

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 28 SEPTEMBER 1939

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

QUESTIONS.**INLAND DEFENCE ROAD.**

Mr. MAHER (West Moreton) asked the Premier—

“Referring to the proposed inland defence road described in the Brisbane ‘Telegraph’ of 22nd instant—

“1. Was the construction of this road requested by the Commonwealth Government as an essential defence measure?

“2. Was it proposed by the State to the Commonwealth Government?

“3. Has it been approved by the Commonwealth Government as an essential defence measure?

"4. Has Commonwealth assistance towards its construction been applied for, and, if so, with what result?"

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

"1 to 4. In October last I suggested to the then Prime Minister, as a practical contribution towards a plan for co-operation between the Commonwealth and the States in developmental works of defence value in Queensland, the construction of an inland road suitable for military and other purposes. The following month I submitted as a tentative formula to serve as a basis of concrete discussion between the two Governments a formula proposal for a military road from Goondiwindi to Rockhampton. In a letter dated 15 March last, the late Prime Minister forwarded a schedule containing brief particulars of the projects which his Government had under consideration relating to railways, roadways, &c., which, if taken in hand by the Queensland Government, would contribute to the defence of the country. This list included repairs and reconstruction to make a first-class military road from Cairns-Atherton-Charters Towers - Townsville - Charters Towers - Clermont - Emerald - Duaringa - Baralaba-Rannes-Banana-Kidsvold-Gayndah-Blackbutt-Esk-Ferndale-Ipswich. This was stated to be the main inland route from Brisbane to Townsville. 'The railway runs along the coast and is vulnerable, but the road is west of the Divide, and, except in the southern portion, generally secure from seawards.'"

COTTON BOUNTY.

Mr. T. L. WILLIAMS (Port Curtis) asked the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—

"1. What will be the result of the proposed new cotton bounty if carried into effect?

"2. What action is being taken to prepare an alternative case for presentation to the Federal Government?"

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

"1. Reduction in bounty of 1d. per lb. of lint, with a maximum annual bounty fixed at £130,000, would result in a diminution of returns on seed cotton of approximately .35d. per lb., and at present ruling rates would restrict production to 15,000 bales of lint per year available for bounty, instead of an immediate objective of 30,000 bales and an ultimate objective of 50,000 bales, which would be required to meet Australian demands.

"2. This morning I am meeting the Cotton Board in conference, with a view to preparing a case for presentation to the Minister for Customs at a conference which is being arranged, if possible, for an early date."

REDISTRIBUTION OF STATE ELECTORATES; COMPULSORY PREFERENTIAL VOTING.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Debate resumed from 21 September (see p. 517) 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 DANIEL (Keppel) (10.35 a.m.): Mr. Speaker—

The Premier: Are you not accepting the advice of the hon. member for Hamilton?

Mr. DANIEL: This debate is very interesting when one compares the speeches made by Government members, particularly the Premier and the Attorney-General, with those they made on the Electoral Districts Bill of 1931. I, Mr. Speaker, should be the last person in the world to accuse the Premier of not knowing to the full what democracy means and is. But when the Premier in his speech on this motion says that he would not entertain the proposal I can only conclude that the hon. gentleman has not a precise understanding of the results at the last general election. By that I mean he has not a full understanding of the percentages of votes and representation in this Assembly. At that election the Labour Party polled 47.5 per cent. of the primary votes, taking into account the seats not contested by giving the sitting members 66 per cent. of the votes in those electorates. Labour, however, got 71 per cent. of the representation in Parliament. On the other hand, all the other parties received 52.5 per cent. of the votes, but were able to get only 29 per cent. of representation.

Mr. Bedford: You have not an exact basis upon which to make the calculation.

Mr. DANIEL: I have.

Mr. Bedford: You have not.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. DANIEL: I have an absolutely exact basis, and have given the House the exact figures.

In the debate on the Electoral Districts Bill of 1931, the Premier, as reported at page 684 of "Hansard," said—

"When a Government endeavours to introduce a Bill whereby the electoral boundaries can be so manipulated and the quotas so fixed as to give an advantage to one party over another, then the purposes of representative government are defeated, and the public, to some extent, are thwarted."

That is the position in which we find this House to-day, the Labour Party having 71 per

cent. representation although it received only 47 per cent. of the votes polled.

At page 785 the Premier said—

“Representation in Parliament does not belong to the Government or to a member of Parliament. It is something that is the possession of the people—a right which they should jealously guard. An alert, intelligent democracy would not tolerate for any indefinite period any interference by a Government or a Parliament with any of its basic rights.”

Only a few weeks ago we had the spectacle of a mob of men making a raid on Parliament House. What was the reason for that raid? I understand that those gentlemen had endeavoured to get an interview with some of the responsible Ministers of the Government.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The subject mentioned by the hon. member is before the court and is, therefore, sub judice.

Mr. DANIEL: I was endeavouring to ask if it is not possible that that raid was the result of a feeling amongst those gentlemen that they did not have proper representation in this House.

The Secretary for Health and Home Affairs: I strongly object to any hon. member's making excuses on behalf of anybody who is at present under charge before a court, as the hon. member is doing.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have already drawn the hon. member's attention to the fact that the subject is sub judice.

The Premier: You will make people think that you are an accomplice.

Mr. DANIEL: Not at all; I am merely indicating that although we have constitutional government, a good constitutionalist recognises that the adoption of extra-constitutional methods is often necessary to bring about some very desirable constitutional reforms. The Eureka stockade is an instance of that, and if we delve further into history we find that the people of England repeatedly showed that they would not tolerate any form of autocratic or despotic government. A grand example of this is to be found in the signing of Magna Charta, which was the result of a rising by the people against despotism. The adoption of that extra-constitutional method led to the establishment of what is now the charter of British justice.

I say emphatically that there is a strong feeling amongst the public that they are not getting proper representation in this House. Only about 18 months ago we saw a large body of men forming a procession and marching on this building. This is simply because they feel that they are not receiving their dues and rights.

The Secretary for Health and Home Affairs: They were organised by the National Party.

Mr. DANIEL: I feel that the Government are not acting in a manner consistent with true democratic principles.

Mr. NIMMO: I rise to a point of order. I think the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs should be asked to withdraw the remark that they were organised by the National Party.

Mr. SPEAKER: That was merely an expression of opinion.

Mr. DANIEL: I was very interested to hear the Premier stating in this House the other day that he moved an amendment of the Electoral Districts Act to provide for a permanent electoral redistribution commission. I believe the appointment of such a commission is highly desirable, and I should like the Premier to tell us why he has not established such a body. I have not the slightest doubt that a permanent commission that would be beyond reproach, one comprising members of the judiciary, would be a highly satisfactory body, and I urge the hon. gentleman to put the proposal into effect. He has the opportunity to-day, and I say that it is his duty to maintain the principles of democracy and democratic government. No-one can say that the State of Queensland is being ruled to-day by representatives of the majority of the people of the State. No-one can deny the figures put forward by the Leader of the Opposition. Labour at the last elections polled 263,971 votes, and the other parties polled 291,997 votes, an excess of about 28,000 votes. In other words, the State of Queensland is being ruled to-day on a minority vote—a minority vote, as I said before, of about 28,000 persons. That is sufficient evidence of the lack of proper representation in this House of the different parties in the State. It takes 6,000 votes to put a member of the Labour Party in his seat; for the Country Party it takes 9,896 votes; and for the United Australia Party 18,582 votes. Can anybody say that that is fair and true representation? I say that it is not.

Mr. Jesson: How do you account for the fact that the hon. member for Wynnum is sitting in this House with 3,000 votes when there were 7,000 votes against him.

Mr. DANIEL: I am taking the actual figures.

A Government Member: Are you taking into consideration the fact that the hon. member for Cunningham was not opposed?

Mr. DANIEL: I have taken that fact into consideration and allowed the hon. member for Cunningham 66 per cent. of the voters.

The Attorney-General, in reply to the Leader of the Opposition, used a somewhat specious argument in an endeavour to show that the contention put forward by the Leader of the Opposition was wrong. He quoted figures for the 1934 redistribution, and said that that redistribution was infinitely more perfect than any conducted before. He said that the percentage of enrolment to representation

in the various divisions of the State was as follows:—

Division.	Percentage.
Metropolitan area—	
Enrolment	35
Representation	32
Southern Queensland—	
Enrolment	29
Representation	30
Central Queensland—	
Enrolment	10.53
Representation	11.29
North Queensland—	
Enrolment	18.35
Representation	19.35
South-Western Queensland—	
Enrolment	5.81
Representation	6.45

It would appear from those figures that there was a fair and equitable distribution of representation in electorates throughout the State. But when one takes into consideration the aggregate votes cast in the different divisions of the State one finds that in the metropolitan area Labour candidates received 46 per cent. of the votes, and with that percentage obtained 75 per cent. of the representation in this Assembly. The remaining 54 per cent. of the electors of the State could get only 25 per cent. of the representation in this House.

Can anyone justly say that that is a fair distribution of the electoral boundaries? My complaint is not about the present number of electorates, but about the way in which the electoral boundaries have been drawn. It is fair to say that there has been some manipulation of the electoral boundaries with the object of nullifying certain votes that may not be cast for the Government. For instance, the hon. member for Hamilton received about 6,000 votes out of a total of 10,000 in his electorate.

Mr. Duggan: He is not complaining.

Mr. DANIEL: He is complaining. He has complained about the manipulation of the electoral boundaries which has had the effect of nullifying the United Australia Party votes.

Mr. Power: You are now casting a reflection on the commission—

Mr. DANIEL: The Premier has already cast a reflection on the commission—

The Premier: I did not.

Mr. DANIEL: Of 1931.

The Premier: I did not.

Mr. DANIEL: Yes.

The Premier: I did not. I never cast reflections on anyone; I only tell the truth about them.

Mr. DANIEL: And that is all that I am doing now.

I read the speech of the hon. gentleman very carefully, and although he did not

expressly say that there had been some manipulation he said so by implication.

The Premier: No. There is nothing ambiguous about my speeches.

Mr. DANIEL: No, nor was there about the speech that the hon. gentleman delivered in Townsville; it was very cleverly thought out. On another occasion the Premier did imply that the commission had manipulated the electoral boundaries to satisfy the then Government, but strangely enough under that redistribution the Labour Party were able to obtain a majority in this House.

The Premier: The Labour Government did not pass that Act.

Mr. DANIEL: I know that, but my point is that the redistribution was so fair that the Labour Party was able to take the reins of government. The average number of votes cast for each Labour representative at the 1932 elections was 7,569, and the average number cast for each representative of the Country-National Party as 7,771, or only about 200 more. I am pointing out that that redistribution was equitable, and that there had been no manipulation of the electoral boundaries.

The Attorney-General pointed out that the last redistribution provided for an enrolment in the Central district of 10.53 per cent., and that the representation was 11.29 per cent., but in the Central district the Labour Party obtained only 59 per cent. of the effective votes, which gave it 77 per cent. of the representation in that district in the House, while the other parties received 41 per cent. of the effective votes, but only 23 per cent. of the representation. Anyone who would say that that was an equitable distribution of the electoral boundaries is prejudiced.

Mr. Jesson: How do you suggest that the boundaries should be drawn?

Mr. DANIEL: I could cut them up very well. As a matter of fact, in his speech on the Electoral Districts Act in 1931 the present Attorney-General said that the boundaries could be so drawn as to give one party such an advantage that it could win the whole of the 72 seats—at that time the State was divided into 72 electorates. I agree that the boundaries could be manipulated to give one party an advantage over another, but according to the Premier that practice would be wrong in a democratic State.

Mr. Jesson: That was the time when your party cut out eight Labour seats.

Mr. DANIEL: Yes, because they did not have the quota of electors prescribed by the Act.

As the hon. member knows full well, several Ministers of the Crown held seats that did not contain 3,000 electors. According to the Act the minimum number of electors should have been close on 7,000. That was the reason why there was a redistribution in 1931. There was no other reason. The fact remains that that redistribution must have been made on an equitable basis, because Labour was

returned to the Treasury benches on an average of about 200 fewer votes than the Country-National Party.

The Attorney-General: On that reasoning our previous redistribution must have been a very equitable one, because your party was returned to the Treasury benches.

Mr. DANIEL: In the period the Attorney-General speaks of there were 72 electorates. Of that number 17 represented by Labour candidates were below the statutory minimum allowed under the Electoral Districts Act of 1910. When the Moore Government were returned to this House, 10 members of the Opposition represented electorates above the statutory maximum allowed, whereas only three members of the Labour Party, the then Government, represented electorates above the statutory maximum. On the other hand, one member of the Opposition represented an electorate below the statutory minimum as against 17 by the Labour Party. That shows there was no need for a redistribution when it was made. The redistribution made in 1931 must have been equitable because the average vote required to elect a Labour member at the general election in 1932 was 7,569 and to elect a non-Labour member 7,771. That average is altogether different to-day. In 1938, after the redistribution made by this Government, Labour obtained only 6,000 votes for each elected member as against 9,896 for each Country Party member and 18,500 for each United Australia Party member. What a tremendous difference! If the Attorney-General cannot see the truth of those figures, all I can say is he is a biased person.

Let me proceed further and quote the redistribution as it affects electorates in Northern Queensland. The enrolments for the North Queensland electorates equal 18.35 per cent. and the representation 19.35 per cent. That on the face of it looks very fair until we analyse the votes cast for the respective parties. That analysis shows that Labour obtained 54 per cent. of the total number of votes polled and yet has 100 per cent. of the representation. The remaining 46 per cent. of the electorates have no representation whatever in this House. That is another reason why the Leader of the Opposition has moved this motion in favour of a redistribution of electoral boundaries. Can any hon. member say those figures reflect a fair distribution of the electoral boundaries? Such facts are prejudicial to the best principles of democracy.

Opposition Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. DANIEL: The Government would do well to consider this motion in a favourable light.

The Attorney-General: Wherever you have the single electorate system, as in England, here, and elsewhere in the British Dominions, you cannot work out an equal proportion of votes and representatives. It would never work. You have enormous majorities one way or another. The results in England show that.

Mr. DANIEL: There is ample evidence here that the votes of 46 per cent. of the people in Northern Queensland are nullified. There can be no doubt about that, otherwise they would obtain some representation. It is all very well for the Attorney-General to say that under the system of single electorates you cannot get an equal distribution of representation, but you can get a more equal distribution by distributing the electoral boundaries properly.

Mr. Jesson: Tell us how.

Mr. DANIEL: I could do it very effectively.

Mr. Duggan: You could do it effectively, but not fairly.

Mr. DANIEL: I could do it effectively and fairly, as the commission did in 1931.

No-one can deny the fairness of that commission, because after their redistribution the Labour Party was returned with an average vote that was a little under the average vote with which Opposition members were returned. There is no equitable ratio here between the average votes cast for Labour members and those cast for Opposition members.

I maintain that it is a bad thing for this Government to have such a huge unwieldy majority. You do not get the best government where there is such a huge majority, because there is a tendency for the Government to become despotic and autocratic. We are hearing in various quarters outside this House that the Government of the day have become an autocratic and despotic Government.

By moving this motion we have at least stirred the Government to make a statement about the contingent vote.

Opposition Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. DANIEL: Many people were wondering what the Government were going to do about contingent voting, and this motion has done so much good—it has stirred the Government to state their policy and declare where they stand on this democratic principle. We know very well an idea was prevalent that the Government were going to abolish contingent voting, and I think this motion has forced them to declare themselves.

I do not think there could be a fairer method of obtaining true representation of the people in this House than compulsory preferential voting. That is the method that is adopted by the Labour Governments in the other States of Australia. The Western Australian Government have adopted that method and so have the Labour Government of Tasmania. They realise that it is a principle that is adopted under all democratic Governments to secure true and proper representation and get true expression of the feeling of the people. That principle is also adopted by the Labour Party in this State when selecting its Ministers.

Opposition Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. DANIEL: They believe that is a proper method to obtain the true feeling of

the members of the party. That is why they adopt the preferential vote.

Government Members: They do not.

Mr. DANIEL: Of course it is. What is the difference between an exhaustive ballot and a preferential vote?

Mr. Power: A lot of difference.

