on to move this motion—the fear of defeat at the hands of one or other party in the State. They realise that there is nothing in their own record and nothing in their own policy to aid them in the appeal to the people. They perceive how futile it is for them to make a frontal attack against the Government on the basis of policy. Those opposed to the Labour Party obviously seek to mislead the public on side issues in order to injure the Labour movement.

Let me deal with the existing law. Preferential voting is proposed in the motion. My case against compulsory preferential voting is that it calls upon a person to vote for a candidate as a second choice when he does not want to do so—and that he renders his first vote invalid unless he votes for a second and third candidate, for either of whom he may not have any time. Why should a man be called upon to exercise the second choice if he really has none? Is it not much better and more equitable to leave it to the individual? If there were three names on the ballot paper and you were one of the candidates, Mr. Speaker, I should vote for you—obviously, not only because of your recognised qualities but your life-long association with all the affairs of public life that are worth while. If there were two others on the ballot paper, why should I be called upon to vote No. 2 and 3 for them when I know in my inmost being what they actually are? I have no second choice at all. If I cannot get the candidate that I respect and honour I do not want any of the rest. If, on the other hand, another elector desires to exercise a second choice, he is permitted to exercise that choice under the law; but if he does not exercise that second choice his first vote—his principal vote—is not thereby rendered invalid. That appeals to me as the common sense of the situation and the existing law provides for it. If a man has a second choice, let him exercise it. Let him act as his own conscience dictates, but do not call upon me, who have no second choice, to exercise a vote for a man for whom I have no time and may have little or no respect.

Mr. Maher: You are against the Commonwealth system then?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. Maher: You would alter it if you had the power? (Laughter.)

The PREMIER: The Leader of the Opposition has appeared in many roles in this Parliament, but in the role of a cross-examiner he is poorer than any other.

Mr. Maher: You would alter it if you had the power?

Mr. Massey: The witness won't answer the questions properly.

The PREMIER: I have no need to answer the question because, if at any time I have the power, I will exercise it in the public interest and according to the balance of public advantage. The idea that the Leader of the Opposition can put words into my mouth that I do not intend to use is ludicrous in the extreme.

I have no intention of accepting this motion. I am opposed to it for the reasons I have stated. If at any time the Government think that it is in the public interest to alter the law, we will bring down a Bill for the purpose and do it in a straightforward manner. We have no intention of accepting the motion and no present intention of altering the law. The law as it stands is perfectly satisfactory. It gives absolute freedom to the elector to vote for one man or exercise his preferences if he so desires. That is a much better method than the forcing of people to vote for a man they do not want.

Mr. Yeates: The boy has almost got away with it.

The PREMIER: I do not know what the hon. member for East Toowoomba means, but he did not get away with the special

train from Normanton to Croydon and back. (Government laughter.)

Mr. Yeates: Wait till I get into the Treasury and I will have one.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The PREMIER: If I ever see that I shall have lived to a very ripe old age; so long as it is a useful old age, I shall be glad. If the hon. member ever gets to that, he will be entitled to do what he thinks is in the public interest. I shall have no objection to that. But many people suffer from fantasies; they should never allow their fantasies to obscure the grim reality of present-day facts.

We have no intention of accepting the motion, and I think I have successfully shown the real reason why it has been moved. It has been moved not with the desire to help electors or to improve electoral facilities but the desire, backed up by McDonald's report, of saving their own political life.

The Attorney-General has dealt very fully with the figures, and there is no need for me to deal further with them.

I advise the House to reject the motion and get on with more important business in the public interest.

Mr. YEATES (East Toowoomba) (11.23 a.m.): I support the motion so ably moved by the Leader of the Opposition. I realise that this is a very touchy matter in this House. The clouds are gathering in the south-west and a cyclonic disturbance is likely at any minute. I am ready for all that.

Allow me, Mr. Speaker, to read the definition of democracy as given by the latest encyclopaedia—

> "Democracy; a form of government based on the theory of the equality of man. In practice it means the government of the State by the majority of the people, as opposed to its government by one (monarchy) or by a few (oligarchy). It has been accurately described as inverted monarchy, and historically it has come about, not by a gradual expansion of power through the medium of municipalities and guilds, as they existed in the middle ages, but by a direct replacement of the absolute power of a monarch, by the will of the major part of the community."
>
> "Democracy, being, therefore, not necessarily incompatible with monarchy, may even work within the framework of a monarchy, as in the British Constitution; and it is to be remembered that the American Constitution, as also the French Republican Constitution, was drawn up by a people accustomed to thinking in terms of monarchy. In the words of Abraham Lincoln, democracy is defined as 'the government of the people by the people and for the people.'
>
> "The difficulties of democratic government on these lines, however, are so great that as Sir Henry Maine says, 'In large and complex modern societies, it could neither last nor work if it were not aided by certain forces, which are not exclusively associated with it, but of which it greatly stimulates the energy. Of these forces the one to which it owes most is unquestionably party.'
>
> "In a democracy a party governs only by right of representing the will of the majority of the community. When, through the decay of political vitality among the people, a party comes to represent only its own theory of government or the will of its leader, a democracy is again inverted back into a system of autocracy—a transition which has taken place in several European countries in the years following the World War."

Mr. Power: We will take it as read.

Mr. YEATES: The hon. member can please himself what he does. If he wants to go and play billiards, let him go; I am going on with my task.

I have been following some of the lobby rumours in connection with contingent voting, and I know positively that a great number of the supporters of the Labour Government are keen on doing away with optional contingent voting in operation at present. I heard these rumours. When I was at Charters Towers, I think the Secretary for Labour and Industry and the Attorney-General were there at the same time. I stated emphatically from the platform of Charters Towers that if this was attempted seriously, I should take every reasonable platform in Queensland from Torres Strait to Tweed Heads in the south and from the coast to Oontoo in the south-west in order to show them up, to show that they were running away from democracy after all their preachings about democracy.

I conclude that the fatherly advice of the Premier is the deciding factor with the Government party. I am giving credit where it is due. Everything the Premier does is not wrong. I believe the Premier and his counsels in that room where I work some mornings has said: "Don't do it; it will be the end of you." I hope the party take my warning from this humble corner of the House in the same way.

In 1859 there were 26 members representing the State in this Assembly. The town of Brisbane had three members; the hamlet of Fortitude Valley—where is the hon. member representing that electorate? I suppose he is studying in the library—had one member. The town of Drayton and Toowoomba had a member, and so on until we accounted for the 26. In 1863 six further members were added to the House, making the total 32. In 1872 the number rose to 42. Population, of course, was increasing at a faster rate than it is to-day. It accounts for the redistribution coming later. In 1875 the district of Cook—a tremendous area extending down from Torres Strait—received special representation, making the total 43. In 1878 some double electorates were established. Drayton and Toowoomba was one of them, and the total increased to 55.

In passing, I say that I hope we do not go back to the day of double electorates. It was shown to be unsatisfactory. It is far better for each man to shoulder his own responsibility; with everybody "mucking about" with jobs, one does not know where one is. You, Mr. Speaker, have your job with its responsibilities. You have to keep us in order. If there were two Speakers in this Assembly, one would not know where one was.

In 1892—coming to the days of greater population when there were families of 12 and 15—and that is what there should be to-day—the electorates of Burke and Croydon were divided and the number of members generally was increased to 72. In 1910, 18 years later, when there were still 72 representatives, a redistribution took place. In 1922 another redistribution was made, but the number of representatives remained at 72. I am warning hon. members to bear in mind that electoral redistributions come about every 10 years in the proper course, unless some manipulation by some party goes on. I made allowance for the early days when we were licking the State into shape, so to speak, and gradually developing it. What wonderful pioneers they were! In 1931 the number was reduced to 62.

In 1935 there were still 62 electorates. I should like the Attorney-General to explain why they did not do the decent thing and wait for the lapse of 10 years before having another redistribution. Why was there a redistribution within three years, with the suddenness of a great westerly wind over the Darling Downs after a storm? Does it not suggest that there must have been partyism somewhere and that caucus was telling them what to do? Yes. Caucus was telling them how to hang on to these seats.

Hon. members opposite have praised the Moore Government for once in connection with the Moore Government's Electoral Districts Act. That fact should be chalked up on the entrance gates to these grounds so that the 1,100 children who go to school at the Central Technical College and State Commercial High School may read of the praise of the Moore Government. What do you think about it yourself, Mr. Speaker? You must have been surprised to hear that little bit of praise from the present Government. They said that the enabling Act brought in by the Moore Government was a very fine thing and that if the present Government had done anything derogatory of this country in the way of the redistribution of the electoral boundaries, the fault lay with the Act passed by the Moore Government. Be that as it may, I do not believe all of it.

In carrying out the redistribution of electoral boundaries for the Moore Government the commission had to have regard to community and diversity of interests, to means of communication, physical features, and to the areas that did not comprise any part of a city. It stands to reason that that should be done. Let us consider what was done with the Aubigny electorate, for example, one that is safe for our party. I hate to talk about parties. I do not like it. I am in a party only because I believe that under the present system hon. members must be in a group if they hope to do anything. I am in a party because at present there is no other way of doing anything. A man who remains on his own all the time will not get anywhere. There must be groups. I regard party politics as a necessary evil, and I associate with party politics only because I have no alternative.

I should like a clear reply from the Attorney-General to a question that I intend to put to him. He is always very courteous, and as a Minister of the Crown it is his duty to give me the information. He will have an opportunity of speaking on this matter again later on. I should like to know whether the commission appointed by his Government to redistribute the electoral boundaries conscientiously considered all the factors that the Act brought in by the Moore Government set down for consideration.

Let me return to my example of the Aubigny electorate, and let me assume for the moment that this Chamber represents that electorate. The boundary runs from the eastern end of the main range in a straight line to Jandowae and beyond. Jandowae is 30 odd miles north-west of Dalby and the boundary line comes within 6 or 7 miles of the town of Dalby. The Bell railway line runs through Aubigny into Dalby. In that case the community of interests is in Dalby. Let me assume that the table in this Chamber represents the town of Dalby. The boundary of the Aubigny electorate, we will assume, runs along the Chamber in front of the main Opposition benches to your chair, Mr. Speaker. The western end of the previous boundary of the Aubigny electorate was just about Bowenville. Its boundaries resemble a circle—as they should—and included the townships of Crow's Nest and Oakey. Although it is of no interest to me personally, it is interesting to record that the commissioners made Aubigny a safer seat for the present holder, at the same time, perhaps, taking something away from someone else to suit the Dalby electorate. It may have been accidental.

The hon. member for Fortitude Valley spoke very nicely. I knew him as a boy. I will not say how we first met—he can do so if he likes. His speech was very fine, as speeches go—I am not referring to his matter or argument—and I want to compliment him as an old friend of mine, although I disagree with him in this matter. He tried to drive down our throats, in effect, that the Commonwealth Electoral Act is all wrong. He quoted the opinion of a judge, who might have been a fanatic, but he disregarded that master-mind of the Commonwealth Constitution, the late Sir Samuel Griffith, and also Mr. William Morris Hughes, the instigator of the present preferential system. I call any system democratic that enables you to single out the candidates, be they Labour or Country Party, or whatever tag is attached to them. I am more for the man and principles than for party. Let me illustrate my argument quietly.

In the 1938 election—my figures include the Barcoo, Charters Towers, and Cunningham electorates, where no contests took place, two-thirds of the total enrolment being credited to the party holding the seat—the aggregate number of votes polled was—

Labour Party	263,971
Other candidates	291,997
Total	555,968

The Labour Party polled 47.5 per cent. of the total number of primary votes. It obtained 44 seats, or 71 per cent. of the total number. Is there not something wrong with that, Mr. Speaker? Of course, I know you understand and you know there is. (Laughter.) This Government—I say it with the greatest respect to the personnel—represent a minority of the electors. My firm belief—and I am open to correction—is they have not been able to fight this motion fairly with proper figures. The Government represent a minority of electors. That is reason enough for a more equitable redistribution of the electoral boundaries.

The Premier came along this morning like a good schoolmaster. He had no sound argument. He simply rushed along. I agree that he is a busy man, and I think that he, like any other Premier, should be paid more. When the Estimates come along I shall talk about that question.

The Premier, I repeat, came along with a very flimsy case. He entertained hon. members sitting behind him by reading a description of what someone said had happened at a meeting at Townsville. I could also read a description of various meetings he held round the country, but time will not permit.

I wish to make a definite statement without committing any party. I made these notes last week. I want electoral redistribution brought under the control of a Supreme Court judge and no-one else. The Supreme Court judge would do everything. He would appoint anyone he wanted to appoint to help him. I have the greatest faith in the Supreme Court; I think it is the only institution in the State that is independent. No matter what party is in power there is always some balancing up to be had there. If my suggestion was put into operation, no-one would have any reasonable ground for complaint.

