

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**WEDNESDAY, 3 NOVEMBER 1943**

---

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

court cases, and as this action has not come before Parliament and the imposition of such ban does not appear to be in the best interests of democracy, will he review this decision with a view to lifting the ban?"

**The ATTORNEY-GENERAL** (Hon. D. A. Gledson, Ipswich) replied—

"No; the relevant Rules of Court as of Thursday, 7 October, 1943, were laid before Parliament by me on Tuesday, 12 October, 1943."

#### TRANSPORT PRIORITY OF FRUIT.

**Mr. L. J. BARNES** (Cairns) asked the Premier—

"In view of the fruit famine in Queensland, will he recommend to the proper authorities that fruit be given a higher transport priority?"

**The SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND HOME AFFAIRS** (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, Ithaca), for the **PREMIER** (Hon. F. A. Cooper, Bremer), replied—

"Inquiries indicate that transport difficulties have not had any marked influence on deliveries of fruit from the South. The trouble has been to buy the fruit in the South, for merchants in all markets have been competing for all citrus available. With the commencement of the Granite Belt fruit season about November, special train services are arranged between Wallangarra, Warwick, and Brisbane, including special facilities for traffic from the Amiens branch. Fruit for the far North in the slack season is provided for by a fast fruit train two days each week, and as the Granite Belt traffic increases, this service is increased to three trains weekly. During the peak of the fruit season traffic, four trains are despatched to the North. Fruit from the Northern and Central Divisions is catered for by a fast fruit train which leaves Bowen on Tuesday night each week, conveying fruit for Brisbane and interstate, and fruit trains are also run from Gympie two days each week to Brisbane. When traffic has been abnormally heavy, and it has been necessary to restrict certain classes of loading for brief periods, the fruit traffic has not been restricted."

#### PAPERS.

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

Report of the Commissioner of Main Roads for the year 1942-1943.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Order in Council under the Companies Acts, 1931 to 1942.

Order in Council under the Supreme Court Act of 1921.

### WEDNESDAY, 3 NOVEMBER, 1943.

Mr. **SPEAKER** (Hon. E. J. Hanson, Buranda) took the chair at 11 a.m.

#### QUESTIONS.

##### PURITY OF ALCOHOLIC LIQUOR.

**Mr. YEATES** (East Toowoomba) asked the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs—

"As several cases of violent drunkenness of both men and women have been noticed in the principal streets of the city in the afternoons, which might possibly be caused by the consumption of adulterated liquor, will he arrange to have special tests of liquor made as soon as practicable?"

**The SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND HOME AFFAIRS** (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, Ithaca) replied—

"Inspectors of the Health Department take samples of liquor for analysis to ascertain if the liquor has been adulterated, and action is taken against offenders for breaches of the Health Acts in this respect. No deleterious substances were found in any samples examined during the last three months. Continuous vigilance is being exercised to prevent adulterated liquor being made available for consumption."

##### BATHROOM, ROMA STREET PARCELS OFFICE.

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

"Will he authorise an expenditure of £50 or £60 for the construction of a shower-bath at the Roma Street Parcels Office buildings for the employees on duty night and day, as recommended by me some two years ago?"

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

"It was approved on 28 October last to carry out this work."

##### BAN ON FRIVOLOUS AND VEXATIOUS LAW SUITS.

**Mr. L. J. BARNES** (Cairns) asked the Attorney-General (Hon. D. A. Gledson, Ipswich)—

"As the Governor in Council has approved of the banning of frivolous and vexatious

## DEATH OF MR. T. W. BOUCHARD.

## MOTION OF CONDOLENCE.

**The SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND HOME AFFAIRS** (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, Ithaca) (11.13 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

(1) That this House desires to place on record its appreciation of the services rendered to this State by the late Thomas William Bouchard, Esquire, a former member of the Parliament of Queensland.

(2) That Mr. Speaker be requested to convey to the relatives of the deceased gentleman the above resolution, together with an expression of the sympathy and sorrow of the members of the Parliament of Queensland, in the loss they have sustained.

The late Mr. Bouchard served through four Parliaments, the 15th, 16th, 18th, and 19th. He was elected to the 15th Parliament on 27 August, 1904, as one of the members for South Brisbane, his associate member being Mr. Reinhold. He was re-elected for South Brisbane with Mr. W. Stephens to the 16th Parliament. He was out of the 17th Parliament elected on 5 February, 1908, when Messrs. Airey and Huxham were elected for South Brisbane. He came back with the 18th Parliament on 2 October, 1909, with Mr. James Allan, as representative for South Brisbane. South Brisbane became a single electorate from the beginning of the 19th Parliament in 1912, and Mr. Bouchard was again elected to represent that electorate. He was succeeded in the electorate by Mr. Free, who was elected in 1915 to the 20th Parliament.

The late gentleman's services in this House were given before I and many other members of the present Parliament entered it, but I remember him very well in the stormy years between 1909 and 1915, when the work of the Queensland Parliament was particularly difficult. Many fierce debates and many serious disputes occurred in Queensland, including, I suppose, the greatest industrial disturbance that has occurred in the history of Australia, the general strike in 1912.

Mr. Bouchard, of course, was well known to all metropolitan electors who took any interest in politics. He was a forthright and very earnest parliamentarian, a man who never hesitated to speak his opinions quite freely and back them up. Even in those stormy years, when at times feeling between the Governments of the day, the Philp, the Denham, the Morgan, and the Kidston Governments, ran very high, Mr. Bouchard was a man who was popular and liked by both sides of the House. He was very popular with the electors of South Brisbane, even those in the Labour movement with whom I have associated, who opposed him very vigorously at election times. He was a man with a splendid and cheerful good nature. He was a good sportsman. As a matter of fact, he maintained his association with sport until a few weeks before his death. Even at that advanced age he was regarded

as one of the premier bowlers in the metropolitan area.

I am sure every hon. member who remembers the stormy days of which I have spoken will remember Mr. Bouchard's work in this Parliament and that all hon. members will join in supporting the motion I have moved.

**Mr. NICKLIN** (Murrumba) (11.14 a.m.): It is with regret I support the motion of condolence moved by the hon. gentleman with the relatives of the late Mr. T. W. Bouchard. As the Minister has said, he gave good and faithful service to this State during the period he was member for South Brisbane in this Assembly. At all times he took an active interest in public affairs and a very great interest in the development of this city and this State. He was a well-known figure in the city, being a very old and honoured member of the legal profession. I do not think there are many people who have lived any length of time in the City of Brisbane and who have taken an active interest in public affairs who were not known to the late Mr. Bouchard. He served his State and country well, and he deserves the commendation of all of us for the services he gave in the interests of this State.

As the Acting Premier has said, he was also very well known among bowlers, having been champion of the State on quite a few occasions and skip of many of its leading teams. He also had the honour of being president of the Queensland Bowling Association for more than one term. He was particularly well known and liked by all members of the bowling fraternity; he revealed his likable characteristics and personality on the green.

I associate the Opposition with the motion of condolence and sympathy with his relatives.

Motion agreed to, hon. members standing in silence.

INSPECTION OF MACHINERY ACTS  
AMENDMENT BILL.

## INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Brassington, Fortitude Valley, in the chair.)

**The SECRETARY FOR MINES** (Hon. V. C. Gair, South Brisbane) (11.21 a.m.): I move—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Inspection of Machinery Acts, 1915 to 1939, in certain particulars.”

The proposed Bill contains only two provisions. The first has the effect of bringing the power plants of electric supply authorities under the inspection of the Sub-department of Machinery and also gives effect to the section of the Act dealing with the manning of large power houses with two or more engines having an aggregate horse-power exceeding 10,000.

In 1939 the Act was amended to exempt hydraulic engines used in generating electricity

and steam or internal-combustion engines used in power houses of electric supply authorities from the provisions of the Machinery Acts. It also exempted those plants from the provisions relating to the manning of large power houses whose plant had an aggregate horse-power in excess of 10,000. There are only two such plants in Queensland at the moment, one being owned by the City Electric Light Company and the other by the Brisbane City Council.

The Act provides that for such plants the engineer shall have an assistant. Although its power house was exempted from the provisions of the Inspection of Machinery Acts, the Brisbane City Council observed the amendment by adding to the staff an assistant to the engineer in charge of the power house. Up to the present the City Electric Light Company has not done that.