Mr. DANIEL: None whatever.

Mr. Bedford interjected.

Mr. DANIEL: You could have a preferential vote.

Mr. Bedford: That is not an exhaustive ballot.

Mr. DANIEL: I say it is—it is tantamount to an exhaustive ballot.

Mr. Maher: It is the same principle.

Mr. King: You do not understand.

Mr. DANIEL: It is the hon. member who is dull this morning.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. DANIEL: Before sitting down I wish to touch again on the Premier's speech in this debate. The Premier belittled himself when in an endeavour to malign the Leader of the Opposition he made use of a confidential report.

A Government Member: It was broadcast.

Mr. DANIEL: It was not broadcast. The Leader of the Opposition did not receive such a report. Therefore, to me, it was a confidential report and the Premier used that report in an endeavour to belittle the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Jones: Why do you not sack McDonald?

Another Government Member interjected.

Mr. DANIEL: If the Premier has done any good thing, he has done that for the Country Party, but his action in using that confidential report was tantamount to a man's making use of a private letter in an endeavour to belittle and malign another person. It is despicable that the first gentleman in the land should so belittle himself in an endeavour to gain an advantage over an opponent. I honestly believe that the Leader of the Opposition would never have used such a document in an endeavour to belittle the Premier. It is lowering the prestige of Parliament that the leader of Parliament should so demean himself as to make use of such a document. Is it any wonder that the public look upon politicians as so much—I will not use the word.

Mr. Bedford: You mean you have not the word.

Mr. DANIEL: Look upon them as most doubtful. It is because of such actions as this. I cannot understand the hon. gentleman's doing such a thing. His conduct is an enigma. One day he makes a grand gesture;

he gives £1,000 to the University of Queensland. A few days later he belittles himself by using a confidential report in an endeavour to gain an unfair advantage in a small matter. It was a petty thing and his action did not become a Premier of this State.

Mr. Jones: You can't take it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. DANIEL: It is the duty of a Government holding democratic principles to see to it that the different sections of the electors have fair representation, and if the Attorney-General reviews his figures, he must come to the conclusion, particularly in regard to Northern Queensland, where the Labour Party got 54 per cent. of the votes but 100 per cent. of the representation in this House, that there is need for a redistribution of electoral boundaries in Queensland.

The TREASURER (Hon. F. A. Cooper, Bremer) (11.9 a.m.): We are likely to get away from the subject after having heard so many speeches delivered by members of the Opposition. After all, a vote is an instrument given for the purpose of registering one's choice. If that is so, we must not get our facts out of proper perspective.

The history of the ballot is interesting. It is by no means a new institution. I believe it was in existence long before the Christian era. It has come down to us through centuries; it is, in fact, something of which it is worth our while to trace to the very beginning.

Very early in the history of Greece and Italy questions were decided by vote of the people—not all, I admit, but there were careful and conscientious rulers who desired to learn the will of the people before taking certain action. Matters were submitted to the assembly of the people in general and approval was given or withheld, much in the same way as to-day, by noise, the strength of the shout or the rattling of the spear on the shield. At any rate, it was noise that signified approval or disapproval.

But even in those days the open vote was subject to all sorts of influences that were not strictly aboveboard, and somebody in those days invented something that later on came to be known as the secret ballot. As far back as 200 to 150 B.C. we had the introduction of the tabella, which was a piece of wood coated with wax, upon which a record of the vote was made. It was in that way that the tribunes of the plebs were elected in Rome. The tribunes were the choice of the people, and, being the definite choice of the people, they had a definite standing and definite work. They had supreme power because they represented the dominant vote of the people of the time. It is just that system of the dominant vote that I want to emphasise. The great struggle between the plebeians and the patricians was due solely to the idea that whatever was dominant should rule and should remain. After all, it is the dominant note in the will of the people that we want to ascertain, not a wishy-washy thing, not some inferior undertone,

but the real dominant note in the will of the people.

Let us take the vote as we have it to-day, and the Opposition's desire to have what they call compulsory preferential voting. I may go into a booth to-day to cast a vote, and, being of the mind of the gentleman who refused to vote for either the hon. member for West Moreton or his opponent, I may do something on my ballot paper that makes it absolutely informal. I express no choice whatever, yet that is a vote; I have satisfied the law. I have thus done all that is required of me. Such a man would express no opinion and desire, and make no choice. But if I am to be subjected to the will of the Opposition, I have to go into a polling booth and I have to vote for the man of my choice first, and, after that, I have to mark my ballot paper according to some other supposed preference that I might have. I might not have that preference, and I cannot for the life of me see how we are to ascertain the dominant note of the will of the people, if I am to express something that is not in my mind.

Let us take it that I do go into a booth to express my opinion. What opinion have I? I have the opinion that this country should be ruled and governed in a particular way. I have been steeped in Australian sentiment. I have in me, I believe, some of that spirit that built this continent of ours, the spirit of the sheep man who was determined to do what he could in sheep, of the cattle man who was determined to do his very best in the cattle industry, of the agriculturist who went into the scrub and hewed a farm out of it because he believed in being a farmer, and of the man who went into the wilderness and prospected and found the veins and leads and lodes that gave us the big mining industry that we have—all dominant people possessed of the desire to do the one thing that they believed was right for them. It was this that built up this great Australia of ours.

Mr. Deacon: Is that what you believe?

The TREASURER: I believe that that is what has built Australia, and I believe that the very hon. member who is speaking has as an individual that dominant note in the matter of progress. But what is he politically, and what does he want to make me politically? He wants me to be something that I am not. He wants me to be a mixer of colours that I believe will not mix. If I am to be a colour-mixer, to get at some particular colour in which I have no belief or faith, am I to follow it? Am I, after having expressed my opinion, to take the colour of the Nationalist Party, that blatant blue, and mix it with something in which I believe, and then, not being satisfied with the blatant blue of the United Australia Party, what am I to take from the Country Party? Am I to take that doleful, drab, desolate, dumb colour of their outlook and their policy, and am I to mix that with the colour that I believe to be the correct colour for the government of this country? If I want to get away from that, am I to take the independent colour,

that colour which seems to be something between a suede and an elephant's breath that has nothing definite, beautiful, or dominant in it?

The policy that I want to follow is the policy that has been in accordance with the dominant note that has built Australia in the past. The country is where it is to-day because we people believed in a definite and straightforward policy and not because we believed in some wishy-washy indefinite sort of thing. How can we get strength and virility where there is no strength and virility?

Mr. Yeates: You are going all around the subject.

The TREASURER: And I will get to the kernel of it this very moment. Take the hon. member for Cunningham. What is he? I believe that he is one of the best horse-breeders in the State, a man who knows more about the horse and dog than any other man in this country. He stands for the Clydesdale or the Suffolk Punch or something of that kind. Would he, I ask you, try to mix the Clydesdales or the Suffolk Punch with the brumby, and call the result a decent thing because it expressed the wishes of all people interested in horses? Am I to express my preference for people for whom I have no preference? I could ask the hon. member for Cunningham to build a horse not as he desires—not a Clydesdale, not a Suffolk Punch, so dearly loved by the hon. member for Stanley, not a brumby that the hon. member for East Toowoomba worships—but one built of all those breeds. The hon. member for Cunningham knows the greyhound as no man in this community knows him. Surely he does not want me to mix my dogs—to mix the masterful mastiff with the cunning cattle pup and the pompous poodle and call it a dog? The thing is impossible. You cannot have virile politics expressing the will of the people if you have some hotch-potch of a party, some nondescript sort of thing. That will get us nowhere.

It reminds me of the story of the three honest straightforward girls. One wanted to go to the pictures, one wanted to go to the seaside, and the other one somewhere else, but because of a preference system they wound up by going to the zoo. We should get nowhere by this nondescript sort of thing. I believe that there are certain things we should stand for. We cannot stand for certain things by having a hotch-potch or a nondescript sort of thing. You cannot have Labour and mix it with United Australia Party and the Country Party. Notwithstanding what has been contended by the other side, you cannot have a mixture of United Australia Party and Country Party. They both have different policies.

Mr. Bedford: They are the same.

The TREASURER: Of course they are. Any mixture with that indefinite blue would give a mixture that no-one desired, and that is the reason why they are where they are.

Mr. Edwards: Your colour is the same as that of the Communist.

Mr. Bedford: They always give you their preference.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The TREASURER: We have no wish to have anybody tacking himself on to us, although there are all sorts of people who tell us that they are as good as the Labour Party. We stand for the things that are of real worth, for the things that are essential, and in those essential things we stand steadfast. In the non-essentials I believe we are entitled to have liberty, and in all things, charity. There are some people who give up because of non-essentials. I am reminded of the story of the gentleman who rebuked the clergyman at the church because he read the epistle from the gospel side and the gospel from the epistle side. It did not matter very much whether one was read from the communion rails or not, so long as he read what the people wanted.

This is an attempt to get away from the kernel of our political system by introducing something that has no positive or dominant note; that sort of thing will get us nowhere.

I regret that the debate has degenerated into an attempt to get something that is "neither fish nor flesh, nor good red herring." This idea that we must go to a ballot box and give a preference for people for whom we have no preference and no desire or inclination to associate with in the government of the country is something that I cannot understand.

Mr. Yeates: You believe in minority government?

The TREASURER: The present Government are not a minority Government. That is the beauty of the thing. We must have the one dominant note, not a wishy-washy thing that is neither one thing nor the other. There must be a dominant note, a clear-cut note, not an admixture of the dull hue of the Country Party and the drab dullness of the United Australia Party with the elephantine note of the Independent, which makes for a party at all—no policy, nothing. How can there be a party or a policy when one does not believe in this, and another does not believe in that? It all amounts to a mass of negations, or, to use the words of Alfred Deakin, "A necklace of negations."

Mr. Yeates: A gallery speech like the Premier's.

The TREASURER: Did the hon. member say "gallery" or "gullery"?

Mr. Yeates: "Gallery"—appealing to the gallery.

The TREASURER: The hon. member for East Toowoomba may enjoy himself on his little "puff-puff" in getting where he wants to go. My speech is neither a gallery speech nor a gullible speech. What does it matter if the Labour Party is in power because it got 45 per cent. of the votes of the people, and 45 per cent. only? I do not admit that that is true, but even if it is, is

it not better to have a party in power with 45 per cent. of the votes of the people than a party of 23 per cent. or 18 per cent.?

Mr. Macdonald: You are in power on a minority vote of the people.

The TREASURER: And so is the hon. member's party in the Commonwealth Parliament. I believe it is right that the dominant party should be in power. We cannot mix oil and water and to attempt to mix progress with anti-progress, as hon. members opposite would like, would get us nowhere. For the future of this State and for the future of our Commonwealth I hope that we shall hear no more about this attempt to water down our vigorous political system and to create an indecisive atmosphere that will give us something which, as I have already said, is "neither fish, nor flesh, nor good red herring."

Mr. BRAND (Isis) (11.22 p.m.): The Treasurer has just said that there should be a dominant note in political affairs, but does he not realise that the dominant note in this motion is justice for the people, and does he not also realise that that is confirmed by the fact that hon. members opposite have taken an important part in this debate? Why, no less a person than the Premier himself has spoken, and we have just heard the next leading Minister, the Treasurer. Of course, the Attorney-General has also spoken, but he always takes up the cudgels on behalf of the Government in a debate like this. The Treasurer condemned the preferential system of voting up hill and down dale, but does he not stand four-square for the system of exhaustive ballot within the Labour Party? The exhaustive system is recognised as the most democratic system, and we are living in a democratic country. Are we not told that democracy means government of the people by the people for the people, and have we not adopted as the basis of government in this country an electoral system in which all the adult people vote?

No-one can complain that the system of proportional representation in Parliament is not the most democratic form of representation. It should be adopted in a democratic country, but for the sake of convenience we have adopted our present electoral system. It has brought about the position that has been exposed this morning, a position that the Treasurer has endeavoured to justify. The basis I am taking shows that in a democracy we have a Government holding 71 per cent. of the total number of seats in this Parliament on a primary vote of the people of only 47.5 per cent.

Mr. Power: Would you refuse to take a seat if you had a minority vote?

Mr. BRAND: I am not discussing that. No-one could blame an hon. member for taking a seat on a minority vote. The Treasurer knows that his party is in power on a compulsory minority vote. We hold that in a true democracy the Government must make voting compulsory. We say to the elector, "You must vote one way or another," in

order that we may obtain a true expression of the will of the people. If a person wishes to make his vote informal that is his choice, but we say: "You must vote, and if you do not a penalty will be inflicted upon you." As a result, compulsory voting is prescribed for our elections. Our Parliament is elected by the people on a system of compulsory voting. Yet what do we find? A true democratic Parliament under that system is quite possible provided there are only two candidates for each constituency. But democracy, if it means anything at all, permits more than two candidates to stand for any electorate. It offers inducement to all to stand. What then does the Treasurer mean by not allowing preferential voting?

Mr. Power: We do.

Mr. BRAND: The hon. member's Government do not. They give to the electors the opportunity of recording a voluntary contingent vote, which is not a preferential vote. The motion simply asks that we embody a preferential system of voting in the Elections Act. Under that system, if the elector's choice of a candidate is not successful he has an opportunity of recording his next choice. There is nothing wrong with that principle. All that is wrong with it is that hon. members opposite fear they may suffer from it.

Mr. Jesson: Your party introduced the system.

Mr. BRAND: That does not get away from the fact that the principle is a sound one. We should adopt the most exhaustive ballot possible in order to get the freest expression of the will of the people. It is very strange to find that a party that has throughout the ages proclaimed its desire to obtain the truest reflex of the opinion of the people should offer any objection to this system of voting. Labour has always fought for the fullest expression of opinion from the people.

Mr. Power: And the freest.

Mr. BRAND: The freest and the fullest expression. It has held that adult suffrage must be the basis of the system of voting. In the years gone by we have tried to spur the Government to bring in many things for the good of democracy, and we might spur the Government to give the people the fullest means of expression, in order to get the true feelings of the people at the ballot box. By that means only shall we have democracy at its best.

We cannot claim to be a democratic Parliament until we have given the people the fullest opportunity to express their wishes.

The facetious speech delivered by the Treasurer this morning indicates clearly that he believes our case to be a good one. Seeking to draw a comparison between the voting system and the breeding of horses and dogs was, to say the least, not a very dignified way of dealing with the motion. We are dealing with an important matter, the expression of the wishes of the people. We desire

to find out what the real wishes of the people are. Take the 1938 elections—

The Treasurer: You had to take it.

Mr. BRAND: We have not complained nor whined about taking anything.

These facts are interesting. There were three uncontested electorates in Queensland, Barcoo, Charters Towers, and Cunningham, and if we credit to each of the hon. members who hold those seats two-thirds of the enrolment we arrive at the following figures:—

Labour	..	..	263,971
All other parties	..	..	291,997

Labour candidates polled 47.5 per cent. of the total primary votes cast, but it enabled them to take 44 seats, or 71 per cent. of the 62 seats.

Mr. Jesson interjected.

Mr. BRAND: I know that is the hon. member for Kennedy's idea of true democracy.

Mr. Jesson: Of course it is.

Mr. BRAND: Of course it is! The hon. member believes in democracy but he has an unusual conception of democracy.

The figures I have quoted show that this House does not reflect the true will of the people. Had compulsory preferential voting been in existence, the people would have had an opportunity of casting a second preference vote that would have counted if the leading candidate did not have a majority over all candidates. Although the electoral system is not a perfect system it is with these exceptions the best we can devise, and it is our duty to make it such a system that it will give true expression to the wishes of the people.

Compulsory preferential system of voting is a feature of the Commonwealth electoral law. The Commonwealth Government have recognised that not only voting must be compulsory but that the nearest system you can get to the exhaustive ballot system, the preferential system, should be adopted in order to get the true expression of opinion of the people of Australia.

Mr. Bedford: The Commonwealth Government have 21 seats out of 75.

Mr. BRAND: The hon. member is complaining about the Commonwealth Parliament.

Mr. Bedford: I am not complaining about anything, merely telling you a fact.