In regard to preferential compulsory voting, I say plainly that, notwithstanding the eloquence of my esteemed friend the hon. member for Fortitude Valley and the speech of the Premier, I am in favour of it. The Premier endeavoured to persuade us that he did not believe in compulsory preferential voting, but he might just as well endeavour to persuade us that he does not believe in compulsory voting or compulsory enrolment. If he happened to become Prime Minister—and that is within the realm of possibility—I shall watch his actions with interest to see if he thinks of this matter, and if necessary I will post a copy of the remarks he has made to-day to him at that later date. Even Ministers sometimes say things in their speeches that they do not conscientiously believe. Metaphorically speaking, the Premier this morning was in the witness box, and when the Leader of the Opposition put a question to him he dallied with it and evaded it. He was careful not to say anything that might be an embarrassment to him later on if he happened to be in the Federal sphere.

One of the objections to compulsory preferential voting advanced by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley was that it was cumbersome and costly, but such objections are not sound. I agree with the hon. member, however, that the Senate system is confusing, and the sooner it is altered the better.

I care not whose fault it is; that is immaterial to me. So far as the hon. member for Fortitude Valley refers to Senate voting I agree with him, but to talk about the expense is absolutely ridiculous. One might as well say that this Parliament should be abolished and there should be only one Parliament for Australia, with a county council system similar to that of London controlling hospitals and other things. And such a system might be adopted in the future. It is only that Australia has a large area with very sparse population that restrains me from saying more. We are not advocating it to-day, but what the future holds in store no person knows. Why the hon. member should stand up and comment on the expense of compulsory preferential voting is beyond my comprehension. I will talk to him privately and endeavour to lead him along the road of good arithmetic and sound finance.

The Premier said he would not do this and that; that he would not accept the amendment—as much as to say that we were the fifth wheel and were not needed. No doubt, the hon. gentleman would be happy if we were not here. The Government Party would be then on their own. They would like that. I should like to refer to the rail motor at Croydon, but under the Standing Orders I cannot do that, notwithstanding that the Premier has given me something to bite at.

Summing up, I contend that the speech of the Attorney-General was mostly balderdash, just as was that made by the Premier this morning. There was no sound argument in either. Both the hon. gentlemen delivered lectures as though we were school children. I have given solid facts that should carry weight. I shall persevere and even though the Premier of the day says that he will not accept the motion, I shall not give way. The hon. gentleman has become, as is mentioned in the last paragraph of the definition of democracy that I read, somewhat of an autocrat. No doubt, he is used to adopting similar tactics in the caucus room, and when he rises here and speaks he thinks, "I have spoken. It is the last word. Be quiet everyone." I will not stand for that. I hope that even at the eleventh hour the Premier, who, I hope is listening in another room, will give this matter consideration. I have already told the House that I believe he has displayed sound judgment in many things, and I repeat that I believe that had

it not been for his wise counsel in caucus that body would have carried the motion to abolish contingent voting in Queensland. Immediately I heard that this had been done, I should have begun a campaign extending all through the country, working from morn till night, combating such a startling movement away from democracy. They get up on lorries and soapboxes at election time and say: "We represent the working man." We are all working men. I have always been one, and I always want to be known as one. When I refer to the working man they speak about I mean the manual labourer. They talk about the working man, having in mind the manual labourer, forgetting all the time that every decent citizen of this State—the professor, the clerk, the medical man, and even the public servant—is a worker.

In conclusion, I appeal to the Attorney-General to accept this motion and so prove to Queensland that his Government are liberal-minded and strong supporters of democracy. If they refuse to accept it they show conclusively that they are opposed to proper democracy as I have defined it; and that is the latest definiton that can be found in the world.

I hope that if he speaks to the motion again the Attorney-General will quote figures and facts, and not play to the gallery as he did the other day, and as the Premier did this morning. A speech of the sort delivered by him and by the Premier is all right for a crowd. Years ago they would say, "Down with black labour," and the crowd would shout, "Hurrah," but that is not the sort of speech for Parliament. I leave the question to the wisdom of the Government.

Mr. Power: You are leaving it in very safe hands.

Mr. YEATES: Does the hon. member think it is about time? I hope that the Attorney-General will use his influence with the Cabinet in an endeavour to get them to accept this motion and so show that they have some understanding of the people's wishes. I know that the people want this, and they will have it in future because the day will come when the parties will be swung round again and the present Government will be in opposition.

Mr. Walsh: You will be pushing up daisies then.

Mr. YEATES: That does not worry me. I hope that the Government will see fit to agree to the motion and show proper public spirit for once.

Mr. DART (Wynnum) (11.58 a.m.): I rise to support the motion. I believe that its mover is actuated by sincere motives, although hon. members opposite endeavour to create the opposite impression.

When speaking about the 1932 elections, the Premier said that the Labour Party would have to gain 18 seats to draw level with the Moore party. That is not so. All they needed was to gain nine seats to be level, and one more to have a majority. Those are the correct figures, and I hope that the Premier will have his statement corrected.

It is unfortunate that the Premier, and many of his colleagues, nearly always live in the past, and prefer to refer to something apart altogether from the motion before the House. The course this motion proposes is an up-to-date step, and should be treated accordingly. I propose to quote figures dealing with many of the anomalies that existed at the last election.

Mr. Power: Including your own?

At 12 noon,

Mr. KING (Maree), one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, relieved Mr. Speaker in the chair.

Mr. DART: The hon. member can have my own, too. The number of voters on the roll for the whole of Queensland was 606,559. Since that time, the number has decreased to 593,688, a difference of 12,871. That number indicates that there has been a cleaning up of the rolls since last election, and I congratulate the Department of Justice on it. It is rather unfortunate that that cleaning up did not take place prior to the elections, but it would have been better still if there had not been the need for any cleaning up. It must be admitted that in a country like Queensland the population is steadily increasing; people are not going away from the State in great numbers. A decrease of 12,000 odd in the number of voters on the roll means that something was wrong before the election took place—people were on the roll who should not have been. Population in a State like Queensland is more likely to increase than decrease. Boys and girls are growing up and reaching the age when their names are placed on the electoral rolls of the State. If the rolls had been properly kept, we should have seen an increase in the number of electors each year, but since the last election we have had a decrease. I again congratulate the officers of the Department of Justice on attending to the cleaning up of our rolls.

There is much unrest in Queensland, and many people are dissatisfied with the present state of affairs. The hon. gentleman who has moved this very important motion is continually coming in contact with dissatisfied people. This is the only place where matters of this nature can be brought before the authorities concerned in order to get equity and justice for the people. The motion is an equitable one; it only asks that justice be done to all.

When one examines the boundaries of our electorates and numbers on the rolls, one finds many glaring anomalies. The Minister himself admits that there are seven or eight above or below the line.

The Attorney-General: Seven.

Mr. DART: That means that seven electorates are not in accordance with the Act and have not received the attention they deserve.

The Attorney-General: You will always have some above or below. It is only when

there is a large number above or below that a redistribution becomes necessary.

Mr. DART: It must be admitted that those seven electorates represent a large number of people.

The Attorney-General: About 2,000.

Mr. DART: Injustice is being done and it is our duty to remedy that injustice as quickly as possible.

The Attorney-General: Does the hon. member suggest that there should be a redistribution every time there is an electorate either above or below the margin? If he does, that would mean a redistribution every six months.

Mr. DART: A redistribution is required at the present time, because there has not been one for four years. Therefore, if the motion is carried much good will be done. The existing boundaries are neither just nor equitable, and although the Attorney-General may have made a casual survey of the various electorates since the redistribution I do not think that he has been in earnest. That is borne out by the fact that seven electorates require attention at the present time, and as they represent about one-ninth of the total electorates they should be reconsidered now.

The hon. member for East Toowoomba said that at one time there were two representatives for the Brisbane electorate, but to-day there are 12 representatives for the city proper and eight representatives for suburban districts or 20 altogether for the greater Brisbane area. Twelve of these electorate embrace less than 4 square miles and three of them less than 2 square miles. Speaking to this motion on Thursday last, the Attorney-General contended that the representation in Brisbane was more equitable than it was in Melbourne, Sydney, or towns in Western Australia, but I am of the opinion that the Brisbane city area of only 27.3 square miles, with 12 representatives, is over-represented.

The Minister was unjust in basing his comparison on an assumption that 47 per cent. of the population of New South Wales is in Sydney and 32 per cent. of the population of Queensland in Brisbane. The position in Brisbane is altogether different from that in Sydney. In referring to Brisbane now, I am referring to the city proper and not to the Greater Brisbane area. I am of the opinion that the city proper is over-represented in comparison with the country. Let me compare one electorate in the city with one electorate in the country. The Brisbane electorate, embracing 1½ square mile, has 9,136 electors, while the Murrumba electorate, which is in the country, embraces 966 square miles and has 10,121 electors. There we have 1½ square mile in the city as against 966 square miles in the country, the one with less than 10,000 electors and the other with more.

Here in Brisbane the areas were well manipulated. To use the word of the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, there has been jockeying. If jockeying has been going on, it may not apply to his own performances, but he implies that there has been jockeying. There is jockeying when an area in Brisbane of 1½ square mile can have as big a say in this Parliament as an area of 966 square miles in the country, and it is time that a just man holding an important position gave the matter due consideration.

The Attorney-General: If you argue on that basis, the Carpentaria electorate should have more representatives than all the others put together.

Mr. DART: The electorate of Fortitude Valley has an area of only 2.2 square miles and contains 9,987 electors. Compare that with the Albert electorate, which has an area of 667 square miles and 10,023 electors. I am making this point in order to show the vast difference in the size and electors in the city and country electorates. Let me now take some Northern and Southern electorates and make a similar comparison. The Attorney-General interjected about Carpentaria. The Carpentaria electorate has an area of 156,533 square miles and 7,956 electors. On the other hand, Dalby, in the south, with an area of 14,567 square miles, has 10,218 electors.

The Attorney-General: Dalby has only one-tenth of the area of Carpentaria.

Mr. DART: If we exclude the swamp lands on which there is no settlement the Dalby electorate contains good agricultural land and can produce anything. Locality and community of interest must be taken into consideration in electoral representation.

The Attorney-General: A minute ago you were arguing the opposite.

Mr. DART: I was not. It does not seem right that there should be this great discrepancy in area and number of electors in the instances I have given. Nor is it right that people living in the country, carving out their own destiny and creating wealth for the country, should have less representation than people congregated in flats in a densely-populated area in the metropolis. Most of the city representatives can walk round their constituencies in a few hours. The city proper is over-represented. I do not mean the city of Brisbane as a whole. The area of the city of Brisbane is 385 square miles, but its centre is over-represented.

The Attorney-General: Are you aware that Brisbane has a smaller percentage of representation proportionately than Adelaide, Melbourne, or Sydney?

Mr. DART: That has nothing to do with this subject. Because one of those cities, metaphorically speaking, desires to commit political suicide, why should we do the same in Brisbane? It does not follow that because a wrong has been perpetrated there it should be repeated here. The subject we are discussing is how the present system affects our own city and State.

Nine electorates in the metropolitan area return members on a minority vote. It is

interesting to know that. Hon. members opposite analysed this matter from their point of view, but they did not analyse it from that point of view.

The Attorney-General: Tell us how many excess seats are held in Brisbane and which should be deleted?

Mr. DART: After this debate concludes I shall be willing to meet the hon. gentleman in his office and discuss it with him.

The city area contains 12 electorates, containing an area of 27.3 square miles all told. The remaining part of the Greater Brisbane area contains eight seats and contains 357 square miles. How can it be reasonably argued that that is correct? Of the 15 metropolitan Labour members, nine were returned on a minority vote.

Mr. Power: You were returned on a minority vote.

Mr. DART: Baroona is the first, and there are also Ithaca, Logan, Merthyr, Nundah, Sandgate, South Brisbane, Kurilpa, and Windsor. Nine Labour men were elected on a minority vote.

Mr. Duggan interjected.

Mr. DART: We are not discussing that on this motion. The hon. member for Toowoomba polled just over half the votes, but he has nothing to blow about.

The 44 members on the Government side of the House represent a minority of the people of Queensland, and they cannot deny it.

The boundaries of the electorate of Wynnum, which I represent, were changed by the Electoral Redistribution Commission, and community interest was neglected. The commission brought in certain areas that had no community of interest with other areas. At one time the Wynnum electorate extended along the sea front from Doboy Creek to Redland Bay. The Labour Government wished to change the electoral boundaries, so they appointed a commission, so that they would have somebody to shelter behind. The new boundaries take in Salisbury, Kuraby, and Cooper's Plains, an area in the southern quarter of the city, whereas Wynnum is in the eastern quarter.

Mr. Nimmo: And Moorooka.

Mr. DART: Yes. There is a camp at Moorooka comprising about 200 men. Quite a number of secondary industries are carried on around Salisbury and Evans, Deakin, and Company, Limited, have a large works there, and that area was brought into the Wynnum electorate.

The Attorney-General interjected.

Mr. DART: I do not think that Salisbury should have been included in Wynnum. Oxley was looked upon as a very safe Nationalist seat, but the Government thought they could win Wynnum by altering the boundaries.