It was intended that the inspection of the power houses should be undertaken by the State Electricity Commission, but because of war conditions generally and the fact that many of the regular officers of the State Electricity Commission are engaged on extraneous duties, and the difficulty of getting qualified men, it has not been possible for the State Electricity Commission to make annual inspections of these plants, as was the practice prior to the amendment in 1939. The Government are of the opinion that it is desirable to reinstitute the practice of having inspections made as a measure of protection against preventable accidents to persons and plant. The object of the first principle in the Bill is to reinstitute these annual inspections of power plants of electric authorities throughout the State. At the present time the boilers and pumps in these plants are inspected by the departmental inspectors, but these officers have not been inspecting the engines because they were exempt under the Act, and were to be inspected by the officers of the State Electricity Commission. I have already explained that it has not been possible for the Commission to carry out those inspections.

The second principle deals with the drivers of mobile internal-combustion engines. At the present time the Act exempts the stationary or mobile internal-combustion engines of or under 60 circular inches in area of cylinders, but it is found that there is a great increase in the use of mobile engines of this size as, for instance, on wharves, in mines, and in sugar mills, and so it has become necessary in the interests of the protection of life and the prevention of accidents that the men employed on them shall hold second-class engine-drivers' certificates.

**Mr. Brand:** What if we cannot get them?

**The SECRETARY FOR MINES:** I shall deal with that point later. Of course, there are at present in various industries quite a number of steam or internal-combustion engines of a greater haulage power than those I have mentioned, and in those cases certificates are required, but the smaller engines that I have mentioned are used as mobile cranes, tow motors, stackers, and

tractors, and to lift loads and transport goods. We believe it is important that the men in control of these engines should be qualified and, to ensure that they are, that they should hold second-class engine-drivers' certificates. The hon. member for Isis asks what the people are to do if they cannot get these men. I venture to say that any of the men at present employed on this engine could, with a little application to study, quite easily and readily qualify for the necessary certificates.

**Mr. Brand:** They do that as quickly as they can now.

**The SECRETARY FOR MINES:** They do, and many of them hold these certificates already. The Bill will make it general and uniform. A number of the men acquire certificates in their own interests, but there are others who have no certificates. It is intended by this Bill that they shall be required to obtain them.

**Mr. Kerr:** Will you give them a period to acquire certificates?

**The SECRETARY FOR MINES:** The hon. member for Oxley can rest assured that those men will have a reasonable time given to them to qualify for certificates. It is not intended by this Bill to disturb industry in any respect or to cause any hold-up in obtaining men with the necessary certificates to run these engines. I repeat that the desire of this legislation is to make the regulations uniform and to bring them all under one heading.

It is not intended to bring stationary plants under this Bill. They will still be exempt and men working plants of the cylinder circumference I have mentioned will not be required to possess certificates.

**Mr. Brand:** You mean plants with a cylinder circumference of less than 60 circular inches?

**The SECRETARY FOR MINES:** Yes, stationary plants of or under 60 circular inches in area of cylinders. There is not the same possibility of accident with a stationary plant as with a mobile engine. There is not the same possibility that a driver of that class of engine will cause an accident or a death, as has happened, unfortunately, although not perhaps altogether through the negligence of the driver. Boys who work round sugar mills, for instance, have been killed. While I do not attribute these occurrences to any negligence or inefficiency on the part of the engine-driver, men driving those mobile engines should for safety purposes hold certificates. The department would then know that they were not being driven by men who were not qualified to be in charge of them.

**Mr. Brand:** What about farm tractors?

**The SECRETARY FOR MINES:** Farm tractors will not come under this Bill any more than oil tractors on farms or tractors of that calibre or nature used round about a farm. As I have mentioned, there are many of these internal-combustion engines in use. In fact, they are used very freely to-day.

They are taking the place of steam because they are more compact and have a haulage capacity of 50 to 60 tons. They can at a slow rate of speed draw up to 100 tons, which is a big load. It is important that a man in charge of such a big load should be qualified to handle the engine he is driving. The proposed amendments will have the effect of a check on the drivers of these mobile engines.

**Mr. BRAND** (Isis) (11.34 a.m.): I listened to the introductory remarks of the Minister with great interest. Shall I be correct in assuming that the proposed Bill will restore the dual control of electricity and steam inspections that was in vogue prior to the 1939 amendment of the Act which disposed of that dual control of inspection? If the object of the Bill is simply to restore the dual control that operated prior to 1939, there cannot be any great objection to it, particularly in view of the difficulties of getting inspectors during this war period. It will be generally accepted that the steam inspector is qualified to inspect electrical machinery and plant.

Other principles in the Bill will have an effect on those in control of certain machines because it seeks to enact that in future they must possess second-class engine-drivers' certificates. The Minister must realise that just as he is finding a difficulty in manning the inspectorial branch of his various sub-departments, both steam and electricity, so the people engaged in industry find great difficulty in manning their plants with the requisite certificated men.

I want to inform the Minister that before a candidate can sit for a certificate he must have had practical experience on an electrical machine for a number of years. During the past year industry has found great difficulty in getting qualified men, because most of them had not had the necessary experience with oil and electrical engines to permit them to sit for the examination. On the introduction of such a Bill it should be stated that whilst it is important to protect the lives of persons engaged in industry there must be some elasticity in the operation of industry. For instance, in a sugar mill it is necessary to have men in charge of the engines that generate electricity, yet, notwithstanding that there are several engineers in a sugar mill to guide and direct the operations of these engines, the law says a man with a first-class certificate must be in charge of that plant. Three men are required to carry on the operations of the sugar mill, and sugar mills have found it impossible to get sufficient men with the qualifications.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** That is because of the emergency conditions.

**Mr. BRAND:** Yes, because of the war. Men with these qualifications are needed in various branches of the war effort, consequently the industry has great difficulty in getting the number it requires. Last year the sugar industry found it impossible, although it combed the whole of Australia, to get sufficient qualified men to carry out the

work of the mills, and men had to go on 12-hour shifts to maintain a service during the three normal 8-hour periods. I realise that no-one would allow an unqualified man to handle his expensive plant. I want to impress on the Minister the difficulty in getting qualified men, and the need for a certain amount of elasticity in administering the regulations.

Let me take, too, the ordinary irrigation plant. Under the Act it is not supposed to work unless it is in charge of a certificated man. To-day the owners of some of these plants are away doing a good war effort, and they find it impossible to get qualified men to carry out irrigation on their farms. I refer to stationary engines of 60 circular inches and over.

**The Secretary for Mines:** This Bill does not refer to stationary plant. It applies to mobile, not stationary, engines.

**Mr. BRAND:** Mobile plant only?

**The Secretary for Mines:** Yes.

**Mr. BRAND:** I must have misunderstood the hon. gentleman. I thought he said engines of 60 circular inches came under it.

**The Secretary for Mines:** It applies to mobile plant only. Stationary plant would still be exempt—it is exempt under the Act.

**Mr. BRAND:** Stationary plant would still be exempt? It is not exempt under the Act.

**The Secretary for Mines:** Over 60 circular inches it is not, but if it is 60 circular inches and under it is.

**Mr. BRAND:** Of course, that is exempt under the Act to-day. I am talking of irrigation plant with a cylinder of more than 60 circular inches. Plant of more than 60 circular inches is not so very different from smaller plant that it could not be worked by the owner himself if he could get a certificate.

In this period we are finding it impossible to get these men, and with the conditions prevailing an experienced man, though not certificated, may be able to take charge of a plant operating an irrigation system, which is for the benefit of the country as well as of the individual. This would enable this industry to carry on its activities as it did prior to the 1939 measure. I ask the Minister to give a reasonable assurance that industry will not be unnecessarily hampered by the amendments he proposes. With those assurances I think generally, from what he said, at least we may be able to accept the principles in the Bill. I recognise that the necessity for returning to dual control in the inspectorial branches, steam and electricity, is desirable to-day, but the people engaged in industry should have the protection that the Minister himself now seeks by transferring the power from the State Electricity Commission to the Inspection of Machinery Sub-Department.