Mr. BRAND: The hon. member is aware that the Menzies Government have the majority of the people behind them. They are the Government in the Commonwealth Parliament to-day, but that is not because of the system of preferential voting. As a matter of fact, it is to the credit of that system that there can be found within a Parliament enough of the spirit of compromise to bring about better conditions in the interests of the people. Be that as it may, the Commonwealth Parliament has adopted the preferential system of voting, whereas it is not recognised in Queensland, although such a system

is the form of ballot that approaches closest to the exhaustive ballot.

Mr. Duggan: You are not seriously advocating the exhaustive ballot?

Mr. BRAND: There are difficulties in the way of having an exhaustive ballot. The next best system is preferential voting, which gives the effect of exhaustive balloting, nothing less. It is a simple form of ballot.

The Premier, speaking on this motion, contended that an elector should not be compelled to vote for more than his own choice; that although he might be allowed a further choice he should not be compelled to exercise it. At every election there are numbers of people who have no wish to vote for any of the candidates, but the law compels them to record their votes. If they are compelled to cast their first vote there should be compulsion on them, when three or more candidates are offering, to select their next choice, for thus only shall we get a true expression of the will of the people. There is nothing wrong with that. This system is in force in the Commonwealth parliamentary elections and objection is not made to it, except by a Labour Government or party that wishes at some time or other to get hold of the reins of government on the minority vote of the people of Australia. Under the preferential system that cannot be done. They must obtain the votes of a majority of the people of Australia before—

The Attorney-General: Can you answer why a minority Government are in power in the Commonwealth sphere under this great vote you are referring to?

Mr. BRAND: The hon. gentleman knows perfectly well that the Menzies Government is maintained in office by its own supporters and the minority Country Party, in other words, upon votes representing a majority cast at the last elections. But be that as it may, in Queensland we should be able to get through the ballot box an expression of the wish of the people, and that could be obtained by the preferential system.

Mr. Bedford: You want a—

Mr. BRAND: I do not want anything more than an expression of the will of the people of Queensland as to who shall govern this country.

Allow me to refer to the pre-depression period, before the advent of the Moore Government. What was the position at that time? A Labour Government in power, and a large number of members of the Labour Party representing much smaller constituencies than members of the then Opposition. And they said that that was justice, that it conformed to the true principles of democracy! They said that it was justice because it enabled the Labour Party to remain in power from 1920 to 1929. For the whole of that period they were in power at the will of the minority of the people. On not one occasion were they returned by the will of the majority of the voters. Even at the last election the

Labour Party averaged only 6,000 votes to each elected member, whilst the Country Party's average was 9,896 and that of the United Australia Party 18,582.

Mr. Bedford: How do you strike averages when there are only three in the United Australia Party?

Mr. BRAND: The hon. member knows quite well that different people voted for different parties. It is a matter of simple addition and division.

Mr. Maher: The United Australia Party should have eight members instead of three.

Mr. BRAND: It would have had eight members if the election had been conducted in conformity with the true principles of democracy. It is obvious that the Labour Party and all hon. members on the Government side are opposed to this motion for one reason only—they know that its adoption might mean the losing of some of their seats. We are not looking for that. All we ask is that the people of Queensland be given the opportunity to give full expression to their opinion at the poll.

Hon. members opposite have referred to the Act that was passed by the Moore Government. At least we can say that that legislation enabled the people of Queensland to give full expression to their opinions in 1932, and at that time the average vote to each elected member was—

Country Party	..	..	7,771
Labour	..	..	7,569

The Attorney-General: And that was on their own redistribution.

Mr. BRAND: Exactly; but what do we find to-day? The scene has changed. The Labour Party has an average of 6,000 votes to each elected member, and that is after the hon. gentleman has gerrymandered the electorates.

Mr. Duggan: Cut that out.

Mr. BRAND: Then let me say that the Attorney-General had a redistribution of seats in 1932, and that even after that redistribution the average votes to each elected member were—

Labour	..	..	6,000
Country Party	..	..	9,896
United Australia Party	..	..	18,582

We know from past experience that this state of affairs may continue until the Labour Party is in power with an average of only 1,000 votes to the elected member as against 20,000 on the other side, and yet they will continue to say that they support democracy. Is it not only right that we should give the people the power to express their opinions fully so that the party in office will be elected by the will of the majority? We know that the reason for the great interest that has been and is being displayed in this motion by hon. members opposite is the fact that the present Government are in power on a

minority vote. They are in the saddle and they are not going to get out of it.

The Minister for Transport: Sour grapes!

Mr. BRAND: I can imagine what the Minister would say if he were sitting on the Opposition benches while we were in power under similar conditions.

Mr. Maher: The lamentations of Jeremiah would be nothing compared to him.

Mr. BRAND: How he would speak in condemnation of the system! We know what hon. members did in 1931. Hon. members who are sitting on that side of the House to-day were on this side of the House. How did they speak of the redistribution of seats that the Moore Government were contemplating? The justification for that redistribution was well-known long before the 1929 elections. We had not got justice. It looks, taking the example of the Labour Government, as if the greatest mistake the Moore Government made were that they did not gerrymander electorates to suit themselves.

Mr. Bedford: They cut out seven seats to suit us!

Mr. BRAND: They cut out the seats that had not the minimum number required under the statute. The hon. member for Warrego, whose wonderful voice penetrates much farther than the mere width of this Chamber, knows perfectly well that prior to 1929 there were 17 members sitting behind a Labour Government who had fewer than the statutory minimum number of electors in their electorates. He knows that full well. There was only one Labour man who had a number over the statutory maximum. He knows that at that time there were members of the Country-National Party who had in excess of the statutory maximum number. That is the reason why so many seats were lost to the country districts of Queensland when it became necessary to reduce the number of members in this Legislative Assembly from 72 to 62.

Mr. Jesson: Don't make excuses. It was a bit of lolly you were giving the people.

Mr. BRAND: The hon. member is always sucking lollies. We are of the opinion that there should be an alteration—first of all, to give an equitable distribution of the electorates of Queensland; secondly, to establish an equitable system of voting to enable the truest and fullest expression of opinion to be given by the people of Queensland. I think I heard the hon. member for Port Curtis say that I had nothing to complain of. That hon. member is looking at the matter from a selfish point of view. I am not looking at it from my own point of view. I want him to understand that I never have complained.

Mr. T. L. Williams: There was no reason for you to complain.

Mr. BRAND: I am quite satisfied to leave my fortune in politics to the good will of the people of Queensland, especially the people of my electorate. I have always got

from the people the reward of faithfully representing them in this Assembly ever since I first came into Parliament, notwithstanding the gerrymandering in 1923, which turned my seat into a strong Labour one. The hon. member for Port Curtis should know that.

Mr. Maher: Still, you have lived through the gale.

Mr. BRAND: And I did not complain or winge.

The Attorney-General: You paid a high tribute to the commission.

Mr. BRAND: I have done nothing of the sort. The hon. member read something to the effect that the hon. member for Isis said to the commission that he was quite satisfied to have a certain area brought back into his electorate.

The Attorney-General: Your little seat was made safe, still you growl.

Mr. BRAND: I am not complaining about my own personal position, but I am complaining about the position as a whole. I am not taking the parochial view. My suggestion is that the boundaries should be made more workable, nothing more.

Mr. Power: They treated you very well.

Mr. BRAND: The hon. member says that they treated me very well, but I care not how they treated me. (Government laughter.) An attempt was made to make an adjoining electorate safer for Labour. I know all the facts.

Mr. Maher: To make safe seats safer.

Mr. BRAND: Exactly. I am not complaining about what the commission did with my electorate, but as a hon. member of Parliament I am pointing out that the distribution has not been equitable throughout the State. I am submitting my views on what I think should be the most equitable system in a democratic country such as ours. The Government would be making a splendid gesture on behalf of the Labour Party if they were to adopt the suggestion made by the Leader of the Opposition. The Labour Party has complained in the past that although its candidates obtained a larger number of primary votes in the Senate elections it did not get any representation after the preferences were allotted, but when the tables were turned and Labour candidates were leading in the primary count not one word of protest was uttered by the Labour Party. Evidently they consider these matters from the party point of view. It seems to me that the only mistake the Moore Government made was in not copying the methods of the Labour Government in redistributing electoral boundaries. If the Moore Government had adopted the attitude of the Labour Government to electoral reform they could have remained in power until the present day. (Government laughter.) The Moore Government would not take that course. Their redistribution was a fair and equitable one, and they were defeated, only by a narrow margin of the votes of the people. Anyone

who knows anything about electoral reform and electoral boundaries knows how easy it is to take action that will lead to a political victory. The party on this side of the House does not stand for such a thing.

Mr. Bedford: Noble fellow!

Mr. BRAND: Yes. We believe in giving to the people of Queensland the means for the fullest expression of their political will. The party on this side of the House has no desire to remain in power on the minority of the votes of the people, and if the Government can get any satisfaction out of remaining in power on a minority vote of the people they are welcome to it. If they were elected on an absolute majority of the votes they would be able to say that they were the real representatives of a people in a democratic country.

We are not asking for anything unreasonable in the motion. As the hon. member for Keppel has explained, all that we ask is that the people shall be allowed to give the fullest expression to their political ideas so that this Parliament may be properly constituted.

After the statements we have heard this morning from the other side of the House, as well as previously during this debate, I feel sure that we cannot hope for a favourable vote on this motion. It is a pity that when we have our national Parliament working under a preferential system of voting the State Parliament cannot be induced to adopt a similar system in order that the voting at all elections will be similar in character, and thus cause less confusion to the electors. Why cannot we have uniformity in this country? Whether we are Queenslanders or citizens of any other State, we are nevertheless Australians. Let us have a uniform system of voting under our electoral laws. If that system is based on the preferential principle we shall always have in our Federal and State Parliaments an absolute expression of the will of the people. That will mean that the Government in power will have behind them, either in themselves or in those sitting with them, a majority of the votes cast at the election.

Mr. J. I. BROWN (Logan) (11.57 a.m.): After listening to hon. members opposite, I am quite satisfied that they do not really know what they want. When they were returned to power in 1929 the boundaries of the electorates were those adopted under a redistribution made by a previous Labour Government. They decided to dispense with 10 of the existing seats. The surprising feature of their decision was that seven of those seats were represented by Labour members and three only by Tory members. The abolition of those 10 seats necessitated a redistribution of the electoral boundaries for the whole State, but when an election was held at the end of the parliamentary term they were defeated on their own boundaries. I am given to understand that the boundaries of the electorates on which the election was held were fixed by a commission that was appointed by themselves.

Mr. Maher: That shows how fair the redistribution was.

Mr. J. I. BROWN: I propose to show how unfair it was. The electorates were redistributed so that the Labour Party could be kept out of office. Let me proceed a step further and analyse the results of the voting for the Brisbane City Council under that redistribution. The hon. member for Isis contended that the last redistribution was made so that Labour seats would be made safer. That was the basis of the redistribution of the boundaries of the city electorates by the commission appointed by the Moore Government. At that time, I represented the Bulimba electorate on the Brisbane City Council. It was considered one of the safest Labour seats in the metropolitan area. Under the redistribution the boundaries of that seat made it much stronger still for me. The commission created a new seat called Coorparoo. Coorparoo was a red-hot Tory seat. Its boundaries extended down Rochdale and Cooper's Plains, two of the greatest Tory areas. I was wide-awake to the intentions of the Moore Government. I called the Bulimba electorate council together and told them that any Labour man could win Bulimba under the redistribution of seats.

I said, "Any Labour man can win Bulimba; I will endeavour to capture the new seat," which is a strong Tory seat. I withdrew from Bulimba and contested that Tory seat. I was successful at that election, notwithstanding the fact that it was conducted on a restricted franchise. The redistribution was bad enough, but under the franchise people who lived outside of Queensland, in the Old Country, Canada, or Singapore, had their names on the roll.

Mr. Maher: That was in the municipal council elections.

Mr. J. I. BROWN: Yes, the elections conducted after the redistribution by the Moore Government. The hon. member for Wynnum was a member of the council at the same time, and he knows what I am saying to be true. If that restricted franchise had not been in operation we should have had a Labour Council returned at that election. As it was, we won one seat. At that time the Moore Government made the Labour seats stronger and altered the boundaries of the Tory seats so as to make them more secure.

We hear much talk about the contingent or preferential vote. After the Commonwealth was constituted in 1900 the principle of one adult one vote was inaugurated in 1902, and there was no suggestion of preferential or contingent voting. The man first past the post won. The first four Federal elections were contested on that principle. Then Billy Hughes ratted from the Labour Party and introduced preferential voting. When that system was first introduced there was not one in 100 persons who could count the preferential votes; even the returning officers did not know how to count them.

Contingent voting was introduced in this State by the late Mr. Barlow, who was acting as Secretary for Public Instruction. I am

satisfied the people of Australia, and Queensland particularly, do not want contingent voting, nor do they want preferential voting.

Mr. Yeates: Do you believe in it?

Mr. J. I. BROWN: I do not believe in preferential voting, and I have never believed in it.

Billy Hughes introduced preferential voting with the object of defeating the Labour Party and he achieved his objective. We framed our Constitution mainly on the pattern of the Constitution of the Mother Parliament in Great Britain, and even to-day the system in Great Britain is first past the post wins; yet we have hon. members opposite wanting to make it compulsory for me to vote for someone I do not want to vote for. For instance, if there was a Labour candidate that I wanted to vote for and the hon. member for Wynnum was also a candidate, do they mean to say I should be compelled to give a vote to the hon. member for Wynnum? That would be ridiculous. (Laughter.) That sort of thing is absolutely wrong.

I was not old enough to have a vote in the first Commonwealth election, but I sat outside the booth and worked in the interests of the late Harry Turley. At that election six senators were required and 17 persons had nominated. The method adopted was for the elector to mark a cross in the square opposite the names of the six candidates that he chose. If seven crosses were marked on the ballot paper, the vote was informal. But to ask me to record a preferential vote for a candidate of whom I do not approve might mean the defeat of the person that I want elected.

Mr. Yeates: You do not believe in democracy.

Mr. J. I. BROWN: That is democracy, and the hon. member knows it. Great Britain has a similar system.

Much has been said of the figures of the last State election. In that election three seats were not contested, Barcoo, Charters Towers, and Cunningham. To be fair, I give the total number on the roll to the Labour Party in the first two electorates and to the Country Party for the Cunningham electorate. The Labour Party obtained 265,950 primary votes. Taking the total population of Queensland, including men, women, and children, that figure exceeds one-fourth of the population.

Mr. Maher: Children are not considered.

Mr. J. I. BROWN: I am basing it on the total population figures. The Country Party got 127,170 votes, which is not half the total given the Labour Government. The United Australia Party got 69,178 votes. The votes for the two Tory parties total 196,348. The sectarian party, the Protestant Labour Party, is shown at 46,608 votes, and then we find these figures—

Party.	No. of Votes.
Social Credit	26,034
Independent	2,857
Communist Party	8,510

And this is a party belonging to the other side of the House. We know they advised their voters to give their contingent votes to them.

Independent Labour ..	3,321
Independent Social Credit ..	2,524
Independent United Australia Party	5,123

That was the number of votes obtained by the hon. member for Toowong. The hon. member for Oxley, who asserts that he is always correct in his figures, has said that the United Australia Party consisted of four members. The hon. member must be claiming the hon. member for Toowong as one of his party, but that is not so: he is shown as being an Independent United Australia Party man.

The whole of these parties combined got only 25,388 votes more than the Labour Party; yet they say we have not the support of the majority of the people of Queensland! The number of people on the roll in 1938 was 610,541. Of that number, irrespective of those who cast informal votes and those who did not vote—

The Premier: It is a wonder they do not claim the informal votes as theirs.

Mr. J. I. BROWN: I should not be surprised if they did. Of 610,541 people on the roll in 1938, 265,950 gave their primary votes to Labour, leaving only 344,591 (including electors who cast informal votes or did not vote at all) to all parties opposed to Labour.

At the last State elections only 23,605 persons exercised the contingent vote. Of that number 19,153 went to anti-Labour parties as against only 4,456 to the official Labour Party.

Mr. Dart: You do not want the contingent vote.