Naturally, they included Kuraby, Eight-mile Plains, Salisbury, Moorooka, and other districts altogether removed from Wynnum as regards community of interests. The Department of Justice has never made a move for any alteration other than at one time it wished to make the electorate slightly larger, probably with the idea that a Labour Party candidate could then win the seat. To-day, I am not concerned about whether it is a seat for the Labour Party, the National Party, or any other party. I am not speaking personally at all. I do not believe in being personal in these matters. I am speaking to the motion moved by the hon. member for West Moreton, who, I am sure, was sincere in tabling it. He, like myself, had hoped that some of the discrepancies—some perhaps made wilfully, although it would not do to say that is so, but evidently made for the purpose of keeping the Government in power—would be rectified. It is wrong for the Government in power to be selfish. They should be broadminded and big-hearted enough to do the right thing, irrespective of whether the votes of the people return them to power. The right thing for them to do is to adjust the boundaries.

The Attorney-General: How would you make your boundaries?

Mr. DART: I am not here to defend my boundaries, nor am I defending that of any other hon. member. I am asking for justice for Dalby, Murrumba, and any other electorate that is prejudicially affected. I want no special consideration. Perhaps it is not to my personal interest to be in Parliament. However, I am here, and whilst here I shall do what I believe to be right. Consequently, I support this motion, which is a motion for equity and justice. The Government are not giving equity and justice, as they should, to the people of Queensland. I believe the action the Government took in 1933 was taken for the protection of the party, and if that is so, the right thing was not done for the people.

Last week I received a letter from a Labour man. I receive many letters from Labour men, but this one told me that he was sick and tired of the Labour Party. He said he had been a member of it for 50 years, but that he was now fed up with it. If such a man was tired of the party, how many others must also be? Why have the Labour Government endeavoured to retain so many small seats in a centre such as Brisbane, instead of enlarging them and including much of the outside area? They are not doing the right thing by the people of Queensland whom they are here to represent.

The Attorney-General: Your party wiped out nine country seats in the last redistribution.

Mr. DART: I am not so concerned about what other people have done as I am about the action of the Government in power. I and others have to live under this Government, and we want justice and British fair play. In the past we have fought for liberty and freedom. The Labour Party have not won everything that has been won for the working man, nor achieved the freedom that we enjoy under the British flag, but whilst we enjoy

such freedom let us uphold it and be democratic. After all, it is democracy that counts. The people will count sooner or later. If the Government do not heed the writing on the wall, I am sure they will not receive the votes of the people in sufficient numbers to give them a majority in Parliament in the future.

The trouble in the totalitarian States to-day is the dictatorship. Dictatorship has come to Queensland in certain forms, too. At present there is a party known as the Queensland Central Executive. What does it do at election time?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to the subject under discussion.

Mr. DART: The motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition is worthy of all the consideration that this Parliament can give it. The present Government are supposed to be democratic. Do not let us drift into some other form of government. The Queensland people are heartily sorry that they have a Labour Government controlling their affairs. The motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition should be accepted, and I hope that good sense will prevail in the Department of Justice as a result of this debate. We look to that department as being above party political influence, and I do not say that it is not. The only way to maintain democracy is to give equitable distribution of the electorates of Queensland, and until they have that the people of Queensland will not be satisfied. In Brisbane we have 27.3 square miles with nine representatives. That number of representatives is far too great for that area.

We can only ask for justice. We know that the Labour Party are in power and that with their majority they will be able to do what they wish, but I trust that they will do the right thing at the right time.

At 12.28 p.m.,

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. DART: By making comparisons with the other States the other day the Attorney-General merely sidetracked the question.

The Attorney-General: Why do you object to the area of Hamilton's having one representative?

Mr. DART: The area of Hamilton needs attention, and so does the area of Wynnum, and the many other places that I have mentioned. I trust that the Attorney-General will give them that attention.

I am not contending that the number of members of Parliament should be reduced. Let us retain the 62 members, but extend the areas. Why give any man the advantage of small areas of 1½ and a little over 2 square miles? In fact, 12 hon. members have areas that are under 4 square miles each. Why, in one day the electors in those small areas could be interviewed and influenced, and I am afraid there has been too much of that sort of thing going on. The people are led to believe that everything in the garden is lovely, and that present conditions should continue.

I say that the condition of the electorates calls for attention, and that this motion is a timely one.

Members of the Labour Party seem to think that they have much to fear in compulsory preferential voting. Why fear anything so long as one does the right thing and gives to the people what is right and just? There is no need for one to be afraid of one's seat; if the people want a member they will have him, and if they do not want him they will not have him. If the Labour Party gives effect to compulsory preferential voting it will not be doing anything more than it does in its own party rooms. Compelling the people of this State to enrol is a form of compulsion; to compel people to vote is another. Why not have the third form by making the people cast preferential votes? I do not think any hon. member of this House likes being returned on a minority vote. I think the nine hon. members who sit in this Assembly on minority votes would be better pleased if they had been returned on majority votes. They must feel very dissatisfied with themselves, when somebody can say to them: "You are only here on a minority vote—half the people of your electorate did not vote for you." It could be said to them: "More than half the people in your electorate are opposed to you, and yet you are in Parliament." If there was compulsory preferential voting, we should all know whether the people in our electorates wanted us or not. An hon. member who was elected to this House could throw out his chest and say: "I have received the vote of the majority of the people in my electorate; I represent the majority of my electors." I believe that the first two forms of compulsion I mentioned are necessary, and I think we should add the third to make the job complete. I trust that the Minister in charge of this matter will prove himself a statesman. We have too many politicians in this House. We have too many who have come here as job-seekers—men who have come here to get all they can out of the game. I believe the Minister to be a just man, and will do the right thing. I trust he will prove himself a statesman before the next election, and will remedy all the anomalies and injustices that exist. I am not speaking in a personal sense, and I have not mentioned the name of any man since I stood up. I want to see that the system is right in principle. I uphold a principle that will give fair play and justice to all. I am big-minded enough not to talk about any individual. If those who returned us have made a mistake, it is their fault. I hope that the law will be amended and that the Attorney-General will consider the matter before another election takes place to see that fair treatment is meted out to all. If that is done, good results can be expected. If the Labour Party is again returned to power, I shall say, "Good luck to them." If another party takes office I shall say, "It is the will of the people." Let us abide by the will of the people and the people will be satisfied; we shall have a happy and contented people. At the present time we have a disgruntled and

dissatisfied people suffering under the injustices meted out to them by a Labour Government.

Mr. POWER (Baroona) (12.34 p.m.): We have heard a good deal this morning from hon. members of the Opposition about democracy, and about government by the people for the people. I should like to remind them of the legislation that they introduced to deprive a large number of people in Brisbane of the right to elect their civic representatives. They introduced a franchise that gave the right to vote only to a householder, which meant that although there might be a family of eight or nine in one house only the householder had the right to vote. On the other hand, a person who paid rent of about 7s. 6d. or 10s. a week for a poky office in a city building was free to exercise the franchise. That meant that the man occupying a city office could vote, while nearly all of the adult members of a family in the suburbs were deprived of that right. That was done by the Moore Government, nd I mention it merely to show how incon-stent they are when they say that the pre-it State electoral system is undemocratic d should be made democratic.

However, it has been the practice of hon. members opposite and Governments of the same political colour throughout the years to restrict the rights of the people to elect their representatives either to local authorities or to Parliament. Now they contend that the electoral system should be made democratic, but their actions in this respect have at all times been undemocratic, and not in the best interests of the people. In a word, they ask for a new redistribution of electoral boundaries on the ground that the existing boundaries are not in the best interests of the people. What a remarkable statement for them to make in the face of their political history!

When the last redistribution was made, the following comments by hon. members opposite were recorded by the commission—

> "The hon. the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. E. B. Maher, West Moreton, was satisfied with the new boundaries, although he regretted the loss of Marburg which he referred to as 'My-burg.' He was fully compensated, however, in getting Harrisville."

That is the comment that he made to the commission.

Mr. Maher: I did not make it to the commission at all.

Mr. POWER: That is the record that the commission has of the hon. gentleman's comments following that redistribution.

Mr. Maher: I did not make those comments to the commission, and it is highly improper of you to say so.

Mr. POWER: Does the hon. gentleman deny ever having made those comments?

Mr. Maher: That is another question. You proceed on the principle of making safe seats safer.

Mr. POWER: That came from the Leader of the Opposition—he was satisfied with the way in which the redistribution had taken place.

Mr. Maher: No.

Mr. POWER: Let me go a little further and give the comments of the Leader of the United Australia Party, Mr. H. M. Russell, Hamilton—

> "He thought the commission had made Hamilton a compact electorate with well-defined boundaries."

Having made those comments some time ago he now comes forward with a change of front, and criticises what has been done and contradicts his previous statement. Let me go further and give the comments by the hon. member for Oxley—

> "He could not have done better himself. He realised that the commission had had a most difficult task, and that they had done their work well."

Those were the comments of the hon. member for Oxley, and he is now bursting to rise in his place and make a speech condemning the redistribution; he would be speaking with his tongue in his cheek.

The hon. member quite appreciates that he has a very safe seat, but, judging by the figures of the last election, if the redistribution had not taken place, he would not be the hon. member for Oxley to-day.

The records of the commission have entries of the following comments:—

> "Mr. G. Morgan (Murilla) considered he had been well-treated by the commission, and the position was not nearly so bad for him as he had feared. He resisted any proposal to alter the boundaries of the district of Dalby as drawn by the commission." (Subsequently, Mr. Morgan appeared before the commission, and again urged that the district proposed by the commission should not be altered.)

Mr. Morgan was quite satisfied with what the commission had done, but the people of Dalby were not satisfied with him, hence his exit from Parliament.

> "Mr. W. A. Brand (Isis) expressed his satisfaction when the commission, at his suggestion, restored Biggenden to the Isis district.
>
> "Mr. A. W. Fadden (Kennedy) stated he was interested in the alterations made in two electorates. He considered the commission had assisted him in making his choice.
>
> "Messrs. Annand and Deacon (East Toowoomba and Cunningham) jointly desired an exchange of territory between their respective electorates. The commission approved of their suggestion."

That goes to show that the commission acted satisfactorily as far as the Opposition were concerned, and now they are only speaking with their tongues in their cheeks when

they suggest that another redistribution should take place.

The other day the hon. member for Hamilton had the temerity to suggest that my electorate should be abolished. The only good thing accomplished by the commission appointed by the Moore Government was that it enabled me to obtain a seat in Parliament. That commission eliminated the Paddington electorate, and, as a result of a redistribution, the electorate of Baroona was created. Although I say it myself, it has a very capable and honest representative.

Hon. members opposite also said that the metropolitan area had too much representation and that the country districts should have more representation. If they believed that to be so, why did they eliminate 10 country seats when they were in power? Why did they deprive them of representation? That is a very sound argument. The Opposition were responsible for the elimination of those country seats, yet to-day they are urging the Government to give further representation to the people in the country. It is a remarkable coincidence that the majority of the seats that were eliminated were Labour seats.

An Honourable Member: Seven of them.

Mr. POWER: Seven Labour seats were eliminated. I am not suggesting that the commission did anything wrong, but it is rather a remarkable coincidence that that should have happened. When it took place the Opposition were "sitting pretty"—on top of the world, to use a popular expression—and thought the Labour Party would not be elected again to control the Queensland Parliament. I endorse the remarks of the Premier this morning, that irrespective of what action a Government may take to retain power, whether there is preferential or contingent voting, postal voting, or juggling with electorates, if the majority of the people want them turned out of office there will be no difficulty in doing it. That has been borne out amply.

In 1931, when I was elected first to the Brisbane City Council, a Bill was introduced in this Parliament providing for compulsory contingent voting, and for allowing householders only to record a vote. It is pleasing to know that on that occasion a number of the Opposition were defeated. The hon. member for Wynnum was one who lost his seat in the Brisbane City Council owing to the new legislation of the then Government. That bears out my contention that the will of the people will at all times prevail, irrespective of the Government.

Mr. Dart: You had a Labour man in Wynnum. You lost the Lord Mayor.

Mr. POWER: I do not represent Wynnum. I represent Baroona.

I point out that, irrespective of what Governments may do, they will not defeat the will of the people, which at all times will prevail.

The basis of the contention of the members of the Opposition is that because the area of certain electorates is small, the people in them should not be given representation. Area is not the only factor for consideration. Population must also be taken into account. Would an intelligent person suggest that because 100,000 square miles of country has a population of 2,000 it is entitled to greater representation in Parliament than an area of 2 square miles with a population of 10,000? Representation on the basis of population must receive consideration, and the greatest consideration, when it comes to the question of parliamentary representation. A member of Parliament does not represent a portion of the country. He is returned to Parliament to represent people and work in their best interests.

The hon. member for Wynnum made a very deliberate misstatement when he said that I was not returned to this Parliament on a majority of votes—that I was elected on a minority vote.