**Mr. WALKER** (Cooroora) (11.44 a.m.): I am rather pleased that an amendment of

the Act has been brought down. That applies to everything in which an examination is necessary, particularly when a breakage would cause risk to the lives of those in the vicinity of the machinery. I remember the time when the first Act went through this Parliament and its effect on the big plants at Charters Towers and Gympie, and the steps that were necessary for the protection of the workers in mining. At that time, however, steam was the only motive power; internal-combustion engines were almost unknown. We had to legislate particularly for steam-driven engines and machinery, which is the most dangerous of all.

If I understood the Minister rightly, he proposes to have somebody with the high qualifications necessary to inspect the two electrical undertakings in Brisbane, but it seems a pity that interference in the form of an inspection like that should take place. These companies are so huge that I should prefer to see the head of the department go round once or twice a year and do the inspections, because of the high qualifications that are necessary. I know that these two large undertakings must have the very best men in their profession it is possible to obtain. They must hold the highest qualifications, otherwise there would not be the efficiency and protection that is evident at present. I trust that there will be no clashing of interests or interference in inspections. I only hope that the Minister can get a man with those qualifications for the inspection of these two large power houses. I presume a yearly or half-yearly inspection would be quite sufficient.

I wish to speak more particularly in reference to internal-combustion engines, which are to be found all over the country and on all sorts of farms. One can come to only one conclusion to-day as to the efficiency of the motor-car engine—that it is almost fool-proof—of course, at times the car is not so—and the degree of protection is very high. If a gasket or a cylinder broke, for instance, I doubt very much whether a person standing alongside would be injured. As to the engines used for farm purposes and in and about sugar mills, as mentioned by the hon. member for Isis, I really think we could go a little bit further and no matter how small the plant may be, if there is a body of men working in the vicinity, no exemption should be made. Of course, I can understand that exemption could be given for the man driving a tractor, a chaff-cutter, or a milking plant. He alone is responsible, and he alone is working in the vicinity, but too great a protection cannot be given to any body of workers, irrespective of what work they are doing, who have to toil in the vicinity of engines. It is not only the engine that may crack up; there is the shafting or something else, and such accidents could cause death to someone near by. I should like the Minister to go into that phase of the question.

Another point appeals to me, and the hon. member for Maryborough will bear me out

in this. Many years ago we all had to pass an examination to get first-class certificates for winding and other engines. This was purely a theoretical examination.

I think the hon. member will agree with me that the time has arrived when a practical examination should be conducted in conjunction with a theoretical test so that those men who say they have the knowledge may have an opportunity of proving it.

**The Attorney-General:** They must have a certificate from a qualified driver that they have put in so many hours that they have become competent.

**Mr. WALKER:** But I want an examination conducted by officers of the department. I want a certificate from the inspector that this has been done in his presence, because we all know that there is a good deal in the brother-in-law business. I know of many men who have come to take charge of plants and they could not even pack a gland in a pump. I am satisfied that any man who has the ordinary State school education could become a first-class engine-driver—not a second-class man as desired by the Minister—by studying for a week and doing a practical examination for a few nights the next week. If he did that, he would have enough knowledge to carry out all the duties pertaining to that work.

The Minister referred to the work that they had to do in connection with pumps and other accessories. We know that those accessories are very delicate compared with the huge cogwheels and crankshafts of the large plants, but these small, delicate things may cause big breakdowns, and the time has arrived for improving upon the old methods. In the old days, when the original Act was introduced, we did not know any better. Up to that time a man did not require a certificate, as the hon. member for Fitzroy knows. Any man could get a job driving a plant, and in Gympie it was usually the boss's son who got that job. The original Act brought about a vast improvement. It meant greater protection to the men who were employed at mining not only along drives but at the bottom of shafts 1,500 feet deep. One can well imagine the confidence of these men when the driver had his engine in such good condition, had his glands packed so well, and his valves working so nicely, that the engine would just sneak away quietly and lower these men without any jarring. If the Minister will only work towards instituting a practical examination to be conducted by the officers of the Sub-Department of Inspection of Machinery in conjunction with the present system of theoretical examinations, I venture to say that we shall have a sound measure that will be in keeping with the times.

**Mr. LUCKINS (Maree) (11.52 a.m.):** I take it that the Minister has taken all precautions necessary to safeguard the interests of the public in many ways, and it is essential to have inspections of machinery and scaffolding, but I cannot reconcile this proposal with the present powers possessed by

the State Electricity Commission, which controls the electricity undertakings of the Brisbane City Council and the City Electric Light Company. Both those undertakings have men who are one hundred times more qualified than any officers of the Minister's.

**Mr. Smith:** That is all rot.

**Mr. LUCKINS:** There are men employed in the Brisbane City Council's power house and in the power house of the City Electric Light Company who have higher qualifications than any men employed by the Government, and I say that advisedly. I am not denying the Government's right to inspect machinery, but I do think they would be well advised to consult those two bodies as to the required legislation.

**The Secretary for Mines:** From what viewpoint?

**Mr. LUCKINS:** In order to get the best type of legislation.

**The Secretary for Mines:** Do you know the qualifications required of an inspector of machinery?

**Mr. LUCKINS:** No.

**The Secretary for Mines:** Then I suggest you make yourself acquainted with them.

**Mr. LUCKINS:** I know the qualifications required by the Brisbane City Council and the City Electric Light Company, and I know that none of the Government's inspectors are receiving the salaries that are being paid to some of the employees of those two undertakings. Both the Brisbane City Council and the City Electric Light Company have the most qualified men in Queensland, if not in Australia, and certainly the plants of both are the best run of any that I know in Australia. I am not going to say that the Government have no right to inspect, but it would be a waste of time for them to send in inspectors.

The Act calls for an overhaul from time to time, and I say that having in mind the fact that the Brisbane City Council is put to some inconvenience in having to put its ferry punt on the slips for an inspection every six or 12 months. What is more, the men who are sent to inspect the machinery sometimes are not as qualified as the men who actually work them and in those instances they have to accept the advice of the engineers associated with the plant or the punt. Sometimes I think it might be advisable, in view of the shortage of punts, to allow the engineers in charge of plant to be responsible for its efficiency for a period of up to, say, six or eight months.

The Minister is on sound grounds in expressing concern about the condition of motor cars and motor busses. I know that there would be an outcry if the City Council busses were allowed to get into the same state of disrepair as some of the private busses that are plying for hire today. The City Council busses must be maintained at a high standard of repair, but a number of private busses

running round the city to-day call urgently for inspection. That does not apply to the majority of them, but it certainly does apply to some.

**Mr. Decker:** And there should be inspection with regard to overloads, too.

**Mr. LUCKINS:** Yes, with regard to overloads and in many other ways, because the safety of the public is at stake. I suggest that the Minister should assign an inspector especially to inspect some of these ramshackle busses that are plying for hire in the city to-day, and that the inspection should not be carried out every 12 months but every month. The Government and the municipal authorities are expected to maintain their plant and machinery at a 100-per-cent standard of efficiency, but private concerns are allowed to get away with something less. I suggest that some of the inspectors should be put on to watch the private bus services so that the danger to life might be eliminated as much as possible.

**Mr. FARRELL** (Maryborough) (11.57 a.m.): Whatever may have been in the mind of the hon. member for Maree, at least I can tell him that he lacks a knowledge of the qualifications of inspectors when he says that the engineers at the City Electric Light Company are 100 per cent. more efficient than the inspectors employed by the Machinery Department. Of course, I readily acknowledge that the engineers in charge at both electric undertakings in Brisbane have the highest qualifications that it is possible to obtain in Australia, but it does not necessarily follow that the inspectors of the department are less qualified to do their job than the engineers of those two undertakings.

The Bill will deal with only two principles. The first will reintroduce the practice that prevailed before 1939, when the whole of the inspection of power houses was carried out by the Sub-Department of Inspection of Machinery. I believe it is in the best interest of those undertakings that we should revert to that practice as the State Electricity Commission is unable to make the necessary inspections. I have had a great deal of practical experience and I can safely say that the possession of a certificate does not necessarily make an engine-driver. However, I endorse the view of the Government that the utmost protection should be given where men are in control of moving machinery. As a result of the practice of putting efficient drivers in charge of plants, there have been very few accidents, and I think it can be said that this improvement in the protection of life has been largely brought about by the very intensive organisation by the department with that object in view.