Mr. J. I. BROWN: The hon. member for Wynnum wants it because it is on that vote that he is able to take a seat in this Chamber. I should like to mention, too, that in the Logan electorate the Protestant Labour Party was 100 per cent. behind the Nationalists. I go so far as to say that they were eating off the same plate, in that United Australia Party supporters signed the Protestant Labour candidate's nomination paper for Logan.

Let me deal now with the voting in the electorate of Wynnum. At the last election the hon. member for Wynnum got only 3,687 primary votes. Donnelly, who was opposed to the hon. member for Wynnum, received 4,041 primary votes, but with the contingent votes, of which the hon. member got 984 and Mr. Donnelly only 257, the hon. member won the seat. Now that hon. member wants compulsory contingent voting.

Mr. Nimmo: You got 351 contingent votes yourself.

Mr. J. I. BROWN: I got 351 all right, but I did not ask for one of them. My card was a plain one—"Vote for Brown." I asked the

electors to vote for Brown, and Brown only. Although I received 351 contingent votes, my opponent, Mr. Trotter, received 1,043, at the rate of $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 1. If we had the election over again I should pull it off again.

I will now deal with the hon. member for Toowong to show how he fared. He received 3,137 primary votes and Mr. O'Shea 2,561. It is to be noted how the contingent voting went in that electorate. Mr. Massey received 2,127 contingent votes as against Mr. O'Shea's 129. Contingent votes were cast in that electorate at the rate of 20 to one in favour of the Tory representative. The hon. member for Toowong is sitting in this House to-day on a contingent vote. If it had been a straight-out fight, O'Shea, the Labour candidate, would have won.

I will now deal with the sectarian candidate, the hon. member for Kelvin Grove. That gentleman received 3,684 primary votes and Waters, the Labour man, 4,375 votes, or roughly speaking, a majority of 800. When the contingent votes were counted, Waters received 104 and Mr. Morris 1,095, a majority of over 10 to one. That majority put the hon. member in this Assembly. Those contingent votes came from the Tory candidate. We had only one party in the field—the straight-out dinkum Labour Party. All opposed to Labour are Tories.

The hon. member for East Toowoomba is in the Chamber and I will now deal with his position. If ever a man got into this Assembly by accident, it is the hon. member for East Toowoomba. That was the biggest accident that ever happened in this State. The hon. member got 2,626 primary votes.

Mr. Kane, the Labour man, got 3,831 primary votes, or a majority of over 1,200 over the hon. member. The distribution of the votes cast for Mr. Annand gave Mr. Yeates 1,572, and Mr. Kane only 146.

I have never heard such silly arguments as those adduced by the Leader of the Opposition on this motion. I am positive that he put it forward only as a joke, but I hope that it will not be carried. I hope that the preferential system of voting will never be adopted in this State; it makes people vote for someone that they do not want. It does not matter how many candidates the parties opposite may run at the polls, we always have only one candidate—the Labour candidate. The rest are against Labour, they are all anti-Labour. Allowing hon. members opposite the credit for all the votes cast at the last elections for other than Labour candidates, and including the votes cast for the Communist candidates, the Opposition represent only 25,000 votes more than those cast for the official Labour Party. Yet hon. members opposite say that we did not get a majority of the votes of the people. If hon. members opposite had not benefited from the contingent vote their numbers would have been reduced to 14.

Mr. Yeates: That would be a pity for Queensland.

Mr. J. I. BROWN: No. It is a pity that the East Toowoomba electorate ever rejected the candidature of Mr. Kane, a man who did good work for them during his three years in Parliament. The hon. member for East Toowoomba will have much to do during the next 18 months before he can in any way equal the achievements of Mr. Kane as a member of Parliament. The hon. member for East Toowoomba is here only as the result of a political accident. Annand put him here, and no-one else. When the hon. member contests the elections in 18 months' time he will be given his walking ticket by the people of his electorate, and he will be out with his big bundle of papers for keeps.

Mr. Yeates: Come up and have a go.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. J. I. BROWN: I should not mind doing that.

Mr. Yeates: You are not game.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. J. I. BROWN: I am game for anything.

Mr. Yeates: You are not game.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. member for East Toowoomba to obey my call to order, otherwise I shall deal with him.

Mr. J. I. BROWN: I am game for anything; it does not matter what it is. During my public life I have fought 12 elections, but always in seats held by Tory candidates. Whether it was a municipal election or a State election, my contest has always been against a Tory holder of the seat. In one election I defeated the deputy leader of the Moore Government, Mr. R. M. King, and in a municipal election I defeated the deputy leader of the Tory party in the Brisbane City Council, Alderman Nixon Smith. Therefore, I would not mind contesting the East Toowoomba electorate against the present member.

Mr. BEDFORD (Warrego) (12.23 p.m.): This is a frantic protest by the Opposition against the fact that for the last 22 years Labour has been in power for 19 years, and they for only a miserable three years, and such a miserable three years that the majority of the people, when they put them out, put them out for keeps, and no amount of argument will put them back again. Hon. members are bursting with a frantic desire for justice, and an absolutely democratic assembly in this country, and they have made attacks on the redistribution of seats as carried out by the Labour Government. They make no apology for the redistribution made before the 1932 election, which was intended to keep Labour out of power. That signally failed, which considering the reputation and record of the Government for that three years is not at all surprising. It will be remembered that in their redistribution scheme they wiped out seven safe Labour seats, only for the purpose of making fast their hold on the Treasury benches. As a matter of fact, in my case, it was only the border of New South Wales

and South Australia that saved me, otherwise they would have pushed me over the border; there was a Commonwealth law prohibiting any member of Parliament in Queensland from representing an area on the other side of the Cooper, so I escaped. What was the result? The result was that the country, knowing what they had done, and being utterly sick of them, voted them out, and has kept them out ever since.

Let us come to our redistribution of seats, and let us see what hon. members opposite, who have spoken against the scheme and condemned it in every possible way, had to say of it at the time the recommendations of the Commission were published. The Commission records—

“Mr. E. B. Maher (West Moreton) was satisfied with his new district, though he regretted the loss of Marburg, which he referred to as ‘My Burg.’ He was fully compensated, however, in getting Harrisville.”

How he compensated Harrisville is not stated. Let me go further—

“Mr. H. M. Russell (Hamilton) thought the Commission had made Hamilton a compact electorate with well-defined boundaries.”

Again—

“Mr. T. Nimmo (Oxley) said he could not have done better himself with Oxley. He realised the Commissioners had a most difficult task, but they had done their work well.”

I leave out the comments by three members of the then Parliament who are no longer here. The report further states—

“Mr. W. A. Brand (Isis) expressed his satisfaction when the Commission, at his suggestion, restored Biggenden to the Isis district.”

Again—

“Messrs. Annand and Deacon, East Toowoomba and Cunningham, jointly desired an exchange of territory between their respective electorates. The Commission approved their suggestion.”

The fact remains that the preference vote has shown itself utterly incapable of declaring the true opinions of the people. In the first place, most people have a defined political bias. They vote Labour, and because the vote is contingent in the State, although it is compulsory in the Commonwealth, a number of them seem to think that they are under an obligation to record their preferences for men for whom they have no opinion whatever. Take the case of half a dozen candidates standing in a safe electorate. The Labour voter votes for his man. If they were like me they would have no preference at all, and would not exercise the contingent vote. Other people are rather more shifty and undecided in their politics, and they like to vote for a nice man, who is anti-Labour, and then they carefully cast a preference vote for a lot of people, whom

they know nothing about, but run against Labour, in the attempt to be returned on an unrepresentative preference vote.

This Protestant Labour Party—which is not Labour and should be called Protestant United Australia Party, and is shown to be negligible on the number of votes actually recorded—by a system of an ill-considered preference vote produced at least one member in this House, with one or two other hon. members who are here by reason of the sectarian vote given as a preference.

In no case can it be shown that there was anything wrong with the first-past-the-post principle. In voting for Labour I have no preference at all. I vote one in our State election, but under the Commonwealth law I am forced to vote preference and put my votes in that order.

Mr. Maher: That is a fair way of doing it.

Mr. BEDFORD: It is the only unfair way. What kind of political student does the hon. gentleman think the average elector is? Suppose there are three candidates who have no possible chance and whose only virtue is that they contribute their deposit to the revenue occasionally. Suppose you have all these freak candidates to a large extent fooling and gulling the elector away from the real consideration of the real question, which, after all, judging by the way the preferences have been exercised, is apparently what they are doing. Now, the majority of the people desire real representation and would not vote for such a weird fowl as an Independent.

Mr. Maher: Why should these freak candidates have to vote for one of the parties?

Mr. BEDFORD: They need not vote at all. This is a free country. It is not only a free country now, but it is a free country at election time.

The position is stated well in reply to a question asked by the hon. member for East Toowoomba. The hon. member for East Toowoomba asked whether the commission appointed to redistribute the electoral boundaries conscientiously considered all the factors that the Act brought in by the Moore Government set down for consideration. That is a stupid question to ask. The answer is, most emphatically, “Yes,” and is based not so much upon the opinion of the Government as upon the opinion of the public and public bodies. Maps illustrating the boundaries of the electorates proposed by the commission were posted at all court houses and police stations for a period of one month and any person interested was invited to submit in writing any objection or suggestion relative to the proposed districts. No exception whatever was taken to 40 of the 62 proposed electorates, and the commission did not receive any communication with respect to them. With regard to the 22 electorates objected to, the commission made alterations in 12 districts in accordance with the suggestions received, and in consequence changes, mostly of a minor nature, were made in the boundaries of 26 electorates. It was never expected that any commission could satisfy everybody, but if

52 districts were distributed to the satisfaction of everyone concerned then it can be taken that the commissioners carried out a difficult task conscientiously and well.

But if further proof is required, it will be found in the fact that the only serious criticism that has been made arises 4 years after the work has been done.

Mr. Maher: And the results become apparent.

Mr. BEDFORD: Even if there were results they would not become apparent to the hon. gentleman in 40 years.

Mr. Maher interjected.

Mr. BEDFORD: It is a matter after all of personal intelligence or the want of it; that is what we are charging the hon. gentleman with.

Surely, if there were any justification for condemnation of the commission it would have been evident long before this. If the commission had disregarded the Act it would have been challenged and public opinion would have been aroused.

Mr. Yeates: When I get my way, only a Supreme Court judge will preside.

Mr. BEDFORD: When you get your way it will be the way out of this House.

Mr. Yeates: I will take you on, too.

Mr. BEDFORD: You did once and you got walloped.

As to all this talk of justice and democratic government, let us see what the Moore Government purposed as well as what they did. They reduced the number of seats in the Assembly to 62 and then proposed to form an Upper House but they did not have the courage to go on with it, principally because some of their members saw that it would mean absolute annihilation without any chance of escape whatever; therefore, because the proposal then made to extend the life of Parliament for two years was not acceptable this proposal also had to be dropped. They proposed to restore the Upper House with 31 members, 15 to be elected by the economic interests—whatever they were—and 15 nominated, and a nominated president. It was not to be dissolved or its constitution altered for nine years, and it could not be altered without a referendum. What can be said of people who were proposing that kind of thing and yet talk to us of justice?

Mr. Nimmo: Did you write that out yourself?

Mr. BEDFORD: I did not; it is a fact. You should know it; if they did not tell you, it was probably because your party did not trust you.

A suggestion is made by the hon. members for Isis and Keppel against the accuracy of the figures given by the hon. member for Logan, but nothing can be said for those given by the hon. member for Keppel. There were a number of "maybe's," "so-and-so's," and "possibles" in his calculations, and his

figures represent a very high degree of Chinese arithmetic. But let us see how this principle works out in other countries. I presume it would not be said that there was any party in the English Parliament that would descend to the things that this common Australian Labour Party would do, nevertheless in the general election on 27 October, 1931, a National Government was returned to office. It was then a coalition of National and Labour Parties. The results were—

	Votes Polled.	Contested Seats Won.
Government—		
National Labour (Mac-	} 14,505,000	495
Donald)		
Conservative (Baldwin)		
Liberal National (Simon)		
Liberal (Samuel)		
Independent Nationalist		
Anti-Government—		
Labour (Henderson) ..	} 7,199,000	53
Liberal (Lloyd George) ..		
New Party (Mosley) ..		
Communist ..		
Independent ..		

In the general election on 14 November, 1935, a National Government was returned with 405 contested seats won on less than 12,000,000 votes, and the Labour Party and other parties were put in Opposition with 170 seats won on 10,209,505 votes. On these figures it must be seen that there cannot be any close actuarial fixation of the electors' idea.

When the issue is obscured with freak candidates and freak questions and the electors are asked to record a preference for such persons and things one finds a similar happening as that which occurred in the Maranoa electorate when I contested the last election against J. A. J. Hunter. The Social Credit Party were in favour of the nationalisation of banking, taking banking right out of the hands of the private banks. Mr. Hunter was not so emphatic—apparently he is never emphatic on anything—on the foolishness of destroying the Commonwealth Bank's original constitution and hamstringing it so that it would become merely the servant of the trading banks or at least their very humble admirer. The Social Credit Party had voted 5,500 times against Hunter and then, on the preference vote—having voted 5,500 times against him—they voted 3,500 times for him, with the lamentable result that I am here instead of making trouble somewhere else.

The whole result of this window-dressing motion is that it has been defeated not by numbers, as it will be defeated directly, but by the logic of fact and the logic of record and history. The hon. member for Logan has shown in his masterly exposition of the working of the contingent vote, how the least extravagant claim of the party opposite to be truly representative of the people, as if they were being juggled out of their proper representation, as though votes were given one value on this side and another on the other, cannot be upheld, and there is nothing more to be said on that point. That having been answered,

I look forward confidently to the defeat of this motion by the votes of the party on this side of the House and as many on the other side who choose to see the light.

Mr. NIMMO (Oxley) (12.40 p.m.): The Premier said this morning that it was a pity that more hon. members were not taking the advice of the hon. member for Hamilton.

The Premier: I did not say that at all; I asked the hon. member for Keppel: "Are you not accepting the advice of the hon. member for Hamilton?"

Mr. NIMMO: It is the same thing.

The Premier: It is not.

Mr. NIMMO: At any rate, I notice that the Premier has spoken to this motion, and so have several other hon. members on the Government side. This is not a trivial motion. It strikes at the very root of democracy!

The Premier: Then why are you trying to talk it out?

Mr. NIMMO: We may have more days than this to talk on it.

Much has been said about my comments on the recent redistribution. I admit that I made those comments. As a matter of fact, I could not have made my electorate better for myself if I had been given full control, because Salisbury, an area that polls three to one against me, was taken out of the electorate. On coming up to Annerley road, however, I found that instead of going along streets the boundaries were set to run along fences. When I inquired why a certain house was put in the Buranda electorate I was told that the occupant was a very good Labour supporter.

Mr. Power: Who told you that?

Mr. NIMMO: The residents of the district told me that. Then, too, when I found that another house that should have been in the Buranda electorate had been placed in the Oxley electorate I was told that the occupant there was a good National supporter. This shows that the boundaries of the electorates had been scientifically arranged.

Mr. T. L. Williams: Now you are reflecting.

Mr. NIMMO: It does not matter what I am doing. I cannot do any more than tell the truth.

Let me refer to one or two other electorates in order to show how they were cut up, not for the benefit of the people but for the advantage of the Government now in power. Take first the Albert electorate. It includes Coolangatta and Southport and all the country surrounding it. One would have thought that it would have included all the area up to Beenleigh, because in all that territory there is community of interest. It has been altered to take in only about 6 miles of the country at the back of Southport and Coolangatta. Then it is brought up to take in Lota, Cleveland, and Redland Bay, districts

that have nothing in common with the rest of the electorate, and are not even connected with that part of it by a good road. Districts such as Lota, Redland Bay, and Wellington Point have always been in the Wynnum electorate and they should have been left there.

Mr. T. L. Williams: You are holding the Wynnum seat now. What are you complaining about?

Mr. NIMMO: We are holding the seat because the people are protesting at the unfair way in which the electorates have been cut up.

The Secretary for Mines: Has not Wynnum got its quota of electors now without adding more to it?

Mr. NIMMO: It has too many now.