Mr. Dart: That is true.

Mr. POWER: Whatever school the hon. member paid his school fees to and attended his education must have been sadly neglected and he should get his money back. I give the hon. member the figures, and if he take them down I will check them with him later. For the Baroona electorate, the sectarian candidate received 3,478 votes, I received 4,736, and the United Australia Party candidate 2,103, showing a majority for me of 1,258; and that was after the contingent votes had been allocated. Of the voters for the United Australia Party, 999 failed to record a contingent vote, and if all those votes were added to the sectarian candidate who opposed me he would have received 4,477 as compared with my 4,736—and that is giving to my opponent all the 999.

Let me quote the figures for Wynnum. The votes received by the hon. member numbered 3,687, and those recorded against him totalled 7,381. He accuses me of being here on a minority vote, when the number recorded against him was double that received by him! It is only by a pure political accident that he is here at all. Before accusing other hon. members of not being here with the will of the majority of the people, hon. members opposite should analyse the figures to make sure that their own positions cannot be assailed. The figures that I have quoted, so far as my own electorate is concerned, show that the majority of the people in that electorate are intelligent. Even giving the 999 votes to an opposing candidate I still had a comfortable majority to return me to this Parliament.

I am one of those who believe that contingent voting should be entirely optional. I do not believe that people should be forced to record a vote for anybody.

Mr. Massey: How about in caucus?

Mr. POWER: What I do in caucus is my own business. Even if we had a compulsory contingent vote in caucus, we certainly should know the calibre of the man for whom we were voting, and we should be prepared to

vote for him. Under the compulsory contingent voting in parliamentary elections, people would be forced to cast votes for candidates for whom they had no time at all. The hon. member for Toowong is very anxious to have compulsory contingent voting, because he is only here with the aid of the contingent vote. Every elector should have the right to choose his own representative in Parliament.

So far as the elections in general are concerned, we have to-day a number of people running under various political colours, and the public are confused. They should have a free and untrammelled right to select their representative by placing a figure "1" before the name of the candidate they favour, and should not be called upon to make any other mark upon the ballot paper. Is it reasonable to suggest that, if a genuine Labour candidate, sectarian candidate, Communist candidate, and United Australia Party candidate were running at an election, any honest, decent elector, who absolutely abhors being associated with the Communist or sectarian party, should be compelled to cast a vote for either of those candidates? I say emphatically that he should be called upon to cast a vote for him. He should have the option of voting for one candidate only. It would not be logical to make contingent voting compulsory. The Act provides that an elector may record a contingent vote; if he does desire to do so, no compulsion is exercised.

The motion has been moved because it is well known that contingent voting has at no time favoured the Labour Party. The Opposition believe that if contingent voting is made compulsory an opportunity will be afforded for defeating the Labour Government. That is what is behind the motion.

If the Opposition are sincere, why did they not move in this direction when they were on the Treasury benches? It is only since the sectarian party has intruded into politics that this desire to make contingent voting compulsory has arisen.

Like the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, I have received a number of anonymous letters signed "An elector of Baroona," instructing me to raise the question of compulsory contingent voting and cast my vote in caucus in favour of it. I want to tell these anonymous letter-writers that I will not accept dictation from them on the attitude I should adopt on this question. I have been elected to this Parliament on the ticket of the Australian Labour Party. That is the ticket I stand on, and no pressure from either a sectarian or any other party will have any influence with me on such matters. If a person has any case to submit to a member of Parliament, or anyone else, he or she should be prepared to sign it, otherwise it is not worthy of any consideration whatever.

In conclusion, I desire to say that I think the present optional system of contingent voting is fair, as it gives electors the right to cast their votes in a democratic manner. I agree with the hon. member for Fortitude Valley that the time is ripe when we should close our ranks against things that divide the public. I am sure that if the Leader of the Opposition gave further consideration to this subject he would have refrained from bringing the motion forward. Its introduction has evidently been inspired by anonymous letter-writers. It is patent that outside influences have exerted pressure to have the motion placed on the business-paper.

At 2.15 p.m.,

In accordance with Sessional Order, the House proceeded with Government business.

MINES REGULATION ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

THIRD READING.

Bill, on motion of Mr. Gledson, read a third time.

MINING ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

THIRD READING.

Bill, on motion of Mr. Gledson, read a third time.

ABORIGINALS PRESERVATION AND PROTECTION BILL.

COMMITTEE.

(Mr. O'Keefe, Cairns, in the chair.)

Clauses 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Clause 3—Repeals and savings (Schedule)—

Mr. MULLER (Fassifern) (2.18 p.m.): I should like an explanation of the paragraph beginning at line 40—

> "All contracts and agreements entered into, permits and certificates of exemption granted, and removal orders issued pursuant to the Acts hereby repealed . . . . "

The Bill refers to employment of aboriginals by arrangement with the protector. Will contracts already made be abrogated?

The SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND HOME AFFAIRS (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, Ithaca) (2.19 p.m.): If it were not for that saving clause they would be. That paragraph preserves existing contracts. If it were not there, the repeal of the existing Acts would render them void. It provides that such contracts shall be of the same validity as if they had been made under this Bill. The same principle applies to exemptions of half-castes and full-blooded aboriginals who are managing their own affairs. Those exemptions also are preserved under the Bill.

Clause 3, as read, agreed to.

Clause 4—Meanings of terms—as read, agreed to.

Clause 5—Purposes of this Act—

Mr. MAHER (West Moreton) (2.20 p.m.): The Bill was fully discussed on the introductory and second-reading stages, and as it has the full approval of the Opposition very little is to be gained by discussing the various

clauses now. In view of that fact and the fact that I am unable to offer any amendment to the Bill, no good purpose can be served discussing the matter anew.

Clause 5, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 6 to 12, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Clause 13—Proclamations, Orders in Council, and regulations—

Mr. RUSSELL (Hamilton) (2.21 p.m.): A little while ago the Premier twitted me with the fact that last year I failed to enter my protest against the inclusion of a similar clause in another Bill, and it is just as well that I should now protest against the inclusion in this Bill of the words "and shall not be questioned in any proceedings whatsoever." Every free citizen should have the right to question in any competent court the validity of the regulations that may be proclaimed under the Bill. While there may be no question as to the legality of the statute law and Proclamations and Orders in Council that may be issued in conformity with it, I think it is a mistake to continue the practice that has been followed for so many years of giving the regulations the force of law and preventing persons from contesting their validity. It is wrong to provide that these regulations shall not be contested in any court of law. It is a grave abuse of parliamentary power. Therefore, I enter my objection against the inclusion of the words that I have mentioned.

The SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND HOME AFFAIRS (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, Ithaca) (2.24 p.m.): The hon. member is a little away from the point in raising the question of the validity of the regulations. Nobody would object more than I to any attempt to deprive Parliament of its authority or the people of their rights under the law. The questioning of the validity of the regulations under an Act of Parliament has been a fruitful source of litigation for many years. The Bill provides that the regulations must be tabled in Parliament, and they receive the endorsement of Parliament just the same as every clause in the Bill receives the endorsement of Parliament.

What Parliament does is the law. All that this clause seeks to do is to empower regulations to be made, and these, in due course, are approved by Parliament and have the same force of law as any clause in this Bill. Once a regulation has been tabled in this Chamber, and receives approval of this Parliament, it justly becomes part of the Act, but it should not deprive litigants of any rights they may have at law.

Mr. Russell: Of course it does.

The SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND HOME AFFAIRS: It merely prevents the exploitation of technical points in regulations under an Act, which are a fruitful field for the enterprise of members of the legal profession. That is all this clause seeks to do. No regulation will be part of the Act until it is approved by Parliament. I cannot see any difference between making legal a decision of the Government in a regulation that is subsequently approved by Parliament and making legal a decision of Parliament in any Bill it enacts.

Mr. RUSSELL (Hamilton) (2.26 p.m.): If the Government think it necessary to issue a regulation touching a subject not within the ambit of an Act, the proper course to take is to ask Parliament to amend that Act. It is the method of government by regulation that I am protesting against. It is a growing evil in every community. If an Act does not contain what it purports to contain, it should be amended, and the Government should not cover up its deficiencies by regulation. Regulations are made during the recess and have the force of law during the whole of that period. Many injustices have been imposed on worthy citizens through unwise regulations.

Mr. Moore: And illegal regulations.

Mr. RUSSELL: That is so. It is all very well to say that Parliament has the right to approve or disapprove of the regulation. The Government, by their majority, can force any regulation through this Chamber but no regulation should be issued that does not conform with the intentions of this Chamber. It is a bad practice to attempt to govern this country by regulation.

The Secretary for Health and Home Affairs: You have already approved of a clause empowering the Government to make regulations.

Mr. RUSSELL: This practice is an innovation that has crept into the Government of this country over a period of years. Formerly, regulations did not have the same force of law as an Act itself has. Any aggrieved person should have the power to question the validity of a regulation. Once a regulation is passed by this Chamber it becomes part and parcel of the Act, and is therefore statute law, and cannot be questioned. We have seen many instances in which citizens have been unduly penalised by the operation of harassing regulations. If an Act is found to be imperfect let it be amended, but not by this method. All regulations, whether agreed to by this Chamber or not, should, if an aggrieved person thinks it necessary, be pronounced upon in a court of law. That is why I enter my protest against the inclusion of this clause in the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND HOME AFFAIRS (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, Ithaca) (2.29 p.m.): I wonder if the hon. member for Hamilton realises the effect of the proposal he is putting before this Committee. He asks that any regulation issued under this Bill, when it becomes statute law, should be made by Parliament itself. If this Parliament is to be called together whenever it is necessary to issue a regulation dealing with aboriginal affairs, then it will have to sit 365 days a year on that subject alone. The hon. member is barking up the wrong tree. He has really been talking on the

wrong clause. The preceding clause is the clause that gives the Governor in Council power to make regulations. All he is doing is taking exception to a clause that denies certain people the opportunity to initiate d the cessary litigation. Imagine having to Parliament together every time it was desired to apprentice an aboriginal child at service.

Mr. Russell: Rubbish!

The SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND HOME AFFAIRS: That is what some of the regulations will prescribe.

The clause prescribes the various things on which regulations can be issued. One of those is: "prescribing the conditions upon which aboriginal children may be apprenticed or placed in service," and another is: "providing for the care, custody, and education of the children of aboriginals." If we conceded the hon. member's point, every time a school opened you would have to call Parliament together. Another matter on which regulations may be made is: "regulating the employment of aboriginals on vessels and elsewhere." The conditions of employment are continually changing. Surely the hon. member does not suggest that every time the Director of Native Affairs makes an agreement with the captain of a lugger for the employment of half-a-dozen aboriginals Parliament should be summoned.

Mr. Moore interjected.

The SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND HOME AFFAIRS: That is all we are doing under this clause. The hon. member is taking exception to the safeguarding of these regulations. Of course, they can be challenged. If we gave way to the hon. member's objection we should have to call Parliament together every time we disbursed any relief from the Aboriginal fund, and for every trivial matter. Action under these regulations is taken several times in the year. To suggest that the Act should be amended every time a child was sent out to service or relief was given to a destitute aboriginal is absurd. It is obvious that the hon. member has not given proper consideration to the matter. Those words "shall not be challenged" are to him as a red rag to a bull. They have become an obsession with him, and without considering what they refer to he lodges an objection. If the hon. member should go to the Sub-Department of Aboriginals and see the hundreds of acts that are done under the regulations, he would see the absurdity of his objection.

Clause 13, as read, agreed to.

Clause 14—Permit to employ—

Mr. MAHER (West Moreton) (2.33 p.m.): I should like an explanation from the Minister of subclause (14) of this clause. The protector is not permitted to give permission to an aboriginal to go with his or her employer to another State or beyond the Commonwealth for a period exceeding 12 months. A case came under my notice about four or five years ago, in which a young aboriginal girl had been cared for from her infancy by a family. The time arrived when that family desired to go to England, and, having grown fond of this girl, who was now 20, and whom they had had since she was five or six, they wished to take her with them, but they were prevented from doing so because they were to be away more than 12 months. In such a case, is it wise to restrict the protector to a period of 12 months? It may be wise to widen the protector's power, and allow him to use his own discretion.

Mr. Jesson: Can he not give an extension of time?

Mr. MAHER: The protector is bound by the Act, which says—

> "A protector shall not authorise the removal of any aboriginal from one district to another district, or to any place beyond Queensland, for a period exceeding 12 months."

The case I was referring to concerned a doctor and his wife, who had reared this girl.

The girl had been treated very well, and had no reason to leave them. When the family desired to go overseas for four or five years and take the girl with them, should the protector be prevented by Act of Parliament from giving his sanction to her accompanying them? Of course, there may be instances in which it would be wise for the protector to exercise his discretion against such a course, but when the aboriginal is in good hands I see no reason why a male or female employee should not get authority to leave a district to go to another State or even overseas for a period in excess of 12 months, provided, of course, that the sureties set out in the subclause are put up. I suggest to the Minister that, unless he has very strong reasons against it, he might, at this juncture, amend the Bill in that particular.

The SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND HOME AFFAIRS (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, Ithaca) (2.36 p.m.): The subclause refers to aboriginals leaving the State for any purpose whatever. The greater number of cases dealt with under it are aboriginals in employment. It is thought by the department that no longer period than 12 months away from the State should be permitted, but, in such a case as that mentioned by the hon. gentleman, it would be wrong to prevent a girl living in a good home from leaving the State with her employer for more than 12 months, provided, of course, the guarantees required to ensure that she would not be left stranded in England were sufficient.

I have just questioned the Chief Protector, and he informs me that he has no knowledge of any such case. If people desire to take an aboriginal away under such conditions, and the guarantees are satisfactory, the arrangement is that they get a permit for 12 months, and towards the end of that period they make application for a further permit and it is granted. There is no difficulty in arranging for an aboriginal to be taken away, provided that the guarantee that the aboriginal will not be stranded in some part of

the world is satisfactory. Obviously, if an aboriginal girl was left stranded in England or on the Continent, she would be in a rather difficult position. The idea is to prevent any person who may get tired of an aboriginal from abandoning her. If the Leader of the Opposition will supply me with particulars of the case we will have it turned up to see whether there was any foolish exercise of authority.

Mr. MAHER (West Moreton) (2.38 p.m.): There is no harm in my giving the Committee particulars. It was Dr. De Pinna, now deceased, but then residing in Marburg. He had an aboriginal girl, and was desirous that she should accompany him and his wife and family. I do not know whether he was prepared to comply with the requirements of the clause about the sureties. At the time he wrote to me he said that they had arranged to take the girl to England with them, but were prevented from so doing because the law was against them. He complained at the time, but reconciled himself to the position, and did not wish me to take action.

That is a case in point. These people reared this girl from infancy, and she had grown to young womanhood conversant with their ways, and it appears to me that in such a case the Director should use his discretion. As the law stands at present, it prevents him from granting a permit for longer than 12 months. A family may desire to go abroad for two or three years, and take an aboriginal girl with them, but this provision prevents them from doing so. A family with whom an aboriginal girl has lived all her life may have a strong attachment to her.

Let me put it another way. We see families coming down from New Guinea to Australia and bringing Papuan girls and boys in their employment. There is no law in New Guinea to prevent their coming down to Australia.

Mr. Nicklin: They have to give a surety of £100.

Mr. MAHER: Then that is somewhat similar to this provision. I do not know, however, whether the laws of New Guinea impose any time limit. They may, but I certainly do know of cases in which New Guinea families bring Papuan servants, male and female, with them. I realise that it is desirable to provide that a surety be given so that aboriginals who may be taken away from the country are not left stranded in other parts of the world, but where persons are prepared to put up all the sureties desired for an absence of a longer period than 12 months I cannot see any objection to granting permission to take aboriginal servants away. The time limit is now 12 months. If a family is not prepared to return an aboriginal servant within that time it means now that the aboriginal will be prevented from going with them.

The SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND HOME AFFAIRS (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, Ithaca (2.46 p.m.): I think it will be acceptable if you move an amendment to insert, after line 53—

> 'Provided that the Director of Native Affairs may, upon application, grant permission for an absence of a long period.' ''

The protector in any particular place may be the local constable of police or the clerk of petty sessions, and it is not desirable to allow those persons to deal with such applications. The Director could deal with them without the need of making further applications at the end of 12 months. I think that the power to grant permission to leave the Commonwealth for long periods should be confined to head office.

Mr. MAHER (West Moreton) (2.47 p.m.): I thank the Minister for accepting the suggestion. I think it desirable to have the Bill amended to give wider discretion to the Director of Native Affairs in occasional instances of this kind. I am prepared to say that only on rare occasions would such an application be made. It could happen that an employee of aboriginal birth might have been in the service of a family for many years, and under such circumstances the family might not like to part with the employee, regarding him or her as being the special responsibility. If that family wish to leave the country for a longer period than 12 months they should be allowed to take their employee with them. I think the amendment will give a justifiably wider power to the Director. I move the following amendment:—

> ''On page 12, line 53, after the word 'absence,' add the words—
>
> > 'provided that the Director of Native Affairs may, subject to this Act, grant a permit to remove an aboriginal to a place outside Queensland for a longer period than twelve months.' ''

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. PLUNKETT (Albert) (2.50 p.m.): The clause says—

> ''No person shall employ an aboriginal without the permission of a protector.''

An aboriginal may obtain work for a week, a fortnight, or even three months, but according to the clause no person would be able to employ him even for a very short period without the permission of a protector. Unless the clause is amended, a number of aboriginals will lose a considerable amount of work, because the prospective employers will not take the trouble to obtain the permission of a protector to employ an aboriginal for only a week or two.

The SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND HOME AFFAIRS (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, Ithaca) (2.52 p.m.): The position is that the protectors never interfere with the employment of aboriginals who are away from reserves working in rural areas, but they must see that they are not exploited and that they are paid the rates prescribed by the

department for the various classes of work. Anyone could employ an aboriginal for a day or half a day. There is this important fact, that the local policeman, who is the protector in the district, is charged with the responsibility of seeing that the aboriginals maintain their wives and families. Therefore, they must see that the aboriginal worker receives the wages prescribed by the department. All that an employer need do is to notify the police that the aboriginal is employed by him. The few aboriginals round the Boonah and Beaudesert districts are well known to the police, and the police keep an eye on them to see that they are paid the right wages. It is not necessary to sign a contract where the work is only for a few days.

Mr. Massey: Does that apply to half-castes as well?

The SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND HOME AFFAIRS: The Act will not apply to half-castes unless they are living with aboriginals.

Mr. MULLER (Fassifern) (2.54 p.m.): The Minister's explanation may be satisfactory, but the clause clearly says that no person shall employ an aboriginal without the permission of a protector. It may happen that a protector will insist on the strict observance of the law and an employer may refuse to take the risk of employing an aboriginal, even on casual jobs, without the permission of a protector, because it would be against the law. Is it not possible to amend the clause to embrace the assurance by the Minister? I cannot help thinking that if an employer is compelled to obtain the permission of a protector before he employs an aboriginal he will not bother in a great many cases, and so the aboriginals will be deprived of a considerable amount of work.

The SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND HOME AFFAIRS (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, Ithaca) (2.55 p.m.): The principle in this clause does not vary from the one that has been in operation since the enactment of the Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act of 1901. No difficulty has been experienced by the administration in the direction indicated by the hon. members opposite. It must be understood that aboriginals must have protection from unscrupulous whites who may either defraud them or get them to do a day's work for a couple of tots of rum. The department does not look upon that as a right thing. The local protector must be apprised of what an aboriginal is being paid and see that he is paid. If we start making any exemptions now, the local protector will possess no power at all. The Chief Protector tells me there has never been any trouble about this clause, and that he has never had a single complaint with respect to it from either an employer or an aboriginal. This clause enables the local protector to see that a person cannot employ an aboriginal on unjust terms—that is, use him to his own advantage.

Clause 14, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 15 to 38, both inclusive, and Schedule, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, with an amendment.

TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS BILL.

COMMITTEE.

(Mr. O'Keefe, Cairns, in the chair.)

Clauses 1 to 6, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Clause 7—Orders in Council and regulations—

Mr. RUSSELL (Hamilton) (3.5 p.m.): It is not in any spirit of levity that I rise to protest against this pernicious practice. I have never taken the view that the words "shall not be questioned in any proceedings whatsoever" were objectionable if they applied only to the identity of the regulations, that is to say, that when they are tendered to a court of competent jurisdiction there can be no question they are the regulations under the Act. That was the original intention. Therefore, if the Government will in future include in this phrase, "as to their identity," there would be no objection on my part at least to the inclusion of such a clause in any Act.

It is absurd to say that regulations on trivial matters may be contested. Regulations are supposed to be framed within the scope of the Act, and there can be no objection to such regulations and they would not be questioned by Parliament. The right I want to preserve to the citizen is to appeal in any court of law against regulations that may be ultra vires of the Act. That Parliament passes a regulation does not prove that that regulation is intra vires. It may be ultra vires. Hon. members are aware of the famous case under the State Transport Act. Although the litigants had a good case, the court ruled that as the regulation had been passed by Parliament it was valid. The case was lost on a technical point. There is no danger that regulations that conform with an Act will be questioned. I want to reserve to the citizens the right to appeal on a regulation that may be ultra vires of the Act. Under this provision, irrespective of the fact that the regulation has been passed by the House, it cannot be contested in any court of law. That is stretching the powers of Parliament too far.

The Secretary for Health and Home Affairs: Stretching the powers of Parliament too far?

Mr. RUSSELL: Yes. It prevents an aggrieved citizen from appealing to any court of law against the regulations. There is no appeal from the Act itself. The Act is the law, but it is not right that we should include all regulations within the Act—i.e., provide that they should not be contested.

The Secretary for Public Lands: All regulations are within the principles of the Act, and the principles are passed by Parliament.

Mr. RUSSELL: I have pointed to regulations under the State Transport Act that were ultra vires of that Act. Every year regulations are framed that are ultra vires of the relevant Act. I call the attention of hon. members to some of the regulations under the Fruit Marketing Organisation Act. Many are ultra vires. The Government, with their overwhelming majority, can force any regulation through this House, but it may be ultra vires of the Act. The Acts are good law, but it was never intended that all regulations supposed to be framed in conformity with the Act should be reckoned as being on all fours with the Act itself. I merely wish to preserve to every citizen the right that he undoubtedly possesses of an appeal to a court of law to contest a regulation. To-day it is impossible to contest any regulation passed by this Parliament. We have gone too far in government by regulation. I do not rise to be facetious about the matter. It is a very serious position. I had hoped the Government would have learned the truth by now. They are stretching the powers of Parliament too much.

Mr. Riordan: Is it not somewhat of an obsession on your part?

Mr. RUSSELL: I am always obsessed when I am right. I have raised this point before, and it is useless appealing to the Government to depart from this very pernicious custom—not only this Government, but their predecessors. I ask them to study some of the old statutes. They will not see such a clause in those Acts. To-day the Government take unto themselves extreme powers that it was never intended we should possess. Every citizen should be allowed to contest the regulations, even if they are passed by this Parliament.

The SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND HOME AFFAIRS (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, Ithaca) (3.10 p.m.): I had always understood that the hon. member for Hamilton was protesting against the people's losing their rights, and the Government's exercising authority that Parliament could not give them. On this occasion he objects to Parliament having power to legislate.

What actually happens with regulations is that they must be laid upon the table of the House, that they must be there for 14 days—sometimes they are there for up to a month—and any hon. member may rise and challenge all or any of them. The other day, the hon. member for Murrumba gave notice that he desired to challenge a regulation. His subsequent withdrawal of the objection was due to the fact that, after a further study of it, he recognised that the objection that he fancied existed did not exist. I have risen and challenged regulations that have been laid on the table.

If, as the hon. member says, regulations that are outside the scope of an Act have been tabled and been put through, then he was guilty of a shameful neglect of duty to the people who elected him in not getting up and challenging them.

Mr. Russell: I am not a lawyer. That is not my job.

The SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND HOME AFFAIRS: And I am not suggesting that the power of Parliament should be handed over to lawyers. Parliament is not going to abdicate in favour of any profession or section. The hon. member has not only the right, but the duty to the people who elect him, to challenge any regulation that is laid on the table if it contains anything that is outside the powers conferred upon the Governor in Council by the Act. If, after he has taken his objection, Parliament makes the regulation law, it becomes part of the Act, and cannot be challenged. That he rises to-day and suggests that Parliament is taking too much power unto itself is a totally new angle on this question. I always understood previously that the hon. member was objecting because somebody had taken the powers of Parliament.

Clause 7, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 8 to 17, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Clause 18—Functions and powers of Council—

Mr. MAHER (West Moreton) (3.14 p.m.): This is a very important part of the Bill. I presume that on most of these islands there is a State school teacher under the control of the Department of Public Instruction in Brisbane.

The Secretary for Health and Home Affairs: Under the control of the Chief Protector, henceforth Director of Native Affairs.

Mr. MAHER: Not an officer of the Department of Public Instruction?

The Secretary for Health and Home Affairs: Some of the teachers are seconded from that department, but sometimes we cannot get State school teachers for the islands. Then the department employs it own teachers.

Mr. MAHER: In the selection of these teachers, I think it is important that consideration be given to the need for obtaining men who can be real leaders in the settlements. In this clause, provision is made for a council on any of the Torres Strait Islands, which can be a really fine thing for the islanders. The council is to have the power of making by-laws for promoting, maintaining, regulating, and controlling the peace, comfort, health, moral safety, convenience, food supply, housing, and welfare of the inhabitants of the reserve, and for the planning, development, and embellishment of the reserve. It can control the building of roads, bridges, viaducts, and culverts, baths, and many other things helpful to native life. The question arises that the elected islanders might not be progressive. They might be satisfied to retain the preferment to the council over their fellow islanders, and prefer to take things easily thereafter.