Whatever may have been in the minds of those responsible for the introduction of the regulations under the Inspection of Machinery Acts it must be recognised that the factor of safety has always been prominent in them. I know from experience that the engine-driver himself is the best qualified person to say whether the candidate is in a position to present himself for examination. That applies

only in respect of the third-class certificate. After he has qualified as a third-class engine-driver and got a job the knowledge acquired by practical experience in the next 12 months will determine whether he is qualified to sit for the second- or first-class engine-driver's certificate, as the case may be. The factor of safety should always be taken into consideration in this matter.

The proposal to give the department's inspectors the right to inspect power houses is a desirable one. The other suggested amendment provides that a man must have a certificate before being placed in charge of a power plant that may be of the locomotive class. That applies particularly to such plants as are engaged in moving men and materials. These may be used in or around a sugar mill—I do not know much about their operation—but the man in charge should hold a certificate. To enable him to obtain a certificate he must qualify in the first place for an engine-driver's certificate. He must satisfy the board of examiners that he is fully qualified to accept the responsibility of driving such a locomotive. It is much better, both in the interests of the employer and employee, as well as the people generally, that a qualified man should be in charge of machinery. Some may think that having obtained a certificate the holder is qualified to take charge of such plant, but the factor of safety should always be predominant in handling a locomotive. An unqualified or incompetent driver may be the cause of an accident merely because he had not the necessary experience.

There is nothing in the Bill that we can see that will injure industry in any way. It only seeks to bring the various sections of industry into line with the Inspection of Machinery Act which has been operating in every branch of industry. It will, therefore, be in the interests of all concerned.

**Mr. KERR** (Oxley) (12.4 p.m.): Nobody can cavil at the amendments. They are quite good and I am rather surprised that they were not in operation long before now. To-day, owing to the great scarcity of labour, it is difficult indeed to obtain hands to man plants. Industry has had to put up with men who have had very little experience, but the department has been very considerate. It has given permits for these men to drive plants, as certificated men were unobtainable. Certain dangers are involved but industry has had to take that risk. I hope that this Bill will cause no disturbance to industry of any kind and that the existing staff, who may be competent though not certificated, will be allowed to continue unmolested. It is the department's duty to issue permits to men to drive these plants when it is absolutely essential to do so to maintain production in industry. I am sure that the Minister will give the matter sympathetic consideration.

**The SECRETARY FOR MINES** (Hon. V. C. Gair, South Brisbane) (12.6 p.m.): The hon. member for Isis stressed the difficulty that sugar mills have in obtaining engine-drivers. I quite appreciate that nowadays there is some difficulty in that respect.

I can assure the Committee, however, that the position is not as grave as the hon. member for Isis would have us believe. Furthermore, having regard to the exceptional times through which we are passing, both the department and the union have taken a very reasonable attitude when difficulties in connection with the shortage of staff have arisen. I do not think that any sugar mill has any complaint to make. The hon. member for Isis stressed, unduly I think, the effect this amendment would have on man-power in power houses. The proposed amendment will not increase the difficulty of sugar mills or any other power plant in obtaining certificated engine-drivers or engineers, but it will have the effect of compelling the City Electric Light Company to give effect to the amendment of the Act made in 1939, from which power houses and electrical authorities were exempted. The amendment will compel that authority to employ an assistant engineer in its power house. As I have already told the Committee, the Brisbane City Council gave effect to this provision without any request from the department because it recognised the need for the additional man; and there is a special need to-day for this assistance because of the big load these power plants are carrying owing to the great increase in the demand for power due to the increase in population and the factories and industries that have grown up because of the war. That is the only power house that will be affected by the Bill, because it is the only one, other than the one owned by the Brisbane City Council, that has plant exceeding 10,000 horse-power.

The hon. member for Cooroora spoke about inspections. It is not intended to appoint any special officer to carry out inspections of the power plants of the City Electric Light Company and the Brisbane City Council. Inspections are being carried out to-day by the Inspector of Machinery. Under the Act these inspectors are limited to inspection of the boiler and pump, and are prohibited from inspecting the engine. That was an arrangement arrived at when the State Electricity Commission was established. As I have already told the Committee, because of the war the Commission has not the staff to carry out these inspections owing to the lack of qualified men, whereas the Sub-Department of Machinery has its own inspectors in the different centres throughout the State who make an annual inspection of machinery and power plants under their jurisdiction. I can assure the Committee there will be no clashing of interests in this connection. The Commission appreciates the difficulty, and we are only desirous of placing the matter on a definite basis. Later on, perhaps, if it is considered desirable that power plants of electric authorities should be entirely under the State Electricity Commission, and it has men available to carry out the inspection, there is no reason why it should not do so. Inspections are very necessary so as to ensure that accidents to the staff and breakage of machinery will be reduced to a minimum. There will

be no clashing of interests, and these inspections will be carried out in the interests of the authorities, the owners of plants, and the staff engaged in the power houses.

As to the other principle, I cannot see very much need for alarm. The hon. member for Cooroora appreciated the necessity of insisting that men driving these small engines, particularly mobile engines, should have certificates because they are a danger in the hands of incompetent people. I again assure the Committee that there will be no interruption or stoppage of industry in this connection.

Reasonable consideration will be given to sugar mills, mines, or any other employing authority, and to the individual. That has been the practice of this department over a period of years.

**Mr. Macdonald:** Did you say above 8 inches in diameter?

**The SECRETARY FOR MINES:** Engines with cylinders under 60 circular inches are exempt, both stationary and mobile. The intention of the proposed amendment will be to make it necessary that drivers of such engines that are mobile shall carry a second-class certificate. With stationary engines, as I pointed out previously, there is not the same element of danger or risk as with mobile plants. As I also pointed out, at present there is an arrangement between many of the shipping companies, which employ these engines on wharves, other employing authorities, and the department, that men driving these engines shall hold certificates. After the men have been employed on these engines for the necessary 26 weeks they make application for their certificates, or, perhaps I should say, for the necessary examination to qualify for the certificates. I do not think there is anything further that I can add in reply to hon. members, but I feel confident that the proposed Bill will be in the best interests of the industries and the men employed therein.

Motion (Mr. Gair) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

#### FIRST READING.

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

#### SECOND READING.

**The SECRETARY FOR MINES** (Hon. V. C. Gair, South Brisbane): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

**Mr. NICKLIN** (Murrumba) (12.17 p.m.): There was a very full discussion at the introductory stage of this Bill, but there are one or two matters that I should like to refer to. The amending Act of 1939 eliminated dual inspection of electrical generating plants, and put inspection of these plants under the State Electricity Commission. I take it from the remarks of the Minister that because of lack of staff it has not been possible for the Commission to carry out these inspections, and

it is now proposed to bring back inspections of these plants under the Inspection of Machinery Acts and the inspectors appointed under those Acts. At the time the Act was passed establishing the State Electricity Commission it was thought necessary to have all electrical machinery under the purview of the Commission, and I therefore ask if this amending Bill is a temporary measure, because of war-time conditions, or is it proposed that when the Commission again functions normally these inspections will be returned to it. If that is so and we have to have another amendment of the Act, we shall get back to dual inspection again. Inspectors of this department and inspectors of the Commission will be inspecting power plants. Whether that is altogether desirable I do not know, but personally I think that intricate electrical machinery should come under the care of the Commission. I should think that its inspectors would be more competent to deal with that type of machinery than those of the Sub-Department of Inspection of Machinery. They have concentrated on that type of machinery.

If this will bring about dual control again it is a question whether it is advisable. It may be all right at the moment, under war-time conditions, to bring this work under the Inspection of Machinery Acts, but there could easily be a conflict of opinion between inspectors of the two departments if this amendment does bring about dual inspections.

I take it that clause 3 of the amending Bill seeks to exempt from the section requiring certain staffs to hold a certificate of competency those persons who are in charge of oil tractors on farms. That is wise, as after the cessation of hostilities there will be many of these tractors and the drivers should not be required to obtain certificates. I think it is only wise to provide that competent men should be in charge of mobile machinery of the cylinder capacity laid down in the Bill, provided always that the Minister will see to it that at the present time when we are suffering difficulties with regard to man-power the provisions of the amending Bill are applied reasonably in order to give all those persons operating these machines an opportunity to obtain their certificates and so that no operators or owners will be harassed in any way by inspectors. The Minister gave us that assurance on the introductory stages, but that point cannot be emphasised too strongly. We all realise the man-power difficulties being suffered by employers at the moment, and it is not right that they should be hampered or harassed any further. If these provisions dealing with certificates for mobile machinery are administered with discretion, no great objection can be offered to the principles contained in the Bill.