Let us consider the Wynnum electorate. It takes in the Moorooka State school. Can it be said that there is any community of interest between Moorooka and Wynnum? As a matter of fact, Wynnum was altered to take in the Moorooka school in order that it might include those 800 people who are living in destitution at the back of Tarragindi Hill. All these things show that the electorates were wrongly distributed. I do not go so far as to say that they were gerrymandered, but I do think that they were altered to suit the Government who were then in power.

I should like now to point out how fair the 1931 redistribution was as compared with that that took place under the Labour Party. The Premier at that time, the hon. member for Aubigny, absolutely refused to convey even any suggestion to the Electoral Redistribution Commission at that time. That commission was given a free hand, and when its work was completed many of the electorates were cut up in a way that was unfavourable to the Moore Government. The electorate of Merthyr was cut up in such a way that the Moore Government must lose it. Do hon. members opposite mean to tell me that if the commission had been got at they could not have made Merthyr an electorate that must have been won for the Government? Dr. Kerwin was the sitting member at that time. Much of the Valley was put into the Merthyr electorate. That showed plainly that that electorate was not interfered with by the Moore Government.

The Secretary for Mines: What did you do in Ipswich?

Mr. NIMMO: The hon. member for Ipswich got a fair spin. The railway line divided the two electorates and although certain parts of the lower end were cut out, it was done to make the position better. The numbers could not have been arrived at otherwise. The hon. gentleman got a fair distribution—so fair that he won it. If the Moore Government had liked, they could have made the redistribution in such a way that the hon. gentleman would not have been here to-day.

The Secretary for Mines: You did your best.

Mr. NIMMO: There are other electorates to which I could refer to show how unfair the Labour Government's redistribution was. They submitted the matter of redistribution to a commission, but certain things were so obvious that one was forced to the conclusion that the commission had been instructed. Let us examine the position of Gympie. Gympie, a city, has a voting power of only 7,000 odd electors. Adjoining it there is a farming district running out for miles, with nearly 10,000 electors in scattered areas—about 10,000 electors were put into the electorate of the hon. member for Cooroora so that Labour should win Gympie. The really good voters for the Nationalist Party were taken out of Gympie and added to Wide Bay. If that is not a scientific redistribution I ask hon. members of this House what is.

I emphatically contend that a fair redistribution should be made. The commission should be presided over by a judge of the Supreme Court—an independent person. Community of interest should be the governing factor rather than interest of politicians. To-day we are supposed to be working under a democracy, but there are many signs of Fascism in the Government in power to-day. We repeatedly see things done that are—

The PREMIER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, Mackay) (12.48 p.m.): I move—

“That the question be now put.”

Question—That the question be now put (Mr. Smith's motion)—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 34.

Mr. Bedford	Mr. Hislop
„ Brassington	„ Jones
„ Bruce	„ Keogh
„ Bulcock	„ King
„ Clark	„ Larcombe
„ Collins	„ Mann
„ Conroy	„ Marriott
„ Cooper	„ McLean
„ Dash	„ Mullan
„ Duggan	„ O'Keefe
„ Dunstan	„ Pease
„ Farrell	„ Riordan
„ Gair	„ Smith
„ Gledson	„ Williams, T. L.
„ Hanlon	
„ Hayes	<i>Tellers:</i>
„ Healy	„ Jesson
„ Hilton	„ Power

NOES, 13.

Mr. Brand	Mr. Plunkett
„ Deacon	„ Russell
„ Edwards	„ Yeates
„ Macdonald	
„ Maher	<i>Tellers:</i>
„ Moore	„ Daniel
„ Nicklin	„ Dart
„ Nimmo	

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Walsh	Mr. Clayton
„ Slessar	„ Muller
„ Foley	„ Walker

Resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That the motion (Mr. Maher) be agreed to—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 13.

Mr. Brand	Mr. Nimmo
„ Daniel	„ Russell
„ Dart	„ Yeates
„ Deacon	
„ Edwards	<i>Tellers:</i>
„ Maher	„ Macdonald
„ Moore	„ Plunkett
„ Nicklin	

NOES, 34.

Mr. Bedford	Mr. Jesson
„ Brassington	„ Jones
„ Bruce	„ King
„ Bulcock	„ Larcombe
„ Clark	„ Mann
„ Collins	„ Marriott
„ Conroy	„ McLean
„ Cooper	„ Mullan
„ Dash	„ O'Keefe
„ Duggan	„ Pease
„ Dunstan	„ Power
„ Farrell	„ Riordan
„ Gair	„ Smith
„ Gledson	„ Williams, T. L.
„ Hanlon	
„ Hayes	<i>Tellers:</i>
„ Hilton	„ Healy
„ Hislop	„ Keogh

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Clayton	Mr. Walsh
„ Muller	„ Slessar
„ Walker	„ Foley

Resolved in the negative.

At 2.16 p.m.,

The House, in accordance with Sessional Order, proceeded with Government business.

PATRIOTIC FUNDS ADMINISTRATION ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

THIRD READING.

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

MACKAY SCANDINAVIAN LUTHERAN CHURCH LAND SALE BILL.

THIRD READING.

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

TREASURER'S FINANCIAL TABLES.

The TREASURER (Hon. F. A. Cooper, Bremer) presented the tables relating to the Treasurer's Financial Statement for the year 1939-40.

Ordered to be printed.

ESTIMATES IN CHIEF, 1939-1940.

Mr. SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from His Excellency the Governor forwarding the Estimates of the Probable Ways and Means and Expenditure of the Government of Queensland for the year ending 30 June, 1940.

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

GRIEVANCES BEFORE SUPPLY.

STATEMENT BY MR. SPEAKER.

Mr. SPEAKER: Before calling on the next business I desire to make a short statement to the House on the matter of the discussion of grievances before the House goes into Committee of Supply. The position is that a ruling was given by the Speaker on 15 September, 1936, which, in effect, meant that there was ample opportunity in the House and in the Committee of Supply for the discussion of any and all grievances. On 22 September, 1936, this ruling was challenged, but it was upheld by the House. In 1937 and 1938 the question, "That the Speaker do now leave the chair," was treated as formal. That is putting the matter briefly.

One might say, therefore, that the ruling has stood the test of time, and I do not now propose to vary it in any way. I desire to give a good deal more consideration to this matter than I have been able to give it up to the present time, and I have in mind the calling of a meeting of the Standing Orders Committee for the purpose of clarifying the position and, if necessary, of suggesting amendments to the Standing Order for this purpose.

I am not at all satisfied with the present position, and hope to see an alteration before the end of this session that will be satisfactory to all hon. members.

SUPPLY.

OPENING OF COMMITTEE—FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

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

The CHAIRMAN: It has been the custom in the past for the tables contained in the Treasurer's Financial Statement to be taken as read. I, therefore, submit the question in the usual way to the Committee. Is it the pleasure of hon. members that the tables

contained in the Treasurer's Financial Statement be taken as read?

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

The TREASURER (Hon. F. A. Cooper, Bremer) (2.23 p.m.), who was received with cheers, said: Mr. O'Keefe, it is my privilege to again present the Financial Statement relating to the public accounts of the State of Queensland. I propose to follow the customary procedure of reviewing the accounts for the year ended 30 June, 1939, and later to submit the Budget Statement for the current financial year.

The transactions of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the year ended 30 June, 1939, resulted in a surplus of £14,046, as compared with the Budget deficit forecast of £215,774, the improvement amounting to, approximately, £230,000. This was the first surplus recorded in the Queensland Treasury accounts since the financial year 1927-28, and consummated the Government's efforts towards Budget equilibrium since its election to office in 1932. In that year the deficit was £2,075,000, which was redressed by annual progressive improvements to a deficit of £228,000 in the financial year 1937-38, and the attainment of a small surplus in the year just closed.

The past year has been marked by continued advancement and progress throughout the State. This fact, in conjunction with the assistance and co-operation I have received from my colleagues in the control of expenditure, has contributed to the pleasing conclusion to the year's operations.

During the seven-year period ended 30 June, 1939, the monetary value of concessions in the nature of remissions of Crown revenue and charges granted by the Government has aggregated £3,223,640—an average annual amount of £460,520. Details are furnished in the following table, for the information of hon. members:—

Particulars of Concessions.	1932-1933.	1933-1934.	1934-1935.	1935-1936.	1936-1937.	1937-1938.	1938-1939.	Total (7 Years).
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Railway Department Concessions—								
Rebates of and reductions in freights on wool, starving stock and fodder, stores stock, lead ores, flour, bran, and pollard to Northern Ports, &c.	78,278	165,042	287,248	285,789	195,825	278,598	312,030	1,602,810
Department of Public Lands Concessions—								
Rental Reductions under Wool Relief Act	96,246	96,517	96,517	96,534	96,562	48,281	..	530,657
Interest written off and arrears of rent funded . . . . .	..	..	61,738	9,418	277	171	270	71,874
Reduction in the price of Log Timber	7,930	26,003	35,355	51,891	54,420	45,494	22,978	244,080
Reduction of Interest on Loans to Borrowers—								
State Advances Corporation (Workers' Dwellings, Workers' Homes, &c.)	352	391	23,365	43,141	43,432	42,611	42,511	195,803
Agricultural Bank	2,474	2,474	13,416	23,375	22,537	21,718	21,545	107,539
Local Authorities, &c. . . . .	..	..	..	108,000	110,000	112,000	114,000	444,000
Other Borrowers (Department of Public Lands, &c.)	1,977	1,761	3,073	4,486	5,649	5,882	4,049	26,877
	£ 187,266	292,188	520,712	622,634	528,702	554,755	517,383	3,223,640

THE CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND, 1938-1939.

Receipts for the year totalled £19,330,369 and expenditure £19,316,323, the result being a surplus of £14,046, as previously mentioned.

A comparison of the estimated and actual figures is as follows:—

	Estimated.	Actual.	Over Estimate.
	£	£	£
Receipts	17,916,785	19,330,369	1,413,584
Expenditure	18,132,559	19,316,323	1,183,764
Estimated Deficit	215,774	..	..
Actual Surplus .. .. .	..	14,046	..

Revenue exceeded the estimate by £1,413,584. This was largely due to the fact that receipts from income (State development) tax, amounting to £1,332,752, were included in the receipts of the Consolidated Revenue Fund as from 1 January, 1939, in accordance with the provisions of the Income (State Development) Tax Act passed last session.

Expenditure exceeded the Budget estimate by £1,183,764, principally because expenditure

under the above Act was not provided for in the Budget. The excess is partly offset by the saving of £865,653 in the appropriation from Trust Funds in respect of the Unemployment Relief Fund.

REVENUE, 1938-1939.

Revenue receipts in comparison with the Budget estimates are summarised in the following table:—

	Budget Estimate.	Actual Receipts.	Over Estimate.	Under Estimate.
	£	£	£	£
Amount received from Commonwealth	1,096,235	1,096,235	..	..
Taxation	5,184,950	5,240,512	55,562	..
Taxation Income (State Development) Tax .. ..	..	1,332,752	1,332,752	..
Land	1,499,000	1,477,187	..	21,813
Mining	49,700	49,660	..	40
Railways	7,516,000	7,638,525	122,525	..
Other Receipts	2,570,900	2,495,498	..	75,402
Totals	17,916,785	19,330,369	1,510,839	97,255
Over Estimate		£1,413,584	£1,413,584	

Excluding receipts from the income (State development) tax, collections under the heading of "Taxation" exceeded the estimate by £55,562.

Railway revenue for the year, amounting to £7,638,525, reached a new high level and was greater than that of the previous year by £412,197, and £122,525 in excess of the Budget anticipation. Train and ton mileages in excess of all previous peaks were achieved. This exceptional traffic was the result of the favourable seasonal conditions experienced through the greater portion of the State with consequent record wheat and

sugar-cane crops, and increased production of practically every other agricultural commodity, coupled with a record production of cream and butter and a substantial increase in livestock tonnage.

Railway expenditure at £6,067,028 exceeded that of the previous year by £314,351, and was principally due to the payment of award, basic wage, and automatic increases to the staff, extra cost of handling the additional traffic, and additional fuel costs due to the necessity for using firewood instead of coal during the period of unsettled industrial conditions in the coal industry.

EXPENDITURE, 1938-1939.

The expenditure for the year totalled £19,316,323, being £1,183,764 more than the estimate, mainly accounted for by the inclusion of expenditure on account of the

income (State development) tax which was not thus provided for in the Budget estimates.

Particulars of the expenditure and a comparison with the Budget estimate are as follows:—

Head of Expenditure.	Budget Estimate.	Actual Expenditure.	Over Estimate.	Under Estimate.
	£	£	£	£
Schedules	1,140,262	1,157,959	17,697	
Interest on Public Debt	5,187,661	5,153,929	33,732	
Executive and Legislative	35,821	36,053	232	
Premier and Chief Secretaries	102,129	106,183	4,054	
Health and Home Affairs	1,638,889	1,627,406	11,483	
Public Works	212,341	212,086	255	
Labour and Industry	60,176	1,180,839	1,120,663	
Justice	215,384	214,560	824	
Treasurer	1,273,696	1,307,257	33,561	
Public Lands	279,369	280,896	1,527	
Agriculture and Stock	160,688	150,237	10,451	
Public Instruction	1,755,205	1,731,128	24,077	
Mines	72,599	67,762	4,837	
Railways	5,976,000	6,067,028	91,028	
Auditor-General	22,339	23,000	661	
Totals	18,132,559	19,316,323	1,269,423	85,659
Over Estimate	£1,183,764		£1,183,764	

It is interesting to note that little variation is shown in the actual disbursements as compared with the Budget provision. The increase in the disbursements of the Department of Labour and Industry was due to the expenditure of the income (State development) tax moneys previously mentioned.

Interest on the public debt was £33,732 less than the estimate, the saving being effected by conversions of stock during the year and redemptions by the National Debt Sinking Fund. This saving, however, was partly offset by additional contributions to the National Debt Sinking Fund of £11,756 over the Budget provision.

The excess shown in the Department of the Treasury was due to the additional amount of £16,080 required for overseas exchange, and the provision of a sum of £23,925 in excess of the estimate for payments to the

Railway Department in respect of rebates allowed on the transport of starving stock and fodder

Railway expenditure was £91,028 more than the estimate, the excess being due to the cost of handling the additional traffic which produced the record revenue for the year

It may be of interest to hon. members to note the ratio that uncontrollable expenditure bears to the total of the year; payments on account of interest on the public debt, sinking fund, and exchange absorbing 34.28 per cent. of the total.

Salaries and wages accounted for 41.47 per cent of the total disbursements, this figure being exclusive of wages paid from the proceeds of the income (State development) tax.

The following table analyses the expenditure and shows the relative percentages:—

Expenditure—1938-1939.	Amount.	Percentage to Total Expenditure.	Increase as Compared with 1937-38.	
			Amount.	Percentage.
	£		£	
<i>Uncontrollable Expenditure—</i>				
Interest on the Public Debt	5,153,929	26.68	140	0.003
Sinking Fund	639,756	3.31	66,339	11.57
Exchange	828,080	4.29	16,587	2.04
	6,621,765	34.28	83,066	1.27
Salaries and Wages	(a) 8,009,732	41.47	403,128	5.30
Statutory Payments (excluding Sinking Fund)	518,203	2.68	117,261	29.25
Other Expenditure on account of Railway Materials and Supplies, Stores for Institutions, Services, and Contingencies generally	(b) 4,166,623	21.57	1,144,645	37.83
	£19,316,323	100.00	1,748,100	9.95

(a) Excludes wages paid from proceeds of income (State development) tax.

(b) Includes expenditure from income (State development) tax.

Exchange and sinking fund charges absorbed £1,467,836, or £82,926 more than the expenditure for the previous financial year.

Sinking fund contributions for debt redemption purposes, under the financial agreement, are analysed in the following table:—

Particulars of Contributions.	1936-1937.	1937-1938.	1938-1939.
5/- per cent. on Debt	£ 313,623	£ 319,818	£ 322,754
4½ per cent. on Cancelled Debt	187,825	213,874	263,782
4 per cent. on Revenue Deficits	35,792	39,725	53,220
	£587,240	£573,417	£639,756

The amount required last year to meet the contribution of 4½ per cent. per annum on cancelled debt was £263,782, this sum being £49,908 more than the previous year's figure. It will be noted on reference to the above table that this particular item under the financial agreement shows the largest annual increase and has the effect of reducing the benefit to the State finances brought about by any saving of interest on debt cancelled by the National Debt Commission.