The Secretary for Health and Home Affairs: They will have only one step up the ladder to reach true civilisation—to acquire a national debt.

Mr. MAHER: They have the power to tax, and that could lead to the acquisition of a national debt. Labour for all this work will be cheap, but it is desirable in the selection of teachers to obtain progressively-minded people to give a lead to the native population and the councillors. The members of a council should be encouraged to embark on schemes for the beautification and development of their island, and for their own security and wellbeing. The councillors might be good islanders, but perhaps require a lead to make them embark on progressive schemes in their own interests. The whole thing will depend on whether the teacher regards himself merely as a teacher, and, therefore, becomes passive, or whether he gives a lead to the councillors. Will he be instructed by the Director of Native Affairs that his job is not only to teach the youngsters, but also to try to encourage the councillors and the islanders generally to take the fullest possible advantage of the powers the Parliament of this State has conferred on him? The success of the scheme will depend on the type of white superintendent or school teacher selected by the director for these islands.

After all, we cannot expect an islander in his own native way to have the same progressive spirit that the white race undoubtedly has. The school teachers selected may be excellent teachers, but unless they are instructed by the department that they must give a lead in these matters, and are expected to help and encourage the islanders to do something in a big way for the improvement of the island, perhaps all these powers we are conferring upon them may not be used as fully as Parliament expects. Some day these lovely islands in Torres Strait might be more widely known that they are to-day.

The Secretary for Health and Home Affairs: Some day they will become the greatest tourist centres in the Southern Hemisphere.

Mr. MAHER: We have read tales of the romantic South Sea Islands. These islands are in the tropical zone.

The Secretary for Health and Home Affairs: They are incomparably more beautiful than the famous South Sea Islands. They constitute one of the most beautiful spots in the world.

Mr. MAHER: As the population of this country increases, we shall be looking round to enlarge the limits to our tourist resorts. These islands may become a place of sheer delight for tourists. They may also have a very important strategic value in the defence of Australia. Therefore, in laying down the powers for these islanders, we should see that they are given every opportunity to develop themselves and to increase their racial prestige. I also think we should go a little further and expect the Director of Native Affairs to select school teachers or superintendents with a progressive outlook, men full of ideas and the will to encourage the local councillors to do substantial work in the improvement of their islands. Perhaps, as the Minister has said, it may be hard to improve on nature.

The Premier: They may spoil it.

Mr. MAHER: Precisely. When I first went to Kuranda and visited Fairyland and the Maze, I saw magnificent tropical views that it would be impossible for man to improve upon. They bore the stamp of the unerring hand of the Creator. So it may be difficult for man to improve upon these tropic islands very much. Nevertheless, there are things that can be done for the benefit of the islanders. If they are just left to their own way, they may lack the initiative that the white man possesses, and it may not occur to them to do certain things that would enhance the value of the islands in every way. That is why I say that the powers of local government to be conferred on the islander should not be restricted and that we should send as teachers men who are not only excellent as teachers, men with kindly natures, but that we should be careful to get men who will give a lead to the islanders until they become efficient representatives on their councils.

I should like to emphasise that because I think it is highly important. I think that a great deal of the initiative and responsibility for the success of an important experiment like this will depend very largely on the type of man that the Director selects for the position of superintendent or local teacher on each island. If he is a man of the type that I have just described he can be helpful to the council in every way, and I feel sure that some day we shall rejoice that we passed a Bill through Parliament to give these advantages to the islanders of Torres Strait.

The SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND HOME AFFAIRS (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, Ithaca) (3.22 p.m.): The staffing of the islands has always been a problem. It is a life that very few people will stick to for any great length of time. The only white people are the school teachers, and as the aboriginal boat visits them only about once a month life becomes very lonely, particularly for the women. If they have growing children they want the advantages of better schooling than they can get from their own father on the island. So that this problem has always given the Chief Protector a considerable amount of worry. But taking it by and large, very fine types of men have worked on these islands, and going from island to island one can see the particular bent of any teacher as soon as one lands. The teacher is also the retail storekeeper. On one island one may see roads very well formed. On an earlier stage of the Bill I mentioned Pilot Bridge on Darnley Island. Pilot, who was a sea pilot, was a well-known native of Darnley Island. He undertook the construction of bridges as foreman. There is a bridge on the island that will compare with any constructed by our Main Roads Commission. It is constructed of hewn timber and is well

done in every detail. The approaches to the bridge are also excellent. That superintendent has a flair for roadmaking and bridge-building.

Then you can go to Mabuiag Island, where it is immediately seen that the teacher is keen on manual training. All kinds of manual training is in progress. At the school are to be seen carved wood models of all modern machinery, including locomotives, ships, engines, sawmills, and other machinery—made in order that the student could see models of those things he read and learned of. The flair of the various teachers could be seen as you went from island to island.

The position of a teacher on one of these islands is not one that every person would desire. Just imagine the average public servant, who does not even like going to a remote place where he would be able to obtain leave once every year, being appointed to one of these islands, where he would see a white person once a month only, and when he obtained leave could take his holiday only at the cost of a lot of money. If these teachers allow their leave to accumulate for several years, the department conveys them to Thursday Island, and then contributes something towards their fare and expenses to revisit civilisation. As hon. members might expect, these teachers, even when going on leave at intervals of a few years, must bear heavy transport costs. When looking round these islands on the couple of occasions I have visited them, it was borne in on me that, notwithstanding his difficulties, the Chief Protector had made very wise selections in his teachers.

These islands are now equipped with wireless. The teachers at a certain time each day can talk by wireless telephone to the head office at Thursday Island. They also receive daily broadcasts, and keep in close touch with the doctor, nurse, or police at Thursday Island. If they run short of anything they can in this way get their supplies replenished quickly. A couple of years ago their only chance of doing so was by getting a passing lugger or cutter to take a message to Thursday Island. Their conveniences have improved out of sight in recent years.

Clause 18, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 19 to 31, both inclusive, and Schedule, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment.

MEDICAL BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

(Mr. O'Keefe, Cairns, in the chair.)

Debate resumed from 19 September (see p. 472) on Mr. Hanlon's motion—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to consolidate and amend the law relating to medical practitioners and the control of the practice of medicine, and for other purposes."

Mr. MAHER (West Moreton) (3.31 p.m.): I understand from the introductory remarks of the Minister that under this Bill all the Medical Acts are repealed with the exception of the provision that relates to the Registrar for Medical, Dental, Pharmacy, Opticians, and Nurses and Masseurs Boards.

One of the main provisions referred to by the Minister was that relating to the establishment of a Medical Assessment Tribunal, to consist of a Supreme Court judge and two medical men, to deal with charges of misconduct of medical practitioners and to hear appeals from decisions of the Medical Board on the question of fees. Power is also given for the Medical Board to deal with cases of disputed fees. If a person is dissatisfied with the decision of the Medical Board an appeal lies to the Medical Assessment Tribunal.

It occurs to me to ask what would be the position of people in remote country districts who were dissatisfied with medical fees. People living in and around the city who are dissatisfied have ready access to the tribunal, but the position is much different for a person living at Augathella, for example. Some struggling man at Augathella may think that he has been overcharged by his medical adviser to the extent of £10. If he disputes the matter, will the Medical Board have to go to Augathella to decide the case? Would the State be put to the expense of sending an appeal court to Augathella to deal with a complaint of an excess charge of £10, or would it be possible for the appellant and the defendant to state their cases in writing for the consideration of the board? If the decision of the board is not satisfactory to the complainant, and he appeals to the Medical Assessment Tribunal, does it mean that that tribunal will have to go to Augathella to determine the issue? May a decision be given on written evidence? Some cases may be complicated, and it is possible that either the Medical Board or the Medical Assessment Tribunal would have to make a journey to settle a dispute to the satisfaction of both parties. The Committee is entitled to clarification of that point. The tribunal set up may in its practical working be too cumbersome to give any benefit to those who have cause for complaint against excessive charges.

My experience of the medical profession is that they are reasonable. There are many medical men who devote a great deal of time and attention to the necessitous poor, and who do not send any account for such work. That is a practice more widely prevalent than many give the profession credit for. Those with means are called upon to pay what the doctor assesses as a fair thing. I have never had a case of excessive charging. Other people have complained to me of it, but the general public are too prone to listen to the complaints of one or two who feel they have been overcharged, and fail to take into account the great amount of excellent work done by the doctors of Queensland for the needy poor and suffering without remuneration. We should keep that in mind when dealing with the medical profession. They

are not all obsessed with the desire to get rich quick.

Looking at the matter not so much from the point of view of people in the metropolitan area, as of those in the country districts, I have the feeling that in this new experiment of establishing a tribunal to deal with disputed fees, some difficulty might arise in distant parts of the State. To avoid the suggestion that the scheme is too cumbersome, it might be well if provision was made that the Medical Board could remit a disputed matter to the police magistrate in the locality for investigation and report, thus avoiding the expense the Medical Board would incur in travelling long distances.

The Secretary for Health and Home Affairs: There would be no need for that.

Mr. MAHER: What would be the method of settling such a dispute?

The Secretary for Health and Home Affairs: An aggrieved patient could send the particulars of his case and account to the Medical Board by post.

Mr. MAHER: There may be complications in that method. The doctor might have a good argument in his favour, as also might the patient, and it might not be possible to give a decision unless the parties appeared before the board. The board, having given its decision, the complainant can appeal to the Medical Assessment Tribunal. Will that tribunal require the parties to appear before it or merely adjudicate on the evidence before the board? There may be prevarication. There may be points in issue on which the truth cannot be established.

The Secretary for Health and Home Affairs: They will have to appear before the tribunal, if they appeal.

Mr. MAHER: That means that the average disputed case will never reach the tribunal. I suppose it is not likely that the disputes will be over sums much in excess of £10.

The Secretary for Health and Home Affairs: There are medical bills for hundreds of pounds.

Mr. MAHER: I regret that anybody should have to pay medical bills running into hundreds of pounds.

Mr. Dunstan: It is often so.

Mr. MAHER: I have no doubt that in major operations big sums may be involved, but I should say that, as a general rule, only a comparatively few pounds would be involved, because very few people in the community can afford to pay hundreds of pounds. I should say that there may be differences ranging up to £50 in the idea of value between patient and doctor, but that would hardly warrant the parties coming to Brisbane to appear before the Medical Assessment Tribunal.

The Secretary for Health and Home Affairs: Judges go through the country at different times.

Mr. MAHER: That is like using a steam roller to crack a nut, if the State has to bear the expense incurred by the Medical Assessment Tribunal in travelling about the country.

The Secretary for Health and Home Affairs: Judges visit the main centres of population throughout the State when attending circuit courts. They go to such places as Charleville, Longreach, and Cunnamulla.

Mr. MAHER: That is so, and I suppose that the medical assessors would then be selected in the rural areas concerned.

The Secretary for Health and Home Affairs: We can do that. We can appoint the local Government medical officer and allow the doctor to appoint whom he likes.

Mr. MAHER: The Medical Assessment Tribunal will also deal with charges of misconduct against medical practitioners. I presume that its decisions cannot be appealed against?

The Secretary for Health and Home Affairs: There is the right of appeal to the Full Court on questions of law.

Mr. MAHER: But its decision on questions of fact is final?

The Secretary for Health and Home Affairs: Decisions on questions of fact are given by the judge with the aid of his medical assessors. At the present time the appeal is only to the Supreme Court without any medical guidance at all. This gives an appeal to a Supreme Court with the guidance of medical practitioners.

Mr. MAHER: Another provision relates to the registration of specialists. In explaining this yesterday, the Minister said that existing specialists would be exempt from the provisions of the Act, but in future the Medical Board will have to approve of the registration of specialists. That is to say, the prospective specialists will have to apply to the Medical Board.

The Secretary for Health and Home Affairs: And give proof of their qualification, which are laid down.

Mr. King: There is nothing wrong with that?

Mr. MAHER: That is a highly desirable provision because I am not always sure that some men are the specialists they hold themselves out to be. There is room for the tightening up of the provisions in that respect in order to make certain that a practitioner who wishes to specialise shall have the fullest possible qualifications. Of course, most of our doctors to-day have had training in all classes of medical and surgical work. That training is necessary before they get their diplomas. Still, there are doctors who have a bent for a particular class of work and have given special study to the subject. They are dealing with cases of that kind all the time and necessarily have a greater knowledge of the disease than most family practitioners who are dealing with the whole range of medicine. That seems a useful provision.

The diplomas of universities not established by law in Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain, and Northern Ireland cannot be recognised. The section of the existing Act that gives reciprocity to other countries has apparently been omitted from this Bill.

The Secretary for Health and Home Affairs: The same qualifications are retained.