**Mr. MACDONALD** (Stanley) (12.22 p.m.): I understand that in dealing with internal-combustion engines the cubic cylinder displacement determines the horse-power. In steam engines the size of a cylinder is determined by squaring the diameter.

I should like enlightenment on one point. If a farmer is using a four-cylinder engine, such as an old Model T Ford engine, according to

the Act that engine would require to be inspected. It has four cylinders, each about 4 inches in diameter. If the diameter of each is squared and the aggregate taken, the capacity of that engine is 64 circular inches. Therefore, any farmer who has an old Model T Ford engine operating plant will have to have it inspected. Is that correct?

**The Secretary for Mines:** If it is in excess of 60 inches this amendment will not apply to it. This deals only with engines under that size.

**Mr. MACDONALD:** There are ever so many power plants on farms in the bush that have Model T Ford four-cylinder engines for motive power.

**The Secretary for Mines:** Are they required to hold certificates for them now?

**Mr. MACDONALD:** No.

**The Secretary for Mines:** There will be no alteration. This deals with only engines under 60 circular inches.

**Mr. MACDONALD:** But according to the computation under this Bill they exceed 60 circular inches. It is a stationary and internal-combustion engine.

**Mr. Farrell:** The Bill will not affect farmers.

**Mr. MACDONALD:** But the engine is over 60 circular inches.

**The Secretary for Mines:** This does not deal with that at all.

**Mr. MACDONALD:** Yes, it does. Take a four-cylinder engine with a four-inch bore like a model T "Lizzie" and you get 64 circular inches. That engine will come under the operation of the Bill.

**The Secretary for Mines:** I do not think you quite understand the clause in the Bill.

**Mr. MACDONALD:** Then I should like an explanation that would enlighten me.

**The Secretary for Mines:** The Act deals with internal-combustion engines with cylinders exceeding 60 circular inches, and the Bill proposes to remove the exemption that applies to engines with 60 circular inches and less that are mobile.

**Mr. MACDONALD:** If you are using a T model "Lizzie" you may be using it as a portable plant, and so be liable to inspection under the Bill.

**Mr. Farrell:** There is a difference between portable and mobile.

**Mr. MACDONALD:** I should like to be more clearly informed on the point.

**Mr. BRAND (Isis) (12.26 p.m.):** I can see nothing wrong with the Bill. It is an endeavour by the Government to make further provision for the protection of life and property, and with those principles we are always in accord. Of course, all Acts of Parliament must be reasonably and sympathetically administered if the best

results are to be obtained. The principle that is to be adopted now is similar to that which prevailed prior to 1939 when the Act was amended to provide for the onward march of progress in the field of electricity. We must pay a tribute to the men in charge of the inspection branch for the reasonable way in which they have carried out that very important work. They are common-sense men with a high understanding of their responsibilities towards the industries over which they exercise their inspectorial control. I know that at times the costs the owners of machinery have been called upon to bear as a result of departmental inspections have been rather irksome to them, especially as to disused machines that have had to be submitted to periodic inspections involving the payment of costs and fees. However, despite the heart-burnings it must be said that the men associated with the inspectorial work are highly qualified and that they endeavour to carry out their duties with the least possible dislocation of industry. If, because of the lack of man-power, qualified men are not available for the work I hope the department will make some allowance for these difficulties arising therefrom. I appeal to the Minister to appreciate those difficulties in the interests of industry generally.

**The Secretary for Mines:** Do you know of any case in which a reasonable attitude has not been adopted by the department?

**Mr. BRAND:** No. In fact, I know of some industries in which men holding certificates below the standard required by the Act have been allowed to carry on with the approval of the inspectors.

**The Secretary for Mines:** Clearly proving that the department is adopting a reasonable attitude.

**Mr. BRAND:** I am willing to extend a wider power of discretion to the Minister, but only for the period of the war. I think it will be conceded that in the special circumstances industry should be allowed to carry on when it is not able to obtain certificated men, subject, of course, to the approval of the inspector of machinery.

Industry generally desires that certificated men shall be in charge of its great machines, and therefore exerts itself to the utmost to engage them. We recognise that the disabilities of to-day have compelled the department to bring down this Bill, and that had it not been for the lack of man-power the Bill would probably not have been introduced. Industry to-day must carry on production with the man-power available, and must be commended for doing so as successfully as it has done. The position in the administration of the Act has also been acute, and therefore this Bill will require sympathetic administration. I propose in the Committee stages to submit a small amendment that will clothe the Minister with greater discretionary power in the matter.

**Mr. SMITH (Carpentaria) (12.32 p.m.):** There seems to be some idea in the minds of

the Opposition that the dual control by the State Electricity Commission and the Machinery and Scaffolding Department may lead to interference. I do not think that it was wise for the Government to hand over the inspection of power plants to the State Electricity Commission. There are two points in the power house that must be considered, the driver and the driven. The driving part of the power house is under the control of the engineer, while the driven portion is under the control of the electrician. The State Electricity Commission inspector is not competent to inspect the driving power of an internal-combustion engine. That must be done by a competent engineer. Steam turbines are controlled by steam engineers. One end of these turbines creates the driving power for the plant, while on the other end is the driven electrical apparatus that generates the electrical current to supply power and light for the town. The State Electricity Commission employs only electricians, and they are interested in the inspection of the electrical installation only, for the safety of the people. They are not competent to inspect a steam-power plant or tell whether the turbines, for example, are satisfactory or not. That part of the inspection is carried out by inspectors of the Sub-Department of Inspection of Machinery, quite a different organisation. It is wise that the Minister should seek power to take from the State Electricity Commission the power to inspect steam plants. One inspector should not undertake dual control. The hon. member for Maree said that the machinery inspector was quite incompetent and often inferior to the man on the job. My experience impels me to speak highly of these men. Take the big power house at Mount Isa. The installation technicians came out from England. No local man had seen one of the modern turbines installed in that power plant, but after the installation technicians had completed their work the men who took charge of that plant had to be examined by our own machinery inspector. He was quite competent and knew all the factors associated with that modern machine.

The danger expressed by members of the Opposition with respect to dual control does not exist in reality. I know there has been no overlapping. The machinery inspector may inspect a joint between the clutch of the driving part of the power house and the driven part of the power house, and discover that it is not working properly. He is powerless to act because there is no inspector from the State Electricity Commission to supervise the job and say it is unsafe for a man to work on.

I commend the Minister for bringing down this amendment of the Act so that the power plants of any power house or mine or electrical distribution place will be under the machinery inspector, and the electrical inspection will still be left to the State Electricity Commission—indeinitely, even though the war finishes, because I do not think there will be any need for amendment.

For a man to get an internal-combustion engine-driver's certificate is an easy matter.

Hon. members opposite mentioned the case of the farmer, and the hon. member for Stanley wanted to know whether if a man had 10 cylinders averaging 4 inches that would be equal to an engine of 40 circular inches. That is not so. It is not economic to make a big 30 or 40 horse-power diesel engine with many cylinders. We have 30, 40, or 50 horse-power single-cylinder diesel engines, but not so with the petrol-driven ones. If you take the engine of a motor car and put it on a concrete foundation there is no difference in the horse-power. For the information of the hon. member for Stanley I point out that you do not add all the cylinders together. It is not like doing an ordinary calculation. It is the diameter and the stroke of the engine that we are working on.

**Mr. Decker** interjected.

**Mr. SMITH:** The hon. member for Sandgate and the hon. member for Maree spoke with their tongues in their cheeks; they spoke of something they knew nothing about. If a farmer has a stationary engine on his property all he has to do is to put in certain hours a week for six months under the supervision of a man with the necessary certificate and the inspector of machinery will come round and give him an examination, and he will receive his third-class internal-combustion certificate; if he wants his second-class internal-combustion certificate he can put in another six months with a further extension of hours and the machinery inspector will give him another examination and he will get his second-class internal-combustion certificate; and if he wants his first-class ticket he will put in another 12 months under a first-class certificated man and the machinery inspector—a competent man with the highest degree of engineering knowledge—will give him another examination, and he will receive his first-class internal-combustion certificate. It is quite simple. If the Leader of the Opposition has a farm on which he has an internal-combustion engine for which he has an internal-combustion certificate he could help the man employed by him by giving him experience on an internal-combustion engine, and in six months' time that man would be competent to take charge of that engine.