TRUST FUNDS.

The aggregate receipts of the trust funds for the year were £9,788,827, and expenditure totalled £9,727,951.

Increased receipts, as compared with 1937-38, were shown in respect of Federal Aid Rehabilitation Fund £141,440, Public Service Superannuation Fund £10,934, State Advances Corporation (workers' dwellings) £49,838, State Insurance Fund £101,049, Unemployment Insurance Fund £29,101, and Youth Employment Fund £25,021.

The principal items of increased expenditure were Federal Aid Rehabilitation Fund £117,265, State Advances Corporation (workers' dwellings) £48,055, State Insurance Fund £455,700, Unemployment Insurance Fund £149,780, and Youth Employment Fund £29,823.

The receipts and expenditure of the Unemployment Relief Fund were included in the transactions of the trust funds for six months only. The balance at the credit of the fund at 31 December, 1938—namely, £312,542—was transferred to consolidated revenue, from which fund relief assistance is now paid.

LOAN FUND.

Loan Fund expenditure on capital projects during the financial year totalled £3,392,641, an increase of £337,641 on the Budget estimates.

The following is a summary of the transactions of the Loan Fund for the year:—

Balance at Current Account, 30 June, 1938	£	£
Net Receipts—		1,117,283
Repayments	1,351,053	
Net proceeds of loan raisings, including domestic issues	7,380,166	
Amount received from Commonwealth Savings Bank under Transfer Agreement	754,000	
Proceeds of Treasury Bills issued	1,950,000	
		11,435,219
		12,552,502
Disbursements—		
Expenditure as per Budget Table E5	3,392,641	
Treasury bills redeemed	1,670,000	
Loans converted	5,951,684	
Expenses of Conversion Loans	23,688	
Repayments utilised towards Sinking Fund Contributions	100,000	
		11,138,013
Balance at Current Account, 30 June, 1939		£1,414,489

The following is an analysis of the expenditure:—

Development.

Soldier Settlement	£ 4,288
Main Roads	394,340
Land Settlement	392,943
Agricultural Bank and Rural Development	267,716
Mining	27,861
Railways	510,086
Loans and Subsidies to Local Bodies and Hospitals Boards	1,039,284
Stanley River Dam	260,000
Brisbane River Improvement Works	22,046
	£2,918,564

Other Expenditure.

Buildings	370,790
Workers' Dwellings and Homes	96,855
Sundry Works	6,432
	£3,392,641

The expenditure on workers' dwellings and homes totalled £96,855 from Loan Fund, but in addition, a sum of £235,059 was advanced to borrowers from trust funds, providing a total of £331,914 for home building.

The funds at the Government's disposal from all sources last year have been utilised for the purpose of maximising employment consistent with sound principles of finance and our obligations under the Financial Agreement, by which our Loan Fund expenditures are determined by the net allocations made through the Loan Council. When the Estimates were presented last year the sum of £215,000 was reserved from Loan Funds to cover the estimated Budget deficit. Loan Fund spendings during the year on works and development projects were increased in proportion to the improvement in the budgetary position. In addition, the expenditure from the Special Employment Works Fund was increased to £1,952,504, as compared with the Budget appropriation of £1,720,000.

The above balance is exhaustive of the sum of £134,234 held on extended deposit, and represents the balance at current account only.

PUBLIC BALANCES.

The cash balance of the State at 30 June, 1939, was £817,822.

This balance comprised—

	£
Credit balances—	
Trust Funds	3,061,420
Loan Fund	1,548,723
	<u>4,610,143</u>
Debit balance—Consolidated Revenue Fund	3,792,321
<i>Net credit balance</i>	<u>£817,822</u>

The cash balance was held as follows:—

	£
In Australia—	
Commonwealth Bank	616,989
Commonwealth Savings Bank	62,123
In London	4,238
In New York	238
	<u>683,588</u>
At extended deposit	134,234
	<u>£817,822</u>

	£	£
Gross Debt at 1 July, 1938		125,781,554
<i>Add—</i>		
Loans raised by the Commonwealth for the State—		
For Works	1,375,038	
For Conversion Expenses	23,688	
Domestic Issues	24,000	
Loans from Commonwealth Savings Bank	754,000	
Increase in Amount of Treasury bills on Issue	280,000	
		<u>2,456,726</u>
		128,238,280
<i>Less</i> Redemptions by National Debt Sinking Fund	729,179	
Adjustment of State's Liability on account of Loan raised by the Commonwealth in May, 1939	5,860	
		<u>735,039</u>
		£127,503,241

The debt was domiciled as follows:—

	£
Australia	57,610,885
Great Britain	62,816,521
United States of America	7,075,835
	<u>£127,503,241</u>

February, 1939—

£8,525,710—

Issue Price	Par.
Interest	3½ per cent. per annum.
Repayable	15 December, 1955, or at the option of Government on 15 December, 1953.
Queensland allocation	£912,030.

May, 1939—

£4,750,000—

Issue Price	£99.
Interest	3½ per cent. per annum.
Repayable	15 December, 1955, or at the option of Government on 15 December, 1953.
Queensland allocation	£267,000.

In addition to the above public issues, a loan of £3,000,000 was made available to the Commonwealth and States by the Commonwealth Bank in May, 1939, at an interest rate of 3½ per cent. per annum, repayable on 15 August, 1943. Our share of this issue was £196,000.

During the financial year loans amounting to £754,000 were made available to the State by the Commonwealth Savings Bank pursuant

The State also held rights to Treasury bills totalling £810,000, and a sum of £48,000 was due at 30 June from the Commonwealth Government on account of the loan floated in May last.

The debit balance of the Consolidated Revenue Fund at 30 June, amounting to £3,806,367, represented the unfunded deficits in that fund for the years 1928-29 to 1931-32, less the surplus of £14,046 for the past financial year.

PUBLIC DEBT.

The gross public debt at 30 June, 1939, was £127,503,241, an increase of £1,721,687, as compared with the liability of the State at 30 June, 1938.

Loans raised during the year totalled £2,176,726, and the Treasury bill liability increased by £280,000. Redemptions amounting in the aggregate to £735,039 were made from funds provided by the National Debt Commission.

The transactions relating to the public debt for the year were as follows:—

Two public issues were made by the Loan Council on behalf of the States during the year, the total amounts of the respective flotations and the amounts allocated to Queensland being as follows:—

to the provisions of the Transfer Agreement, being £196,000 more than in the previous year. These loans, which represented 70 per cent. of the net increase in Savings Bank depositors' balances, bear interest at the rate of 3 per cent. per annum, and are repayable in half-yearly instalments.

Redemptions were made by the National Debt Commission to the extent of £729,179 during the year. These redemptions included

Australian stock to the value of £491,952, and overseas securities amounting to £237,227.

The net public debt at the close of the year, after allowing for the accumulated sinking funds, totalled £126,685,693, or £1,624,413 more than the net liability at 30 June, 1938.

CONVERSION LOAN.

Australian consolidated stock to an aggregate value of £67,600,000, being the liability of the Commonwealth and the various States, fell due for conversion on the 15 December, 1938, Queensland's proportion of the maturing debt being £3,991,934, of which £1,671,394 bore interest at 4 per cent. per annum, and £2,320,540 at 3 per cent. per annum.

Redemptions on account of Queensland's proportion to the value of £223,030 were made from the National Debt Sinking Fund, leaving £3,768,904 due for conversion.

The new loan was floated at an interest rate of 3½ per cent. per annum, and was issued at par, the maturity date being 15 December, 1954, or at the option of the Government on 15 December, 1952.

No benefit will accrue to the State from this conversion loan, as the increased interest payable on the new securities, together with the sinking fund charge of 4½ per cent. per annum on the redemptions made by the National Debt Commission, will entail a further annual commitment of £20,527.

TREASURY BILLS.

The liability of the State to the Commonwealth Bank on account of short term debt at 30 June, 1939, was £2,463,000, and represented Treasury bills issued in Australia.

In accordance with the approved arrangements, Treasury bills to the value of £1,150,000 were issued to meet the temporary lag in revenue in the early months of the year, and redemption of these bills was made prior to 30 June, 1939.

Bills amounting to £800,000 were reissued during the year, and temporary redemptions to the extent of £520,000 were effected from the proceeds of loan issues.

The outstanding liability of the State (£2,463,000) on account of Treasury bills and the bills temporarily cancelled at 30

June, 1939 (£810,000), amounting in all to £3,273,000, represents that portion of the accumulated deficits in the Consolidated Revenue Fund from 1 July, 1932, which has not yet been funded.

The discount rate of 1½ per cent. on Treasury bills remained unchanged during the year.

No short term debt is due on behalf of this State in London.

DEBT REDEMPTION.

Contributions by the State during the year 1938-39 to the National Debt Sinking Fund, pursuant to the provisions of the Financial Agreement, amounted to £639,756. The contributions by the State from the inception of the National Debt Sinking Fund now total £5,183,207. Commonwealth contributions have reached a total of £1,930,507, and with accrued interest, amounting to £56,356, a sum of £7,220,070 has been available for debt redemption purposes.

Securities to a face value of £6,454,411 have been repurchased and cancelled by the sinking fund trustees, and, in addition, the contractual liabilities of the first and second American Loan Sinking Funds, amounting to £288,708, have been provided for. Exchange on overseas remittances totals £289,411, leaving a balance of £289,304 at credit of the fund at 30 June, 1939.

Redemptions amounting to £489,777, which have been made from the special fund established in connection with the 12,000,000 dollar loan, are not included in the redemptions made under the Financial Agreement.

INTEREST ON THE PUBLIC DEBT.

Interest payments on the public debt during the year totalled £5,153,929, and were made in Australia and overseas as follows:—

	£
Australia	1,959,757
London	2,795,483
New York	398,689
	<u>£5,153,929</u>

I consider it advisable to again supply, for the information of hon. members, the average rates of interest payable on the public debt as at 30 June, 1939, inclusive, and exclusive of exchange, as compared with the rates for the previous year—

	30 June, 1938.	30 June, 1939.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
<i>Including Exchange—</i>		
Overseas Debt	5 14 6	5 15 0
All Debt	4 14 11	4 14 11
All Debt, excluding Treasury bills	4 16 0	4 16 2
<i>Excluding Exchange—</i>		
Overseas Debt	4 11 4	4 11 4
Australian Debt	3 10 2	3 10 7
Australian Debt, excluding Treasury bills	3 11 8	3 12 2
All Debt	4 2 0	4 2 0
All Debt, excluding Treasury bills	4 2 10	4 2 11

It might also be of interest to quote the average rates of interest payable on the debts of the several States at 30 June, 1939, as under:—

	Per cent.
	£ s. d.
New South Wales	3 12 1
Victoria	3 15 9
Queensland	4 2 0
South Australia	3 15 11
Western Australia	3 13 9
Tasmania	3 15 1
Average all States	3 14 11

The unfavourable position disclosed by the above figures, in so far as Queensland is concerned, is mainly due to the fact that Queensland has not received the same benefit in recent years from debt conversions overseas as other States. For this reason the average rate of interest payable on the Queensland debt is 7s. 1d. per cent. more than the average of all States and 9s 11d. per cent. higher than the New South Wales average.

Payment of interest on the same basis as that applicable to New South Wales would mean an annual saving of £573,846 to Queensland, or £715,880 inclusive of exchange.

LOAN COUNCIL.

During the financial year the Loan Council was convened on three occasions—October, 1938, March and June, 1939.

The principal object of the October meeting was to make preliminary arrangements for the flotation of a loan in December, to convert stock maturing on the 15th of that month amounting to £67,600,000, of which £61,400,000 carried interest at 4 per cent. per annum, and £6,200,000 at 3 per cent. per annum.

It was decided that the amount required for the conversion of this stock, together with a further sum of £4,000,000 for defence purposes, should be provided from a loan to be raised at par with an interest rate of £3 17s. 6d. per cent. per annum, the period of the loan to be 16 years. This constituted the biggest operation conducted by the Australian Loan Council on the Australian market since the national debt conversion of 1931.

The March meeting dealt principally with the allocation to the States of the loan of £8,500,000 raised in February.

The allocation decided upon resulted in Queensland receiving an amount of £912,030 from the loan.

The June meeting gave consideration to the allocation of the loan of £7,750,000 raised in May. Queensland received £463,000 from this issue.

At this meeting a new principle was adopted in dealing with loan requirements, the programmes for works and deficits of the States being combined with proposed borrowings by semi-governmental authorities.

The defence requirements of the Commonwealth also entered largely into the question of the amount to be borrowed for the year 1939-40.

The Loan Council, after giving consideration to all aspects of the situation, decided that a sum of £41,100,000 was the maximum amount likely to be available for the current year and this sum was allocated in the following manner:—

Commonwealth—	£
For Defence	10,000,000
For Post Office Works and Farmers' Debts	4,000,000
States—For Works and Deficits	18,550,000
Semi-governmental Authorities	8,550,000
	£41,100,000

The amount allocated to Queensland was £2,700,000, as against the allocation of £2,140,000 for the previous year. In addition, semi-governmental approvals were fixed at £1,260,000.

It was also agreed that the Commonwealth Government should allocate to the States the funds available for the purpose of the Federal Aid Rehabilitation Scheme. The Queensland Government subsequently requested that this allocation should be at least on the same basis as last year, namely £300,000. The matter has not been finalised, although the Prime Minister informed the Premiers' Conference held at Canberra on 9 September that, on account of the increase in the defence programme, it was not likely that the same quantum of funds would be available for this purpose for the current financial year.

PUBLIC DEBT AND LOAN EXPENDITURE.

A somewhat interesting comparison is shown in the following table between the annual increase in the State's public debt and the yearly loan expenditure during the period 1 July, 1932, to 30 June, 1939:—

Financial Year.	Annual Debt Increase.	Loan Expenditure other than for Revenue Deficits.
	£	£
1932-33	2,619,070	2,188,021
1933-34	3,286,497	3,166,481
1934-35	1,029,401	4,785,700
1935-36	3,789,298	4,219,630
1936-37	2,262,314	3,760,300
1937-38	883,189	3,521,486
1938-39	1,721,687	3,392,641
Total seven years	£15,591,456	£25,034,250
Yearly Average	£2,227,351	£3,576,322

It will be seen that whilst a sum of £25,034,259 has been expended from Loan Fund on development and capital projects, the public debt has increased by £15,591,456 only. This has been possible by the utilisation of the repayments to Loan Fund by local authorities and individual borrowers.

In reviewing the State's loan expenditure for the seven-year period, it might be pointed out that a sum of £14,632,000 has been provided internally by the State from repayments and domestic raisings, representing 58 per cent. of the total disbursements from loan funds. The requirements of the State from public loan issues have been correspondingly reduced.

MAIN ROADS.

The Government has continued to carry into effect a progressive policy of main roads construction, and at 30 June, 1939, the Main Roads Commission had under its control 14,000 miles of road.

The expenditure on permanent works in respect of main and developmental roads and maintenance totalled £2,585,000 for the year. Funds to meet this expenditure were provided

from the ordinary receipts of the Main Roads Commission and the Commonwealth grant, together with an appropriation from Loan Fund. In addition, the sum of £505,818 was made available for road construction from the income (unemployment relief) tax and the income (State development) tax as a repayment to the Main Roads Fund of portion of the moneys previously diverted to consolidated revenue, pursuant to the provisions of the Main Roads Fund and Heavy Vehicles Road Fund Transfer Approval Act of 1935.

ESTIMATES, 1939-1940.

I have traversed the financial operations for the past year, and I am sure that the results disclosed have been pleasing to hon. members.

I will now turn to the year 1939-40. The Estimates of expenditure are before you, and I can assure you that they have been framed with due regard to the economic needs of the State.