Mr. MAHER: So far as Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain, and Northern Ireland are concerned. There seems to be no warrant for omitting from the Bill Empire countries, such as Canada, South Africa——

The Secretary for Health and Home Affairs: They are included.

Mr. MAHER: They are not referred to.

The Secretary for Health and Home Affairs: It is the same as the old Act. I have forgotten the exact wording, but I know those countries are included.

Mr. MAHER: I was merely going on what the Minister said in his introductory remarks. I took it that provision had only been made for the recognition of the diploma of universities in Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain, and Northern Ireland. On the second reading stage of the Bill I shall deal more fully with that aspect of the matter. As I understand it now, only graduates from those universities can be recognised, and Empire countries such as Canada, South Africa, and India are omitted. Countries such as the United States of America and Eire should be considered, as in the past.

I recognise that the Minister is not anxious to create a condition whereby medical men from other States and countries can come here and enter into competition with our own Australian doctors. I was prepared for the possibility that this Bill would contain a provision enabling refugee doctors to practice in outlying parts of this State where it is difficult to get our Australian doctors to live. However, the Minister made it clear that no such provision is in the Bill. That does not get over the difficulty of servicing the outlying districts of Queensland with properly qualified medical practitioners.

In return for the powers to be conferred on the Medical Board it should be under the obligation to supply medical practitioners for certain selected western and north-western areas of the State, and it should be an obligation on the selected doctors to spend a certain time in those districts. If we are going to make a close preserve of the State of Queensland for our own doctors and those from New Zealand, Great Britain, and Northern Ireland, they should co-operate with the State, and so there should be an obligation upon the Medical Board to provide fully qualified doctors, perhaps young men, who will spend a certain amount of their time in the outlying parts of the State. I do not think that Parliament can pass a Bill of this kind and not make some provision for medical service in selected parts of the State where to-day it is difficult to get medical aid at all. These people who spend their lives in the lonely outback regions of the State, under tropical conditions, and with very limited refinements of our civilisation——

(Time expired.)

Dr. WATSON BROWN (Gregory) (3.52 p.m.): So far as I am able to judge from the explanation of the Bill by the Minister, I think it will be acceptable to the medical profession. For some years past the medical profession has been uncertain about what the Government were going to do in connection with their profession, and they have been subject to a considerable amount of irritation, but this Bill will probably remove most of the anomalies that have existed between them and the State.

There is not a great demand for this kind of legislation, because Queensland has a rather good system of hospital and medical service. It is not perfect, nevertheless it is a good one. There has been a genuine attempt to supply a good hospital and medical service to the whole of the community in Queensland, but it is the opinion of the medical profession that the basic requirement of any medical service is the adoption of the family-doctor system, whereby every person in the State is at liberty to select any medical practitioner whom he wishes to treat him. In our opinion, the idea of the family doctor is very much better than the attempt that is evident to-day at concentrating all patients in hospital for medical treatment. A great number of them could be better treated by their own family doctors in their own homes.

A very useful service is being given by the friendly societies in all the States of Australia, and the medical profession is acting in close co-operation with them and their members. Under this system it is possible for every member of a friendly society to select his own doctor to treat him at home. To our way of thinking, an extension of that system would be much more beneficial than any governmental-controlled system could possibly be. The ability of a patient to select his own medical man inculcates a spirit of co-operation between patient and doctor. It creates between them a spirit of complete confidence in each other. It gives the medical officer a definite personal knowledge of the family and all other conditions under which the patient lives. Such a medical practitioner must be in a very much better position to attend to those patients than a doctor who was just a number on a card attending a hospital clinic. That psychological effect is extremely helpful both to the medical practitioner and the patient.

There is another aspect of lodge practice. In a lodge practice there is a feeling of loyalty by the lodge member towards his lodge. Consequently, he does not ask for unnecessary treatment, as he would do if he was receiving medical treatment under a controlled social system. There is a tendency under a social system, be it medical or otherwise, for people to take everything they can get. We see to-day in our social services persons making every possible attempt to get

everything they can. If that is happening in our present social services, how much more so is it likely to happen under a medical service? There would be great opportunities for them to obtain additional service. The medical practitioner would feel that he was being imposed upon, and his service would lose a good deal of its value because he would lose a good deal of his enthusiasm in his work. That is an important point when considering any scheme that might bring the medical service under close Government control away from the family-doctor system.

There are several systems under which patients can receive medical attention. Another is our private hospital system, which caters for paying patients. We have our intermediate hospitals—excellent institutions—all over the State. The patient is thus able to select his own specialist or private practitioner. These are three very good services, and there has not been any great demand for an alteration in them.

The medical profession has done all it possibly could throughout the ages to maintain a high standard of ethics and practice. The medical profession in Queensland to-day, as it has always done, is attempting to maintain that ethical practice and dignity of profession according to the oath of office that a medical practitioner takes when he becomes qualified. The first and last consideration of the profession has always, and will always be, that of service. There is not a medical practitioner in the world to-day who has not at some time or another been called upon to give service for which he has never wanted and never expected any remuneration or any consideration whatsoever. As I have pointed out, too much control by the State has damaged that spirit of co-operation between patient and medical practitioner. That is one of the things that we want to guard against. The feeling of freedom and co-operation between doctor and patient is very important in the treatment of disease of any kind. The profession is anxious to protect not only its own interests, but the interests of the public, and it will do its utmost to assist the State in any way it can.

The Bill appears to be a move in the right direction. Judging from the remarks of the Minister during his introductory speech, the Bill will be a reasonable one.

In regard to the Medical Assessment Tribunal, it may interest the House to know that the British Medical Association has had a tribunal for the fixing of fees for a considerable time. A short time ago a list of fees to be charged was issued and sent to all medical practitioners in the State. Generally speaking, I think medical men are reasonable in their charges. It is very difficult for the average patient to estimate the value of the service rendered to him by his medical adviser. The establishment of this tribunal will be of great assistance to the public and of greater assistance to the medical profession.

I am of opinion that the assessors appointed to this tribunal should not be members of the Medical Board. If they are members of the Medical Board they may be already familiar with the case that comes before them.

I also think it is important that a minimum amount of disputed fees should be laid down which could be referred to the tribunal. If the matter is left open, the time of the tribunal would be taken up in dealing with charges of one guinea or two guineas.

As to specialist treatment, I might mention that about 10 years ago the British Medical Association endeavoured to introduce the same thing as the Bill contemplates, but not having any disciplinary powers was not able to do so. Whether the clause will be acceptable to the medical profession depends entirely on its precise terms. The principle is acceptable to the profession and I am sure will be a protection to the public.

I am pleased to know that the clauses dealing with refugee doctors have been deleted from the Bill. In a time such as this it would not be right to permit people of enemy nationality to practise medicine in the community. Of course, we sympathise with these unfortunate persons. We should not even like to think that they would be disloyal to the country that sheltered and adopted them, but the risk of allowing nationals of enemy countries to practise medicine in our midst is too great.

The Secretary for Health and Home Affairs: National feeling in a time of war may destroy all reason.

Dr. WATSON BROWN: A medical practitioner wields too much power to justify allowing medical practitioners of any enemy country to practise in our midst. I compliment the Minister for having deleted those clauses.

To-day we are at war, and it will be very difficult to meet the medical requirements of the military and civil population. Unfortunately, the reduction of the number of medical men available for the civil population will make it extremely difficult for some sections of the community, especially those in Western Queensland, to receive medical attention. This they thought till recently they would obtain, but now they cannot expect to get medical practitioners in such places, because military duties have depleted the ranks of the profession. There has been much difficulty in getting medical men for the western parts of the State, and had it not been for the services of the so-called flying doctor in the North and Central-West—there is a flying doctor's service in Longreach, the oldest in the world—the people there would have been in a bad way.

Despite the value of this service to the western part of this State, it has to some extent been the cause of the smaller number of medical men now practising in the outside centres. Certainly, it has been a wonderful service, but it has been responsible for the scarcity of medical practitioners in Western Queensland. It has caused a stoppage of the continuous medical service, that is so necessary to patients.

The Secretary for Health and Home Affairs: How is that?

Dr. WATSON BROWN: In this way; a small centre such as Camooweal had a medical officer 18 years ago. He received a salary from the hospital, with the right of private practice, which in such localities meant travelling for long distances. His salary of £500 to £600 a year was considerably augmented by the charge for journeys over long distances. The introduction of the aerial medical service has caused the reduction in his remuneration by abolishing most long-distance travelling.

The Secretary for Health and Home Affairs: Private patients may make use of the flying doctor's service?

Dr. WATSON BROWN: Yes. What I have stated has happened, and, consequently, the people of these small centres have now no continuous medical service, a very important item to them.

There is to-day a possibility of setting up a scheme suggested by me many years ago for the purpose of supplying the necessary services to the Western hospitals. Although I realise that it is not possible to put the suggestion into effect at the present time, I commend the following scheme to the department:—

1. Base hospitals to be established at three (3) centres—Charleville, Longreach, Cloncurry. (As at present suggested by the Department of Health and Home Affairs.)

2. Western Queensland to be divided into three (3) hospital areas, with contiguous borders—the hospital precepts for each would then be on a more equitable basis.

3. Aerial ambulance facilities to be made available at each centre.

4. A new unit to be created in the Department of Health, which could be termed "A Tropical Medical Service Unit."

5. Medical men to be appointed to this unit on a 12 months' agreement, plus six months' post-graduate course, at £850 per annum.

6. These men to be required to be sent anywhere in the tropics for service.

7. These men to be sent to each of the north-western hospitals, and that they be transferred from place to place in this area with a short period of service in each.

8. In each area they act as medical officer for the hospital and district.

9. The aerial ambulance to be made available for their use, when necessary, in their respective area, whereby patients can be transported to their nearest hospital, and treated there when possible—to be taken to the base hospital only when treatment locally cannot be given.

10. The whole unit to be given some research to carry out which will be arranged and co-ordinated at the head office, in Brisbane.

I feel sure that reasonably well-appointed base hospitals in the three main centres in the West are a necessity, but their maintenance must be a charge on the whole community using them. I suggest that the incidence of the tax for the maintenance of these hospitals should be so arranged that each base area will be contiguous with its neighbour. For instance, the Charleville, Longreach, and Cloncurry areas should be contiguous—all the people in each one paying for the upkeep of the hospitals in it instead of leaving one small section to bear the burden for the whole. The provision of an aerial ambulance for each centre is, of course, a necessity.

The appointment of medical men for 12 months, with six months' post-graduate work after that period of service, together with the remuneration offered, would, I feel sure, secure a very good type of medical man for the service, especially when it is known that they would not have to stay in one town for long periods.

The establishment of co-ordinated research will be an added incentive, as well as give great service in the scientific development of the State.

The scheme I outline would give constant medical service to each and every community in the West, with treatment in the centre in which the patient lives, where that is possible, thus removing the difficulty that is being experienced to-day of repatriating patients who have had to go to hospitals far afield when they could have been treated at the local hospital. Of course, the cost of this service will have to be met by the ordinary precepts.

I believe that the introduction of this Bill will remove most of the anomalies that exist at present, and I feel sure that the medical profession and the Department of Health and Home Affairs will be able to work in harmony and accord for the benefit of the people of Queensland.

(Time expired.)

The SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND HOME AFFAIRS (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, Ithaca) (4.15 p.m.): Most of the things that have been outlined by the hon. member for Gregory are just what we are endeavouring to bring about in that district. Many years ago, after giving consideration to the conditions under which the people in the West had to live, we decided that we would make Charleville, Longreach, and Cloncurry the three base centres for the whole of the west of Queensland, and ultimately have three hospital districts only. As the hon. member pointed out, quite a large number of people in Queensland escape their legitimate liability to the hospitals in their districts by being outside of the hospital area. Those who are outside of the area maintain an agitation to stay outside; they do not want to come into the hospital district, because they would have to pay a few shillings or a couple of pounds a year towards the upkeep of the hospital. That agitation is continuous. If the whole of the people in those areas bore their own share of hospital maintenance, the burden on the individual would be very small indeed.

It is utterly impossible to provide medical services and hospital services in every little town in Western Queensland. In the first place, the cost would be beyond all reason, and,

in the second place, if we got the money given to us to pay the salary of a doctor to go to those little places or towns, he would soon leave for want of practice. Nothing kills a medical man more than the want of practice. There would be nobody there to treat. Take a little place like Burketown—I should not like to submit myself to the tender mercies of a doctor who had been 10 years in Burketown. He would be lucky if he had one patient a week coming to see him. He would lose a great deal of his skill of diagnosis and his skill in surgery if he was out there for any length of time. On each occasion I have been up there, the only patients I noticed were a couple of aboriginals who were perhaps getting treatment for venereal disease. They are evidently a healthy race up that way. In those tiny little places up there no doctor would stay because there would be nothing for him to do. The quickest way for a doctor to lose his skill is to be idle.