**Mr. Macdonald** interjected.

**Mr. SMITH:** You do not get the number of cylinders by adding them up till they become 80 horse-power.

**Mr. Macdonald:** No-one says so.

**Mr. SMITH:** I do not think we can knock that out of the hon. member's head. It is not a matter of adding them all up together like a school kid adding with the aid of beads. The Opposition members, not having any knowledge of this matter, find it hard to understand what I am telling them, but later on, with the aid of some figures and some other things, I might go out to the billiard room with them or on the veranda and explain it to them. I find it

hard to explain to men who are incapable of understanding what I am talking about.

In conclusion, I assure the members of the Opposition that there is nothing in this Bill that will be detrimental to any farmer who owns a power plant or anyone else who owns one. This amendment has been wanted for a long time. As I said before, there are not many electricians with engineering experience capable of inspecting the driving part of the power plant, and no engineer of experience can go along and inspect the driven or electrical part of the power plant. For the information of hon. members I assure them this is something that has been looked forward to by power-house men and mine-owners, so that when the engineers come along they can make an inspection. It has been stated by the member for Maree that he hoped the Government would not antagonise the owner of power plants. That does not happen. After a power plant has been working for 2,000 or 3,000 hours it is stripped for inspection for corrosion in the boiler and tubes. The owners notify the inspector in the area of the date that they will be stripping the boiler for overhaul, and the inspector goes along, and while the machinery is down for repairs he will inspect it to see it is safe to work while the men are on the job.

**THE SECRETARY FOR MINES** (Hon. V. C. Gair, South Brisbane) (12.42 p.m.), in reply: There is very little to reply to, and it is evident that the principles of the Bill are acceptable to the House. I would point out that when the power houses of the electrical authorities were exempted from the Inspection of Machinery Act the circumstances were altogether different from those existing to-day. However, there is a section in the Act that provides that in power houses with engines aggregating more than 10,000 horse-power, for the purposes of safety an assistant engineer shall be appointed, but section 5 of the Act exempted such power houses from the provisions of the Bill in respect of manning. As I have already stated this morning, there are only two such power houses in the State of Queensland at present, one of them controlled by the Brisbane City Council, which saw the necessity, especially during the period of war, as it was carrying a heavy load, to appoint an assistant engineer, and the other by the City Electric Light Company, which has never seen the necessity for appointing the additional man provided for in the Act, a provision that was rendered ineffective because of section 5, which exempted power plants of electrical authorities from its provisions.

At the present time the Sub-Department of Machinery has a number of inspectors in various districts throughout Queensland. These inspectors are highly qualified to inspect plant of all descriptions that requires inspections at least once a year. They also go into the power houses of electrical authorities and there inspect, as I have already intimated, steam boilers and pumps, but they are prevented from inspecting the engines—

the prime movers—because the Act states that that is the function of the Electricity Commission. These inspections have not been carried out, and it seems advisable that if we have qualified men going into the power houses of electrical authorities at the present time and carrying out a partial inspection the same qualified men should complete the inspection. There is no reason why they should not do so. That is the intention of the Bill before the House—that our inspectors shall be authorised to carry out a full inspection.

It is true that this inspection of plant, even that which is being inspected at the present time by the inspectors of machinery, would have been carried out by the State Electricity Commission, but because so many of its regular officers are engaged in extraneous war-time work and because of the difficulty in obtaining men with the necessary qualifications to do that job, I believe that the inspection of power plants of electric authorities can be very efficiently done by the officers of the Sub-Department of Machinery. I do not think anyone would question for a moment the necessity for a periodical inspection of plant and engines. It is true, as the Leader of the Opposition has said, that authorities watch their plant because it is in their own interests to do so and that really there is no necessity for inspection.

**Mr. Macdonald:** Not always.

**The SECRETARY FOR MINES:** Not always, and it is the exception that makes these laws necessary. If everybody cared for his plant and took an interest in it and realised that it meant pounds, shillings, and pence, in addition to the safety of his workers, there would be no necessity for an Inspection of Machinery Act; it is because people and authorities have not done this that that Act has been necessary. I believe it has worked very efficiently and satisfactorily over a period of years.

The Leader of the Opposition can be assured that there will be no clash of interests so far as the State Electricity Commission and the Sub-Department of Inspection of Machinery are concerned. Hon. members can rest assured that both departments will work in with one another with a desire to have this job discharged effectively and efficiently in the best interests of all concerned and in the interests of the safety of the men employed in the power houses.

The hon. member for Isis stressed the difficulty experienced by sugar and other industries in obtaining certificated men. I appreciate this difficulty but it is by no means as great or grave as the hon. member suggests. He knows from experience—he has admitted it to-day—that our attitude is very reasonable. He knows that the department has met the emergency to the satisfaction of all concerned. And here I desire to give credit to the unions for their co-operation and the reasonable attitude they have taken, realising the necessity for a little flexibility in the present circumstances, because of the shortage of labour.

I think it is generally agreed that the second provision, that drivers of internal-combustion

engines of a cylinder measurement of 60 circular inches and under shall have certificates, is necessary. Again I wish to assure the House that there will be no undue interference with industry. Already many of the drivers of such engines are the holders of certificates, and in order that there might be uniformity in this connection this principle is contained in the Bill. There will be no stoppage or inconvenience to industry. Reasonable consideration will be given to cases that come under the notice of the department.

**Mr. Brand:** What about special cases?

**The SECRETARY FOR MINES:** They will receive reasonable consideration, as all cases have in the past. No inconvenience or stoppage will be caused by the requirement of a certificate. If the men have been driving these engines for 26 weeks they can make application for their certificate, sit for the necessary examination, and qualify without any disturbance to anyone. If they are not already qualified, if they are a few weeks short in experience, no-one is going to press them to take out a certificate immediately. A reasonable time will be given within which to comply with the Act.

There is nothing else I desire to say except to repeat that these amendments are necessary and they will prove of value.

Motion (Mr. Gair) agreed to.

#### COMMITTEE.

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Brassington, Fortitude Valley, in the chair.)

Clauses 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Clause 3—Amendment of section 45 (6); Drivers, &c., of engines and boilers to hold certificates—

**Mr. MACDONALD** (Stanley) (12.53 p.m.): On the second reading the hon. member for Carpentaria took hon. members on this side to task because they could not understand what he was trying to convey. I want to point out that members of the Opposition had proved more apt than their teacher. The hon. member for Carpentaria gave us entirely wrong data. He told us it was utterly impossible to calculate circular inches of a four-cylinder plant by squaring the diameter of one cylinder and then multiplying by four. He said that was utterly wrong.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** He did not say that.

**Mr. MACDONALD:** Pardon me. I know he said it. The Minister was not in the House at the time. He came in too late. I ask him to keep out of this.

Fortunately for the House, the Minister, being in doubt, sent for his expert, Mr. Barker, and asked Mr. Barker what the situation was. He explained to me that my contention was absolutely right, that a man having an old T. Model "Lizzie" and using it at home, would be using 64 circular inches. We know very well that the hon. member for Carpentaria was trying to prove his point on the basis of his early education, which he got

from a Chinaman who, after attending to his beans and peas, did his counting on the bead frame. The hon. member for Carpentaria was a little boy attending school when I was driving a pumping plant, and at that time the Chinaman—Ching Dun—used to do his counting on the bead frame.

**Mr. Smith:** You could never cheat him.

**Mr. MACDONALD:** No. I am very glad to say that my point was right and, of course, it will now mean that in future any man on the land using a plant of this kind is going to be penalised.

**The Attorney-General:** No.

**Mr. MACDONALD:** He will be because he will have 4 cylinder inches over the number allowed.

**The Attorney-General:** It has never been done.

**Mr. MACDONALD:** It is still there, and the hon. gentleman is only asking us to throw ourselves on the mercy of the court and trust to its generosity.

**The Attorney-General:** It has never been done.

**Mr. MACDONALD:** Past experience leads us to believe that we can expect very little consideration from this Government.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** Cite a case where it has been done.