In determining the requirements of the various services of the State for the year, it has been essential to consider the following additional charges on the Budget:—

	£
(1) The increase in salaries and wages on account of the basic wage variation awarded by the Industrial Court as from August, together with award increases, was estimated to cost the Consolidated Revenue Fund alone, an amount of	285,000
(in excess of last year's actual disbursements.)	
(2) The increase in the cost of interest on the Public Debt	79,000
(3) The increased Sinking Fund charge	35,000
(4) The increase in the cost of overseas exchange	70,000
	£469,000

Hon. members will realise that provision for the above items is inescapable and must be a first charge on the revenues of the present year. In addition, it is necessary to make provision for the normal requirements of the various State services.

REVENUE, 1939-1940.

I have estimated the receipts of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the year at £20,310,735.

In assessing the revenue I have allowed for the economic progress of the State and for the higher taxable incomes of the people. The estimate is higher than the actual receipts for last year by £980,366. My anticipations of the major items of revenue are that taxation, exclusive of the income (State development) tax, will produce £5,435,000. The amount estimated to be received from the income (State development) tax is £2,000,000 as compared with £2,436,488 collected during last financial year by means of the income (unemployment relief) tax and income (State development) tax.

Little variation is shown in so far as receipts under the other main headings of revenue are concerned, with the exception of railways, an increase of £241,475 being anticipated in the earnings of this department.

EXPENDITURE, 1939-1940.

The estimates of expenditure have been prepared with a due regard to the efficient functioning of the various services of the State.

It has been necessary to make provision for certain uncontrollable items of expenditure which I have previously referred to and the disbursements for the year are anticipated to reach a total of £20,375,437.

I anticipate that the deficit in the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the year will be £64,702.

LOAN ESTIMATES.

The funds available for loan expenditure in the current year are estimated to be £3,841,000.

The State's allocation of loans to be raised is £2,700,000 and repayments to Loan Fund should produce £1,205,000. A sum of £64,000 will be required to meet the revenue deficit, leaving £3,841,000 for employment and development projects. This sum is £448,359 more than the total expenditure last financial year.

The amount available has been allotted to the various services as follows:—

	£	£
<i>Development—</i>		
Main Roads	269,000	
Land Settlement	190,000	
Forestry	70,000	
Water Supply and Irrigation	60,000	
Bureau of Rural Development	250,000	
Mining	30,000	
Loans and Subsidies to Local Bodies	930,000	
Stanley River Dam	470,000	
Sundry Works	54,000	
	<hr/>	2,323,000
<i>Special Employment Works</i>		300,000
<i>Services Generally—</i>		
Railways	495,000	
Buildings	423,000	
Workers' Dwellings and Homes	300,000	
	<hr/>	1,218,000
		<hr/> <u>£3,841,000</u>

EXPENDITURE ON WORKS AND OTHER DEVELOPMENT.

From Loan Funds and income (State development) tax moneys the Government has planned to carry out a vigorous programme of developmental works and projects during the year, by which it is estimated that an average for the year of between 9,000 and 10,000 persons will find direct employment, while a large additional number will receive employment indirectly, in the various industries providing materials and services necessary for the implementation of the works programme.

Of moneys from these sources it is estimated that £4,384,000, or 79 per cent. of the total, will be spent by the Departments employing labour directly, while the balance will be spent on rural development, including the production of cotton, mining development, and on ration relief for which provision will continue to be made, as required, during the year.

As wide a spread of works as possible with a maximum of employment and development has been the aim, and with the achievement of this it is anticipated that the provision which will be required for ration relief will be correspondingly reduced.

It is hoped that Queensland will participate in a substantial way in the accelerated defence programme which is now being adopted by the Commonwealth Government. The proportion of defence expenditure disbursed in Queensland has been low, and on several occasions the Queensland Government has strongly represented to the Federal Government the urgent need for additional defence provisions in various parts of the State.

RAILWAY ACCOUNTS AND RESULTS.

Railway expenditure is estimated at £6,228,000, an increase of £160,972 over 1938-39, while revenue is estimated at

£7,880,000, an increase of £241,475 over 1938-39. The increasing expenditure is almost entirely accounted for by the greater burden placed upon the railways by the Industrial Court's basic wage decision.

Critics of the railway system often ask for a return to the supposed good old days of 25 years ago. They little realise how vastly more extensive a service is now provided to the user of the railways, and how much cheaper the railway service is in the light of the rising cost of labour and materials. Hourly wage rates are now 120 per cent. above the level of 1914-15, and coal and stores over 80 per cent. above the prices of that period, wages and salaries constituting some 60 per cent. of railway costs. Yet passenger fares are only 28 per cent. higher than they were then, merchandise freight 33 per cent., and mineral freights 45 per cent. higher.

Excursion fares to seaside resorts, and for women and children travelling from the West to the coast, are now also actually considerably lower than they were in 1914-15. Suburban and country passengers have been provided with a vastly improved service, the latter through the use of rail motors, as is shown by the train mileage figures.

The Queensland Railways are, to an increasing extent, becoming a goods system. Goods and livestock represented 70.8 per cent. of the earnings in 1938-39. The relative importance of coaching traffic was at a maximum in 1921-22, when it constituted 39.7 per cent. of earnings, and goods and livestock traffic 60.3 per cent. That year represented the dawn of the motor vehicle era. Motorisation is not yet completed, but its effects on the general budgetary position might be partly set off by the annual diversion of £250,000 to general revenue from the Main Roads Fund.

STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE OFFICE.

The State Government Insurance Office completed its twenty-third year on 30 June last and continues to grow in strength and in service.

This growth and appreciation of this service are best shown by the following comparisons—of an office established in 1916—midway in its career, and to-day:—

—		Premiums.	Claims.	Life Funds.	Assets.
		£	£	£	£
1928	.. .. .	1,042,622	574,786	1,439,759	2,534,087
1939	.. .. .	1,487,047	815,236	4,214,860	6,212,280

The very satisfactory figures of the year just closed coincide with the improved economic position of the State as shown by the rising totals of wages returns on which workers' compensation premiums have been adjusted during the last seven years—

	£
1931-32	26,577,870
1932-33	28,378,923
1933-34	29,794,375
1934-35	32,098,923
1935-36	34,614,920
1936-37	36,413,807
1937-38	42,987,129

the last and peak year showing an increase of £6,573,322 wages expenditure over the previous year.

During the year a record number of 23,190 workers' claims for accident were intimated, 488 were rejected, and to those rejections there were 72 objections.

The actuary's report on the life department as at 31 December, 1938, shows 51,147 policies in force for total sums insured of £11,426,156 and recommends the same high rates of bonuses as last year.

It is estimated that reductions in rates, concessions to policy-holders, and distribution of profits brought about by the establishment of State insurance has resulted in a saving to the insuring public in Queensland of over £7,000,000.

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN THE STATE.

Notwithstanding the fall in export prices, which reached a minimum in May, 1939—30 per cent. below the 1937 peak—Queensland employment during the past year continued to rise above the high levels previously attained. The following table shows the number of contributors to unemployment insurance in the three months ended June of each year:—

1932	102,000
1933	106,000
1934	118,000
1935	130,000
1936	129,000
1937	143,000
1938	153,000
1939	158,000

Apart from this, there is evidence to show that there has been an increase in the numbers in work in industries outside the field

of unemployment insurance, and a more than striking increase in the number of those engaged in business on their own account. Between 1926-27 and 1938-39 the population of Queensland rose from 862,000 to 1,004,000, a rise of 16.4 per cent. as against a rise of 12.7 per cent. for the rest of the Commonwealth. But the numbers in employment, including those in business on their own account, have risen from 296,000 in 1926-27 to 363,000 in 1938-39, a rise of 22.8 per cent.

During recent years the major attention of the Government and the people has been centred on the problem of employment. In view of the appalling amount of unemployment which prevailed when this Government took office, no-one can deny that we were right to place this problem first, and the sustained efforts of the Government have produced most satisfactory results. It is important that we should not repeat the mistake of allowing another generation of youth to grow up unskilled. In this respect the employment of boys in dead-end jobs in certain types of employment is a very grave matter for the economic future of the State. The Government has an expert committee working at high pressure on this matter, and intends to take action shortly.

CONCLUSION.

It is fitting to mention that the past year witnessed the attainment of some notable achievements in the State's progress and advancement. Seasonal conditions were, on the whole, generally favourable in the pastoral and agricultural areas of the State, although the Treasury was involved in an expenditure of £31,925 during the year by way of rebates for the carriage of starving stock and fodder, as compared with £15,004 for the year 1937-38.

Our direct overseas exports constituted a record, reaching a new high peak of £28,500,000, exceeding by more than £2,000,000 the previous high level in the year 1937-38. On the other hand, the figures for the Commonwealth as a whole, unfortunately, showed a reduction in the overseas trade balance for the year, and this State's contribution, therefore, to the maintenance of Australian balances in London has been very substantial.

An increase of butter production was also registered, and for the first time Queensland took the lead as the greatest producer and the greatest exporter of butter amongst the Australian States. Sugar production eclipsed previous records.

Brisbane bank clearings, which are recognised as a barometer of the volume of business activity generally, also surpassed any hitherto recorded, the monthly average for the year showing an increase of 4.7 per cent. on the previous year, whilst the corresponding figures for the Melbourne and Sydney monthly averages, partly due to the unseasonal conditions in the Southern States, showed a decline of 5.2 per cent. and 0.5 per cent. respectively.

Since the loan programmes were approved at the June meeting of the Loan Council, the international crisis and the declaration of war have intervened, and the transition from a peace-time economy to a war-time economy has to be met.

The allocations then approved provided for an increase in the States' loan works programmes, as compared with the previous year, and for a substantial increase of Commonwealth borrowing, particularly for defence. The increase in the governmental loan expenditure was designed to assist in the maintenance of employment and industrial activities generally through a period when the drop in income from exports might have led to a decline in the operations of secondary industry.

It is important that there should be no departure from the principles which animated the Loan Council's decisions when the programme was decided at the June meeting. On this point I quote the views expressed by the National Bank of Australasia, Limited, in its monthly publication dated 11th September, 1939—

“A certain nervousness at the outbreak of hostilities is not unnatural, and forebodings as to the course of economic events can be understood, but it behoves us to think calmly and to avoid action which will in any way contribute to a decline of trade and consequent unemployment. Our attitude should be the reverse, as there is much to encourage us to go forward in a determination to keep the wheels of industry turning. The sale of our wool clip to the British Government for the duration of the war is assured. Great Britain has also placed with us standing orders for the purchase of our surplus production of butter, cheese, meat, eggs, canned fruits, and dried fruits. Plans for the disposal of our wheat seem to be well advanced, and indicate that wheatgrowers may expect adequate returns for their labours. The disposal of our metal production should present no difficulties. The marketing of the greater portion of our primary export commodities is thus assured, and this, combined with the promise of abundant production this season, is one good reason for maintenance of business confidence in the near future.

“The certainty of a steady sale of our exportable goods, coupled with heavy war expenditure on internal armament manufacture and mobilisation, cannot fail to reflect itself in the secondary industries as well as in the wholesale, retail, and distributing trades.

“Other factors should add to our confidence. As a result of the experience of the last war, and the difficulties of the great depression, the Australian economy is much better equipped to withstand the shock occasioned by the outbreak of world conflict than it was 25 years ago. Our banking structure has not only gained unprecedented strength, but has developed its technical knowledge of the organisation of finance to such an extent that it may be confidently relied upon to carry through its share of the community effort and make positive contributions towards the solution of the financial problems which will arise from time to time.”

I am sure that hon. members have noted with satisfaction the arrangements which were completed by the hon. the Premier and the Sugar Board in Sydney last week for the sale of the State's exportable sugar surplus to the British Government.

The conference of Commonwealth and State Ministers convened by the Prime Minister and held at Canberra on the 9 September provided the means for full co-operation to be maintained between the Commonwealth and State Governments on matters needing immediate attention, as well as those which will arise in the future.

Machinery has been set up by the Commonwealth Government for co-ordinating appropriate action by the Commonwealth and State Governments in regard to the control of prices generally, so that the public interest might be adequately protected.

The Government is in complete accord with the sound advice that has been so frequently repeated by the Right Hon. the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth, that our aim should be to carry on our activities with the minimum of dislocation. If this is adopted generally there is every reason to hope that the transition period, and whatever may be involved in it, will be accomplished with the least possible friction.

This Budget is, therefore, framed on the basis that our internal economy should be so designed as to maintain normality in business conditions as far as practicable, with the proviso that unforeseen situations must be met as they arise.

Mr. O'Keefe, I move—

“That there be granted to His Majesty, for the service of the year 1939-1940, a sum not exceeding £300 to defray the salary of the aide-de-camp to His Excellency the Governor.”

Government Members: Hear, hear!

Progress reported.

PEST DESTROYERS BILL.

SECOND READING.

Motion—That the Bill be now read a second time (Mr. Bulcock)—agreed to.

COMMITTEE.

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

Clauses 1 to 4, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Clause 5—Unqualified persons prohibited from manufacturing pest destroyers—

Mr. MAHER (West Moreton) (3.7 p.m.): I am wondering whether any hardship would be imposed on any person who wished to undertake the manufacture of pest destroyers in being compelled by the Bill to have as a supervisor a person possessing one of the following qualifications:—

(a) A certificate of fellowship or association of the Australian Chemical Institute;

(b) A master's or bachelor's degree in science, with chemistry as a major subject, obtained at a recognised University;

(c) A diploma in industrial chemistry or chemistry obtained at a recognised University or technical college;

(d) A permit in writing as prescribed by subsection 2 hereof;

(e) Such other qualification as may be approved by the board.

According to the clause a person about to embark upon the manufacture of dips and specifics of all kinds for the destruction of pests would have to undertake the additional overhead expense of providing a supervisor possessing one of the qualifications that I have enumerated. I do not mind that so much, but when we take into account that those who are already engaged in the manufacture of these specifics—

The Premier: They will be protected by paragraph 2 of the clause.

Mr. MAHER: That is all right so long as they will not be compelled to undertake the extra overhead expense to which I have referred. Paragraph 2 says—

“(2) Notwithstanding anything contained in subsection one of this section, any person manufacturing, mixing, or preparing for sale any pest destroyers on the passing of this Act shall be permitted to continue to manufacture, mix, or prepare for sale such pest destroyers without complying with subsection one of this section, provided that from time to time he furnishes on demand to the satisfaction of the Board—

(a) Sample of each such pest destroyer;

(b) The formula of each such pest destroyer;

(c) Full methods of manufacture, mixing, or preparation for sale of each such pest destroyer;

(d) Sources of supply of raw materials and/or ingredients of each such pest destroyer;

(e) Such further information as may be required by the Board:”

I feel that when we are laying down a principle of this kind there ought to be one law for all. Why should persons who are already established and carrying on an enterprise, profitably, no doubt, have the advantage that they are not called upon to carry a supervisor with special qualifications, while those who wish to enter into the manufacture of these specifics must charge their business costs with the wages or salaries of qualified officers. There is an unjust differentiation there. An established manufacturer has an advantage over any possible competitor. That does not seem to be right, and I should be glad to have an explanation why the Bill seeks to give it. It is obvious that if an enterprise that is struggling for a footing has to carry the extra cost of a qualified supervisor it will find it difficult to meet the competition of the business that is already successfully established and is exempt from the obligation to carry a supervisor having these special qualifications.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, Barcoo) (3.18 p.m.): I am afraid the Leader of the Opposition has not read this clause as meticulously as is desirable before expressing an opinion on it. This clause divides manufacturers into two groups. The man appointed under subclause (1) is to have jurisdiction over the manufacture of the substance that such manufacturers are selling. That does not necessarily mean, of course, that a chemist has to be employed permanently, but, in effect, that a chemist must pass the work they are doing. I explained yesterday that the success of a pest destroyer, or a kindred article, depends very largely on the technique and ability of the manufacturer to make the necessary blending.

Then this clause goes on to say that notwithstanding anything that is said about chemists—most firms do employ a chemist—a person can carry on without a chemist, provided he submits to the board a sample of the pest destroyer, the formula, full methods of manufacture, details of the mixing or preparation, the source of supply of raw materials and/or ingredients and any other information of a technical description required by the board.

Mr. Maher: Why do you not allow the same conditions to apply to the new man?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: Do we exclude the new man? If a man establishes a business, he falls into the category of a person “manufacturing, mixing, or preparing for sale.” This Bill does not create a monopoly. It does not say that no new man can come in.