We have made an attempt to establish a big north-western scheme with a staff of medical men at Cloncurry, who would be well paid and live in centres where they would have education facilities for their children and amusement for their women folk, but the landholders in that district, who would be compelled to pay some contribution towards the upkeep of the staff of doctors have successfully organised against the scheme. Ultimately, it must be done. That is the only way in which there will be decent medical services for the people of the far West.

Tropical medicine, which is so important in this State—as referred to by the hon. member for Gregory—is receiving the attention of the department. In our own medical school some teaching of tropical medicine is being carried on. As a matter of fact, the need for teaching tropical medicine and preventive medicine—that is, the degree of public health—was one of the greatest factors in urging the Government to spend that great amount of money on the medical school for Queensland. I am a bit disappointed to find that the faculty, for some reason—I do not know why; I have formed an opinion of my own—did not want to give a degree of tropical hygiene in the Queensland University, and, in the same way, they did not want to give a degree of public health. There are few medical men in Queensland with the tropical medicine degree, and very few in Australia with the degree of public health. The present medical officer to the Brisbane City Council has not the degree of public health. At the time the vacancy existed for a medical officer I was advised that no suitable man was available who had that degree. The arrangement made was to accept a doctor who would undertake to obtain his degree at the first available opportunity, which apparently has not yet arrived. The point I make is that no State and no University in Australia is in as good a position to teach tropical medicine, particularly preventive medicine, than the Queensland University is, and it is a shame that students are not being encouraged by the profession to take these degrees. I cannot see why there should be any objection to it, unless it is that the young students will be armed with a qualifying degree that is not held by the great majority of the profession practising in Queensland. That may not be the reason, it may not be any selfish motive at all, but if there is any other reason I do not know it.

We shall not be giving the people in this great tropical State the service to which they are entitled unless we give the medical men in this State an opportunity to obtain a knowledge of tropical medicine, and as a Department of Public Health we shall not be giving the taxpayers the return to which they are entitled if we do not spread the knowledge of preventive medicine and get a little away from the principle of having a profession who live only by treating sickness. Our objective must be to remove the cause of sickness, to strike at the root of the trouble, and if we do not do that we, as a Department of Public Health, are not giving the people the service that they have a right to expect from a Government department. Every effort must be made to prevent the people from getting sick.

That is one of the reasons why we decided to establish a medical school here, even though it cost an immense amount of money. A large sum was spent in building the school, and a largely increased grant has had to be given to the University to maintain the school. I am very disappointed to know that the medical faculty at the University has not entered wholeheartedly into the planning of this service, which is essential to the people of Queensland. Why should any old-established medical practitioner feel aggrieved because the new fledglings are being equipped in a manner in which he is not? Why should obstacles be placed in the way of equipping these people with additional knowledge of a subject that the very busy medical man has not the time to make a special study of now—that is, tropical medicine?

It has never been realised by the Australian people that the training in all British universities has been in countries where tropical conditions did not exist. The only interest shown in tropical medicine in England was to concentrate on services for the people of India, the near East, Egypt, Northern Africa, and so on. Great Britain was interested only in providing a medical service in those tropical countries, and the people in those countries had a right to look to Great Britain for that service, but there was no such urge on the part of Great Britain to serve the needs of the white population in other tropical countries because most of the services were required in temperate zones. In Queensland we have the largest permanent white population in the tropics of any country in the world, and we should concentrate on a study of tropical diseases, but in that study we should really plan to eliminate them. Wonderful work has been done in other countries in the elimination of tropical diseases, and the same good service can be given here if the trained man is made available to the people.

I was pleased to hear the hon. member for Gregory, a member of the medical profession, approve of the Bill and give it his blessing. There has never been any desire on the part of the Government to do anything unjust by the medical profession. But the Government are bound also to give what protection is necessary to the community as a whole. No question can be viewed by the Government from the standpoint of the interest of any particular section. At all times community interest must be the predominant factor in guiding the Government. When community interest and the interest of an individual or group of individuals conflict, community interest must prevail. Although the latter section may feel aggrieved because of some little inconvenience caused by governmental action, the Government must legislate for service to the community as a whole.

I am quite sure, notwithstanding the fact that some medical men will complain of this Bill—I have not seen any Bill yet that someone or other did not find fault with or cavil at—the bulk of them will, despite the introduction of many new features not previously attempted, concede that it is an earnest attempt by the Government to give better service to the community as a whole, and that at the same time it in no way interferes with or unjustly treats members of their profession.

Motion (Mr. Hanlon) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING.

Bill presented, and, on motion of Mr. Hanlon, read a first time.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT (WATER, IRRIGATION, AND WIRE NETTING) BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

(Mr. O'Keefe, Cairns, in the chair.)

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. P. Pease, Herbert) (4.30 p.m.): I move—

> "That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to make better provision for rural development by providing improved facilities to producers with respect to irrigation and water supply and the supply of wire netting; to amend the Rural Development Co-ordination of Advances Act of 1938 in certain particulars; and for other purposes."

I think this is a Bill that will have a rather speedy passage through the House because there is nothing controversial in it. The main purpose of the Bill is to implement Government policy in connection with water conservation. It enables the Bureau of Rural Development, from a water fund to be constituted under its control and derived from the sale of debentures, to advance the cost of water-supply schemes to the Sub-Department of Irrigation, who, in turn, can re-advance to local boards. That really means that the Rural Development Board will be enabled to go ahead with the Government's scheme, particularly in providing water supplies and water conservation in the rural districts.

Mr. Nimmo: Another borrowing authority.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No, the borrowing has already been done. This is an employment authority. I take it the Opposition are mainly concerned about employment measures, and this is probably one of the best employment measures that the House will have before it this session.

The Bill also conveys power to the Bureau of Rural Development to advance money to the Secretary for Public Lands for advances to settlers for the purchase and erection of wire and wire netting. Previously, there was a Commonwealth Government fund for this purpose. It was the function of the States and the Commonwealth up to 1933, but at that date the Commonwealth withdrew the support it had given. From that date until now the provision of wire and wire netting to selectors has been a charge on the Government's loan funds. It is now intended that the Rural Development Board shall administer that activity and make advances to settlers to enable more blocks of land to be wire-netted.

The Bill is designed to co-ordinate and link up the facilities of—

1. The Co-ordinator-General;
2. The Bureau of Rural Development;
3. The Department of Labour and Industry;

in the matter of—

(a) Country water supplies;

(b) Provision of wire and wire netting.

It is really a co-ordinating Bill. It is a Bill that is absolutely necessary in order to link up all the powers the various branches of the Government service have under their control. The Bill is linked up with the Land Acts, Water Acts, Irrigation Acts, Wire and Wire Netting Advances Acts and Rural Development Co-ordination of Advances Act.

Under the present Irrigation Acts no irrigation undertaking can be established without a special Act of Parliament. Only one has been authorised to date, the Dawson Valley scheme. Instead of passing special Acts for every water scheme embarked on by the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works, it has been decided that the necessary power should be given under this Bill for the Governor in Council to initiate these water schemes. Under this Bill the Governor in Council, on the recommendation of the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works, and after a report from the Irrigation Commission, may establish irrigation for water-supply undertakings not to exceed a cost of £250,000. On approval by the Governor in Council notice is to be published of the scheme, as is

provided for at present in the Water Acts in connection with water-supply trusts. Persons affected may lodge objections and necessary inquiries are made. The Governor in Council may approve or disapprove or refer the matter back for further report to the Co-ordinator-General. Notification of approval must be published in the "Government Gazette." The Commissioner of Irrigation is then authorised to construct. At the present time we have not a Commissioner of Irrigation. The Land Administration Board is constituted as the Commissioner of Irrigation and Water Supply, and is appointed a General Irrigation and Water Supply Board for the State, with all the usual powers as a body corporate for this purpose. That, of course, brings it into compliance with the previous Acts.

The Land Administration Board has power to appoint local boards for irrigation or water-supply schemes, and for joint irrigation and water-supply schemes. Not only can they carry out schemes approved of by the Co-ordinator-General, but they can also give to the small holders in the State the right to carry out irrigation or water-supply schemes. As in the present Water Act, local boards are provided for, and for the smaller schemes they are to be constituted by three persons, two nominated by the Governor in Council and one to be elected by the ratepayers as prescribed under the Water Acts. The powers under the present Water Act are conferred on these boards.

The rating powers are—

1. To the general board—that is, the Department of Public Lands—which will have to apply the rate where there is no local board; and

2. The local board—where the local boards are appointed to take on schemes throughout the country.

The basis of rating is the best use the land can be put to. There may be differential rating in one area. It will be understood that there cannot be a hard and fast rule for all areas. All local boards will be under the control of the Land Administration Board, which is the central authority.

The cost of any work is deemed to be a loan to the central authority. The cost of any undertaking is to be published in the "Government Gazette," including any subsidy granted by the Governor in Council. The power to grant subsidies is provided in this Bill. Loans are not to exceed 30 years, and the Governor in Council has power to fix the terms of loan, the rate of interest, and general conditions. The Governor in Council has also power to make grants or loans (subsidy loans) under section 69 of the Income (State Development) Tax Act.

The central authority shall be the Land Administration Board where no local board is constituted or where a local board has been dissolved. It is necessary to have that power in order that if a scheme is started by a local board and for some reason discontinued, the central authority—the Land Administration Board—may proceed with the job to conclusion.

The central authority—the Land Administration Board—has power to advance money to landholders in an area for development work on their holding. This includes water reticulation and water conservation. The terms of advances are to be fixed by the Governor in Council.

Power is given to the Bureau of Rural Development to make such advances subject also to the Governor in Council.

There are general powers to the Bureau of Rural Development to make advances from the sale of debentures, to the Land Administration Board for water-supply projects, or to any controlling board for the construction, maintenance, or regulation of works, subject to the terms and conditions and securities approved by the Governor in Council.

Another major co-ordination clause is provided to give power to the Bureau of Rural Development to advance money to the Secretary for Public Lands for advance to settlers for the purchase of wire and wire netting. This has been found necessary because the land that has been cleared from prickly-pear causes a greater demand for wire and wire netting. It is requisite that a greater sum of money be found for that purpose than hitherto. Those in charge of small schemes should be able to approach the Rural Development Board and, provided it has the money, obtain an advance. In order to safeguard the advance, the Governor in Council has to approve of the terms and conditions.

The Bill provides all the necessary legal machinery for effective and workable co-ordination of the Irrigation Acts, Water Acts, Income (State Development) Tax Acts, State Development and Public Works Organisation Act, and Rural Development Co-ordination of Advances Act.

It really is a co-ordination of all the Government departments concerned, in order to secure maximum development at the most economical cost.

Since the existence of the Bureau of Rural Development, it has been found necessary to alter the Act in some respects. At present £300 is the maximum amount that may be advanced for the purchase of rams or ewes for fat-lamb raising on approved properties. It is now proposed to increase that maximum to £1,000.

Provision is also made for advances by the Bureau of Rural Development of short-term loans for special purposes, such as the purchase of fertilisers, and the cost of harvesting and preparing land for special crops. Previously, approximately £10,000 a year was made available for this purpose by the Agricultural Bank. The Agricultural Bank is now merged in the Bureau of Rural Development, and this Bill makes provision to give the bureau powers of administration of these

loans. The loans will be mostly small and for special purposes.

Mr. Maher: It is a real Chinese puzzle now to work out your co-ordinating. Last year we gave powers to the Rural Development Bureau. Now you are delegating powers from the bureau back to the Department of Public Lands.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No. The bureau finds the funds, and it in turn must delegate certain powers of administration to the Land Administration Board, so that that board may take care that these funds are not mis-spent.

Mr. Maher: It will need a Philadelphia lawyer to unravel the tangle.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Not at all. We are doing all these things in an endeavour to do what the Opposition are continually saying should be done—to help the man in the country to develop.

Power is taken also to provide for the necessary security under these advances. The loans will be mostly short-term, with a maximum of, say, £200. As the Leader of the Opposition knows, this practice has been going on for some time, and it is now desired to bring this work under the jurisdiction of the Land Administration Board, which is given power to see that the money is properly spent.

The Co-ordinator-General of Public Works has power to advance money to the bureau under the Income (State Development) Tax Act, but the existing system has been found to be too unwieldy, and the ratification of advances made is provided for in this Bill.

We are making provision, too, that ringbarking, scrubfalling, clearing, stumping, grubbing, and fencing loans may be continued under the terms and conditions of the Income (State Development) Tax Act.

Those are really all the principles contained in the Bill, and on the second reading I shall give hon. members an idea of what has been done up to date and what will be effected after all these departments are co-ordinated. The Bill really implements the Government's policy of helping the man in the country, in that it gives him help to obtain a water supply and to carry out necessary ringbarking, netting, and fencing.

Mr. Nimmo: Do you propose to raise your own money?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Power to raise money is already given. The Agricultural Bank had that power, but that work will now be handed over to the Bureau of Rural Development, which is administered by a board consisting of an officer from the Department of Agriculture and Stock, one from the Treasury, and one from the Land Administration Board. I commend the Bill to the favourable consideration of hon. members.

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at 4.46 p.m.