**Mr. MACDONALD:** There are innumerable cases. At the present time, because of the dearth of engines, many farmers are using discarded car engines as power plants to drive a circular saw for firewood, for cracking corn, and in some instances for pumping purposes. For the sake of economy they might plug two or three cylinders on a four-cylinder job and use the remaining cylinders or cylinder. An inspector may come along and say, "Yes, you are at present using only 16 circular inches, but when my back is turned how do I know that you are not using over 60 circular inches and thus be liable to inspection and the payment of a fee?"

**Mr. Smith:** What is the cylinder diameter of any car engine?

**Mr. MACDONALD:** It depends on the bore of the engine.

**Mr. Smith:** It does not.

**Mr. MACDONALD:** We know that Great Britain lost the motor-car market here after the last war. In 1918 Great Britain had to raise revenue and one way of doing it was to tax the car engine on its cubic capacity. The consequences were that the British manufacturers built a car with a very small bore, a long stroke, higher revolutions and gears. Then America went in for the square cylinder job, captured the market here, and has held it ever since. Now many farmers in Australia are using those four-cylinder square engines on account of the dearth of stationary engines of 2, 3, and 4 horse-power. Those engines

will do more running and heavy-duty work in a fortnight than many stationary engines will stand up to in a lifetime.

**The Premier:** It all depends on the circumference of the periphery. (Laughter.)

**Mr. MACDONALD:** No. I am glad that I have confounded the theory advanced by the hon. member for Carpentaria. I move the following amendment:—

“On page 1 omit the word—  
‘sixty’

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

I am sure, in the light of the experience I related to the Minister, he will have no hesitation in accepting the amendment. It will mean we shall not be dependent on the good graces of his department for the use of these plants in primary production. It is no use labouring the question, for I spoke very fully on it, and there is nothing I can see to cause the Minister to regret it. I know he is not stubborn or obstinate, that he is a fair-minded man with appreciation of the situation of the farmers at the present moment, who are undergoing untold hardship due to the stress of war. By accepting the amendment he will show a sense of justice and a keen appreciation of their parlous position.

**The SECRETARY FOR MINES** (Hon. V. C. Gair, South Brisbane) (2.17 p.m.): I have no objection to accepting the amendment.

**Mr. Macdonald:** Hear, hear!

**The SECRETARY FOR MINES:** At least 64 circular inches is a more even number, particularly where four cylinders of four inches in diameter are concerned. I understand that the figure “60” was inserted in the Act away back in 1912 as a datum for the exemption. If the hon. member for Stanley thinks the amendment will meet the case he cited—of an engine used on a farm of four cylinders each four inches in diameter, being 4 inches in excess of the present exemption figure—then I have no objection to accepting it, especially if it will overcome the difficulty in the farming industry hon. members have mentioned. I was inclined to say before the hon. member for Stanley moved his amendment that neither he nor any other person need fear any action from the sub-department in such a case, because it would be merely straining the point and be unreasonable in the extreme. I am sure that the experience of hon. members does not show that it is the practice of this sub-department to embarrass or harass the people in cases such as he cited.

Amendment (Mr. Macdonald) agreed to.

**Mr. BRAND** (Isis) (2.20 p.m.): I move the following amendment:—

“On page 1, line 20, after the word ‘inches’ insert the words—

‘(or a greater area, if approved by the Minister in special cases during the period of the present war).’ ”

We know that at present the Minister has exercised his discretion in special cases.

I have limited the amendment to the period of the war, during which difficulty is experienced in getting certificated men to supervise certain machines of more than 64 circular inches. There has not been any desire on the part of the inspectors to apply the Act strictly where men are not available. I have in mind a couple of instances. One is a sugar mill where the electrical plant is under the control of three certificated men, although that organisation has chief, second, and third engineers, in charge of all the machinery. According to the Act, these machines should be in charge of a certificated man during each shift. The men engaged on this work have absolutely nothing to do, and it is recognised by inspectors that no harm can come to the machines and no injury can be done to human life during their operation.

**The Secretary for Mines:** We are discussing stationary internal-combustion engines.

**Mr. BRAND:** They are stationary and internal-combustion engines that I am talking about.

**The Secretary for Mines:** We are not talking about the manning of them. There is nothing in this clause about manning them.

**Mr. BRAND:** If they are over 64 inches they must have a certificated man in charge. We exempt only the stationary engines whose combined cylinder area is less than 64 inches. There are some that are over, and in relation to those, I think approval should be sought from the Minister, owing to the special conditions obtaining during the war. The Minister has agreed not to carry out the law strictly in respect to many of those, and I have admitted that his officers have been very reasonable in the circumstances of the inability of industry to get certificated men. I think provision should be made whereby such a company could come to the Minister and ask for permission to carry on the plant without running any risk of prosecution. I have in mind an irrigation plant that is more than 64 cylinder inches in area, and it is impossible to get the necessary certificated manpower to operate it. The owner, who was qualified to operate the plant, enlisted in the air force, where his special qualifications are of the greatest use to him, and he is doing very important and useful work on the battle front, but those who are carrying on the farm find it impossible to get a man with the necessary certificate—a third-class certificate—to take charge, and so the irrigation plant is at a standstill. I think in such circumstances it should be possible to make application to the Minister for approval for carrying on the plant for the period of the war without a certificated man. I do not believe there will be any abuse of any privilege granted in these circumstances. I believe the Minister will be reasonable, and I think it should be included in the legislation.

**The SECRETARY FOR MINES** (Hon. V. C. Gair, South Brisbane) (2.26 p.m.): If I thought there was any need for the amendment I should gladly accept it, but under the circumstances I do not think there is any

need for it. There need not be any fear that any embarrassment will be caused to anyone operating a plant in excess of 64 circular inches.

The hon. member for Stanley submitted an amendment a few moments ago, which I accepted, extending the total measurement of cylinders from 60 to 64 circular inches. As I said, it is a more even figure, and met the case submitted by the hon. member before lunch. Hon. members must recognise there must be some limit, and there must also be regard for the safety of the people working in the vicinity of these plants. We cannot entirely disregard the safety provisions of the Act. If we throw away the limit, where shall we finish? The hon. member knows from his own personal experience that in cases in which difficulty has been experienced in getting the services of certificated men the department has allowed the man operating the machine to carry on, that is, after an investigation has been made and the officers are satisfied that he has a working knowledge of the job, pending sitting for his examination and obtaining the necessary certificate. Nobody can say that the department has not been helpful in this way. The hon. member knows from his own personal experience that the department has helped him, as it has helped many others during this time of man-power shortage. The hon. member for Isis and members of this Committee can be assured that the department will continue that practice. Really, there is no necessity for the amendment because if the plant exceeds the 64 inches and the man working it has no certificate an inspector comes along, checks up on the man's ability to operate the plant, and if it is found he has a reasonable working knowledge he is allowed to continue his job pending his sitting for the examination and obtaining the certificate. Nothing could be fairer than that, but if we permit just anybody to operate these machines, disregarding the qualifications, we surrender the safety of everyone associated with the plant and expose him to the danger of being killed or injured because of a defect in the plant or the inefficiency of the operator. I do not feel disposed to accept the amendment because there is no real necessity for it.

**Mr. BRAND (Isis) (2.30 p.m.):** There was no indication in the words I used or in the amendment of any desire to get away from the Act to such a degree that there would be a danger to life and property. The amendment proposes that only in special circumstances the Minister may give a permit.

**The Attorney-General:** He takes the responsibility.

**Mr. BRAND:** He would not take the responsibility after his officers had advised him.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** You would still blame the Minister if anything happened.

**Mr. BRAND:** The Minister assured the Committee that he virtually intends to do as the amendment asks.

**Mr. O'Shea:** He is doing it. You know that.

**Mr. BRAND:** He has no power under the Act to do it. He only blinks the eye. The Act is specific, but the officers carry out their work in a common-sense way and turn their eyes away. That is exactly what occurs. I am asking that something definite be put into the Act. It cannot be operated until the Minister has considered the application and through his officers gives consent. There is no need to contend that it would be responsible for getting away from the principal Act. By the words of the amendment or by the argument I have advanced in favour of it, that is not intended. I specifically stated there were special cases. These special cases could be investigated by the officers. I know the officers of the department, Mr. Brassington, and I know their opinion. In the instances I have mentioned it would be well that this should be dealt with in a legal way and not in another way.