Mr. Maher: You handicap him.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: No. Any new man may come in if he conforms to the requirements

of the Act. There are two requirements: One is to employ a chemist. Quite obviously, the larger firms must have a chemist, because the efficiency of their preparations very largely depends on the chemical knowledge displayed in the manufacture of their ingredients. Some people prefer to have their own chemist rather than be associated with the department; they do not desire that their technique should be known to some of our officers. But then the clause provides—

“Notwithstanding anything contained in subsection one of this section, any person manufacturing, mixing, or preparing for sale any pest destroyers on the passing of this Act shall be permitted to continue to manufacture, mix, or prepare for sale such pest destroyers without complying with subsection one of this section, provided that from time to time he furnishes on demand to the satisfaction of the board—

(a) A sample of each such pest destroyer;

(b) The formula of each such pest destroyer.

There are two proposals, alternate in nature. They give the opportunity to the manufacturer to do one or other of the two things—have a chemist or submit his sample, formula, and so on. I can assure the hon. gentleman that if anyone not now established in manufacture came along and desired to begin manufacturing and he could satisfy the board that he could do the job and it was worth while letting him do the job, no impediment would be put in his way.

Mr. Maher: The Bill insists that he has to undertake the expense of the chemical supervisor.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: Not necessarily.

Clause 5, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 6 to 36, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACTS AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

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

The TREASURER (Hon. F. A. Cooper, Bremer) (3.23 p.m.): I move—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Workers' Compensation Acts, 1916 to 1936, and the Workers' Compensation (Lead Poisoning, Mount Isa) Act of 1933 in certain particulars, and for other purposes.”

I propose to give the Committee an outline of the amendments in the Bill. I have no intention of debating them, but merely give them so that hon. members will be conversant with what it is proposed to do.

It will be remembered that some time last year an employee at Coolangatta was sent across the border into New South Wales to

do some work for his employer. In that State he met with an accident, and, unfortunately, as he was not within Queensland territory, the Queensland Act did not apply. He was not covered by the employer whilst in New South Wales. The position was somewhat difficult. A position like that should not arise in an ordinary community, but on the border between two States, where there are twin towns such as Coolangatta and Tweed Heads, it can happen. We got in touch with the Government of New South Wales and endeavoured to come to a reciprocal arrangement under which a Queensland employee for the time being working in New South Wales would be covered by the Act of that State and an employee of New South Wales working in Queensland would be covered by the Queensland Act. Draft proposals were forwarded to the Government of New South Wales, who some time afterwards informed us that the matter had not then been considered, that for the time being they were concerned with other matters. Dealings between States or between the Commonwealth and the States sometimes take a considerable time to bring to finality, and in order to save delay it is thought advisable to amend the Queensland Act to provide that an employee of a Queensland employer who goes into any State or dependency of the Commonwealth upon his employer's business shall be covered by the Queensland Workers' Compensation Act and shall be entitled to all those things for which the Queensland Act provides. I think that is a reasonable thing to do. If it is possible to come to some reciprocal arrangement later on, well and good, but if the House and the Committee agree we will protect all of those workers of Queensland employers who, in the course of their employment, go outside the boundaries of Queensland.

There is a time in the year—I believe somewhere about the beginning of November—when people drive in such things as charabancs as far as Melbourne, and the driver of the vehicle, being an employee, should, I think, be covered in case he meets with an accident on the road. We are not confining this provision to New South Wales; it shall apply to the employee who goes to any of the other States of the Commonwealth of Australia.

The definition of the “worker” under this Act is such that hitherto contributors to the Public Service Superannuation Fund have been excluded. It is proposed, in the measure to be brought before the House, that that exclusion shall be excluded, so that contributors to the Public Service Superannuation Fund will be within the ambit of the Workers' Compensation Act. There are very good reasons for that, which I shall give to the House when it asks for them.

I am not sure, but I think that Queensland is the only State in the Commonwealth that varies its basic wage in accordance with district situations or territorial margins. The basic wage is declared as so much and parities are added for various divisions of the State. Up to the present workers' compensation has been fixed upon the basic wage

as paid in Brisbane. This Bill proposes to amend that provision so that the compensation shall be based upon the basic wage as paid in Brisbane, plus the parities as allowed by the court for the various divisions of the State. That, I think, will bring all the workers of the State on the same level, and is a very decent and ordinary division.

It is found in research work that officers of departments and others are required to make investigation into dangerous diseases. For instance, we have had people working in connection with Weil's and one or two other diseases and they have become afflicted by the disease. It is not really an occupational disease so far as they are concerned in the ordinary acceptance of that term, but I think that we should bring such employees within the ambit of the Act because their daily occupation brings them in contact with germs that might endanger them.

Mr. Moore: Have you had any cases of that?

The TREASURER: Yes. We had one case of an attendant at a Government laboratory who contracted one of the diseases then being investigated.

We have found, too, that certain people engaged in the brick-making industry are likely to be what is commonly called "dusted" by reason of their occupation. We propose to insert an amendment in the Act covering those people.

Mr. Maher: It is a common thing for a man to be dusted.

The TREASURER: If it is a common thing and arises out of his occupation he should be considered; we propose to give him consideration.

There is another peculiar point. A man is eligible for compensation for injury on the ground that he is working in industry, and the industry is supposed to cover him—and it does cover him—at his work, and from the time he leaves his home to go to his work and from his work home again—industry needs his help and he must go to work and it is necessary that he should leave work to go home. It may happen that an employee is receiving worker's compensation and while so receiving compensation is instructed to do certain things by the Insurance Commissioner. That man is not working for the Commissioner but has to do certain things to satisfy that officer. Perhaps the man has to go from his home to a hospital or medical man for attention and has, of course, to get back home again. Or he might have to go from his home to the insurance office to get his weekly compensation. That man is not travelling for himself, nor is he travelling for pleasure or about his own business. He is travelling on business occasioned by reason of his occupation, and if an injury happens

him in that period there is good ground for saying that it happens to him within the scope of his employment. This Bill proposes to cover him when going from his home for medical attention ordered by the Commissioner and in going to the Commissioner's

office or sub-branch of the department to receive compensation and on his return journey home.

Mr. Maher: He is already in receipt of compensation?

The TREASURER: Yes.

Mr. Maher: But meets with a further accident?

The TREASURER: For which no compensation is at present payable. I admit that cases of this nature might not happen very frequently. At any rate, henceforth an injured man will be able to set out on such a journey with the knowledge that he is covered should he meet with an accident.

Mr. Macdonald: In contesting a claim against the Insurance Commissioner he could meet with an accident and still recover?

The TREASURER: If he meets with an accident on the way he is entitled to recover.

Mr. Maher: If he keeps on meeting with accidents he will keep on drawing compensation in perpetuity.

The Premier: A man might be going to a hospital for treatment and get run over.

The TREASURER: There is a case on record of a man who had delivered his certificate to show that he was fit to return to employment and on the way back home again was knocked over by a motor-truck and killed.

Mr. Moore: Did he have anything on the way back?

The TREASURER: No, he went straight from the office. The accident was not his fault.

There is still a further proposal in this amending measure. It is desired to make it clear that the amount of compensation payable to a man in respect of an injury shall be a certain amount. To illustrate, a man may lose his hand; he becomes entitled to a certain amount set out in the schedule. He is entitled to that amount and no more. If a man injures the middle finger of his hand but does not lose the finger, the finger may not recover. That man is permanently injured; he loses the use of the hand. It is possible that the medical man might report that Jenkins is not able to return to work "as his finger has not recovered." Were the finger off, the right to the specified sum would have vested! It is proposed to make the maximum amount of compensation available in that case the amount that would be received if the limb was totally lost or removed.

The Workers' Compensation (Lead Poisoning, Mount Isa) Act of 1933, as hon. members know, deals with compensation for miners who contract lead poisoning at Mount Isa. One of the provisions of that Act is that an applicant for compensation must be examined and a certificate given by the doctors appointed at Mount Isa for that particular purpose. A man may leave Mount Isa, however, to go to some other part of the State or Commonwealth, and then discover that he is suffering from the effects of lead poisoning, but, unfortunately, his application for

compensation cannot be entertained because it is not accompanied by a certificate given by the doctor appointed for that purpose. The Act is to be amended to enable the doctor at Mount Isa to accept the certificate of any other medical man in any part of the Commonwealth that the unfortunate worker is suffering from lead poisoning.

Mr. RUSSELL (Hamilton) (3.36 p.m.): I found it rather difficult to follow closely the Minister's explanation of the Bill, but in the main its provisions appear to be very reasonable. I recall a case in which a worker was killed outside the State and his widow was unable to obtain compensation. In fact, she came to me about it, but, of course, the Commissioner was not liable. It seemed very hard on the widow that, although her husband was covered under a worker's compensation policy when working in Brisbane for a Brisbane carrying firm, it was null and void as soon as he crossed the border. I am glad to learn from the Minister that it will be possible, subject to arrangements with the other States, to arrange that a worker's compensation policy—

The Premier: That is the object of the Bill.

Mr. RUSSELL: I take it that negotiations are being continued, and that the Queensland Government have decided that, in the meantime, the State Insurance Office's policy shall cover persons who cross the border in the course of their employment. I also understand that the policy will apply not only to an insured person who is an employee of a Queensland employer, but also to drivers of motor cars who go beyond the border of the State.

The Treasurer: If they are employees of a Queensland employer.

Mr. RUSSELL: Quite so. I think that there should be no objection to that. In fact, the Bill will remove an anomaly. I was very sorry for the woman who called on me, but nothing could be done for her, because legally she was out of court.

I agree with the Minister that the basic wage parities should be taken into consideration in fixing compensation.

I should like more detailed information concerning the contributors to the Public Service Superannuation Fund before I express any opinion on that point but from what the Minister has told us the provision seems to be a very reasonable one indeed. It seems peculiar that a person who is entitled to worker's compensation and is injured when going to the department to collect it is not treated as working in the interests of the Insurance Commissioner or an employer and so is not entitled to compensation for injuries that may arise while he is complying with the directions of the Commissioner.

The provision relating to lead poisoning at Mount Isa appears to be acceptable.

It is too early to express any definite opinion on the proposed amendments, but I should say that they would appeal to both sides of the Chamber. We have had several

amendments of the Workers' Compensation Act before us for consideration, and it is our duty to remedy the anomalies and injustices that present themselves from time to time. They do not arise from any want of sympathy on the part of the department or the Government, but become apparent during the administration of the law. Consequently, the measure will have the support of the Opposition.

Motion (Mr. Cooper) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING.

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

AGRICULTURAL REQUIREMENTS CONTROL AND CONSERVATION BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

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

The PREMIER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, Mackay) (3.43 p.m.): I move—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to conserve, control, and adjust essential supplies of fertilisers and other agricultural requirements during any emergency arising out of the present war.”

This is an emergency measure due to the present war. Its purpose is to organise the supply of all fertilisers with a view to supplying all essential requirements to the industries that require them in Queensland. It can be understood that in a time such as this difficulties will arise. There are difficulties at the present time in regard to certain types of fertilisers and chemicals that are used in mixtures prepared by companies that deal in this business. Efforts are being made by the Government to obtain fertiliser from other States and also from overseas to supply those shortages.

It is intended to take power under this Bill to prevent hoarding, and to utilise to the best possible extent the quantity that may be available. It is obvious that where there is a shortage it may be necessary to resort to rationing. It is also necessary to prevent hoarding with a view to preventing the forcing up of prices. That is the aim of the Bill, which is in the interest of the industry generally.

Mr. MAHER (West Moreton) (3.46 p.m.): The Bill is stated by the Premier to be an emergency one, because of the shortage of fertilisers required for agricultural crops in the State. It seems important that those powers should be taken, because it would be very unfair to the agriculturist if there was any suggestion of hoarding by those who may corner supplies and thereby force up prices to undue levels. Unfortunately, this happens under war conditions. The spectacle of the ghastly profiteer is always looming up. He increases prices very frequently when there is no legitimate reason for doing so.

I telephoned Sydney a few days ago in an endeavour to get quotations for wool-packs, and I was informed by a firm in Sydney that deals in wool-packs in a big way that none were available, and therefore they could not quote; yet, subsequently, a Commonwealth Minister announced that there were ample supplies of wool-packs in Australia for the current season. The prices of wool-packs rose a couple of shillings a pack in Sydney and Melbourne within a week. That indicates that there was speculation and gambling with supplies that forced up values at the expense of the grower. Precisely the same thing is happening in many other sections of industry, but it is nearly always the man on the land who is the victim of this profiteering. I have no time whatever for the type of business man who is prepared to force prices up under war conditions when there is no need to do so. That man is not doing a fair thing by his country. Therefore, as the Bill takes power to prevent hoarding, cornering of stocks, and forcing up of values unnecessarily, it has my very warm support.

As to chemicals used in fertilisers, I realise that there is likely to be a shortage of potash.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: Not only is there likely to be; there is.

Mr. MAHER: There is a definite shortage. Potash comes from Germany and also from the Dead Sea, in Palestine. There are also other ingredients with which I am not familiar of which there may be a shortage.

It is important that we realise early that the orchardists and other agriculturists in the State who use fertiliser in large quantities may suffer considerably if these powers are not taken.

Taking the broad principles outlined by the Premier as fairly representative of the Bill, it appears to be one that will be of advantage to the State.

Mr. BRAND (Isis) (3.50 p.m.): I am pleased that legislation is being brought down to control these essential supplies. From the agriculturist's point of view it is essential that if they are to maintain, still more if they are to increase production, they shall have a reasonable supply of fertiliser. It appears that such a Bill as this is necessary, inasmuch as there have been adjustments in the constituents of fertilisers used in the sugar industry. Muriate of potash is essential for the production of sugar when cane is grown in volcanic soil. The title of the Bill indicates that it will provide the necessary machinery for adjusting and controlling constituents in fertilisers. I trust that is the intention.

In the early part of each year representatives of fertiliser companies visit sugar-growing districts to write up contracts for the supplies of fertilisers for the ensuing 12 months. They contend that they must do so in order to ensure a sufficient supply to fill orders, but they do not say very much for these companies at so soon as an economic disturbance takes place they are unable to carry out the contracts entered into by them.

I should like the Minister to give some assurance that muriate of potash will be available in at least sufficient quantities. That does not come from Germany or any other country with which we are at war, but, strange to say, it is impossible to buy muriate of potash from the companies in the State to-day. It is right that we should have legislative action to ensure sufficiency of supplies to meet the requirements of the formulas for fertilisers used in the various parts of the State. This would be for the benefit of Queensland. The volcanic soils in which sugar-cane is grown require fair percentages of this potash—some a very high percentage, but some of the companies have decided not to supply fertilisers with the very high potash content of Dr. Kerr's formula, and if this Bill will adjust the contents of the fertilisers that were being sold by fertiliser companies, in the interests of the growers and Queensland generally it will be a very useful measure. There should be no difficulty in obtaining a full supply of muriate of potash. It is not obtained from enemy countries.

Mr. DART (Wynnum) (3.55 p.m.): I support the Bill in the interests of the primary producers. I find that it is usually the middleman who benefits from such a disturbed period as the present. The Leader of the Opposition mentioned wool-packs. I know of a number of cases in which the prices of wool-packs were put up although ample stocks were available. Profiteering will go on if a Bill is not brought down to protect the primary producer from having to do without these very necessary fertilisers.

I suggest that the Bill might go further and protect those who are now engaged in secondary industries in the manufacture of farm machinery. I know of cases in which the prices of iron and steel—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. DART: I confess that I am out of order, but I thought it might be advisable to protect these people, too, in the interests of the primary producer. I am pleased to be able to support the Bill.

Mr. YEATES (East Toowoomba) (3.57 p.m.): I rise to support the introduction of this Bill. Of course, at East Toowoomba we do not need fertilisers. The soil there is extremely fertile and has been producing for over 30 years, but we are now dealing with matters affecting the whole of the State. The longer I sit here the more I am convinced that we are getting nearer the day when we shall have to consider seriously the establishment of one Government for Australia.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Motion (Mr. Smith) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING.

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

The House adjourned at 4 p.m.