Amendment (Mr. Brand) negatived.

Clause 3, as amended, agreed to.

Bill reported, with an amendment.

### THIRD READING.

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

## LAND AND WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT BILL.

### INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Brassington, Fortitude Valley, in the chair.)

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. E. J. Walsh, Mirani) (2.36 p.m.):** I move—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to plan, co-ordinate, and provide for the development and use of the land and water resources of the State of Queensland in a manner best calculated to increase the population, settlement, and development of the State generally, and to secure its civil defence and economic wellbeing, and for purposes incidental thereto.”

No doubt hon. members have gathered from the wording of the motion that this is another link in the chain of co-ordinated legislation that has been brought down by the Forgan Smith and present Governments during the past few years, the object being the better working of industry in general. Hon. members might cast their minds back to the time when the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act was introduced in 1938. Then there was the Act dealing with the co-ordination of education, followed by the Act for the co-ordination of employment facilities. Each of those enactments improved the economic structure of the State. It has been revealed through the operations of the first-mentioned Act in particular that the State has benefited from the co-ordination of the various departmental services that are more or less concerned with carrying out

governmental activities. Much good can accrue from the other two measures that have been passed by this Parliament—each of them has its place in the economic structure—and I think it will be generally conceded that there is some necessity for similar legislation so far as our land and water resources are concerned.

It is interesting to note that although we have had something like 200-odd legislative enactments in this Chamber dealing with land and land settlement over the period for which Queensland has been a sovereign State, on no occasion has legislation been brought down to co-ordinate the development of the land with the development of the water resources of the State. Some might be inclined to argue that this has been rather an oversight on the part of previous Governments, but if we took a kindly view of things we might say that the Governments of the day dealt with the problems that confronted them at that time.

So it will be seen that much of the legislation had to do with land settlement, and from time to time production was stimulated by bringing in other phases of development.

When we cast our minds back to the old forms of land settlement, in which free grants were made of pretty substantial areas and given to men who were interested in land activity as a living, we shall see that it was left to the pioneer or the settler, whichever he may be called, to make his own means of access and find his own markets for whatever he was able to produce. It is recognised now, however, that it is necessary for the Government to provide access for the settlers because it is a good deal easier for land-owners to develop their properties thereby. A considerable amount of this aid to development has been given in the past 10 years, as may be gleaned from the expenditure on Public Estate Improvement activities, and this Bill is another attempt to develop the land by linking with it the development of the water resources of the State.

Most of our closer settlement has taken place on the coastal belt, which is subject to favourable climatic conditions such as a good rainfall and where the watercourses attracted the earlier settlers; the necessity did not arise as it has arisen in these times and will arise to a greater extent in the future to consider the development of our inland areas. It is in that respect, I think, that the measure of which I move the initiation is more desirable than in any other.

From time to time we hear remarks about the huge open spaces in Australia, particularly in Queensland. There are some people who hold the view that much of that land is not suitable for settlement, but after travelling over a substantial area of the State I have formed the opinion that the only thing that is lacking to make that land suitable for closer settlement is water.

**Mr. Macdonald:** What about the wallum country?

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:** Each type of country has its own problems, and I am not suggesting that the develop-

ment of water facilities will overcome the difficulties that preclude the development of that type of country. It well may be that we shall still have what are regarded as waste lands. The hon. member for Stanley knows, as many other hon. members know who have travelled throughout the State, that there are millions of acres—not thousands, but millions—of fertile land that are just begging for development, but cannot be developed because of a shortage of water.

**Mr. Edwards:** It can never be done without it.

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:** That is true. It is pleasing to know that it is becoming more and more recognised by land men themselves, amongst others, as I have mentioned previously, that settlement cannot take place without an adequate water supply. During the discussion on the Estimates I quoted figures to show that there was a tendency to increase the number of pumping licences in the Lockyer area. In looking over the figures for the last 11 years I discovered that the number of pumping licences throughout the State has increased from 400 to 4,000 odd, which shows that the land men themselves are becoming more alive to the need for using water to increase production. The investigation of the water resources in the past has necessarily been limited and spasmodic because of the meagre technical staff available. We have investigated a plan here, and a plan somewhere else. It has occurred to me that there is a very substantial opening for the setting up of an organisation that will give us more information on this part of our resources for the guidance of the Government, and particularly as to the plan to which we should give immediate effect as part of our post-war reconstruction.

We know that there is a feeling abroad that land settlement will continue to play a very big part in the financial economy of the State as well as in post-war reconstruction. I am not inclined to the view held by some people that we should overload the State with land settlement. That can be overdone, particularly having regard to the fact that we cannot find a suitable market for what is grown. There is, nevertheless, a feeling not only in Queensland and Australia but in Empire countries throughout the world to-day that land settlement is to become an important feature of post-war reconstruction.

I was rather interested, on reading a report submitted to the British Government on that phase of their reconstruction policy, to note what could be regarded as the revolutionary proposals that were made to serve a country such as England.

**Mr. Macdonald:** They were certainly very revolutionary.

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:** They are certainly very revolutionary, as the hon. member for Stanley suggests.

**Mr. Macdonald:** And with some knowledge.

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:**

This measure will not go so far as many of the proposals that have been submitted by that commission, which was presided over by a district court judge in England. One remarkable feature I noticed in the report published in the Press—and hon. members may have noticed it, too—was that the commission has recommended that land values shall be pegged at those existing on 31 March, 1939. There you see a recognition of the fact that the high compensation could easily wreck any plan of post-war land settlement in that and other countries throughout the world. Apparently the Government of Britain recognised the fact that the first approach to the plan must be the pegging of land values. That will mean that irrespective of what the owner of the land may have paid for it since that time, the basis of value to be taken into consideration on its resumption will be the value as existing at 31 March, 1939. It must be noted that that date is prior to the war. In New Zealand they have passed legislation to deal with the settlement of war-service men at the end of the war, and the Government there, too, have seen fit to lay down the principles of valuation in the Act they have passed. Hon. members will see that no attempt has been made in this measure to lay down any new principle of valuation. That is an aspect of the matter that no doubt will have to be considered at some future date, because it will be generally recognised that in any plan of land settlement regard must be had to what is to be paid for land on resumption.

I propose now to outline briefly the principles of the Bill. It provides for the establishment in the Department of Public Lands as a State instrumentality, continuously functioning, of an investigation bureau in connection with the land and water resources of the State and the development thereof. It further proposes to establish an advisory committee or committees to further the objects of the Bill, namely, the planning and development of Crown lands and the water resources of the State, the preparation of a plan based on the findings of the investigation bureau, and the development of the land and water resources over a period of years, together with an annual plan. It also provides for a more intense use and development of undeveloped lands, either freehold or Crown leasehold, within the framework of the plan. Finally it provides for the declaration of developmental areas and the control of the subdivision and the sale and leasing of lands within any developmental area.

**Mr. Maher:** Where will you draw your advisory committee from?

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:**

I will develop that as I proceed, if the hon. member will be patient. The control of subdivision and the sale and leasing of lands within any developmental area is a very important phase of the measure and one that I think hon. members will agree is essential to the success of land settlement in any plan for post-war reconstruction.

The bureau of investigation in the first place is to consist of five persons, not necessarily members of the public service.

**Opposition Members:** Hear, hear!

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:**

It does not follow, of course, that they will not be members of the public service, but the measure in no way ties the Government down to selecting the members of that bureau from the public service itself. The idea is to get the men most versed in the problems of the land and land settlement and with practical knowledge of these matters.

For example, it will be very necessary to have on that bureau a man with outstanding knowledge of hydrology, a hydrological engineer who has some knowledge of water resources generally, who would be competent to advise the Government on that phase of any plan of land development. Another very important point that is sometimes overlooked in land settlement is the necessity for a co-ordinated plan. There is the forestry side of it, for instance, and it is reasonable to say that a person with some practical knowledge of forestry development should be associated with such a bureau so as to advise the Government as to what areas should be set aside, for forestry purposes as against agriculture, dairying or other forms of primary production. Then, of course, we shall have a man with a knowledge of land settlement generally.

**Mr. Brand:** What about the chairman?

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:**

I think members will appreciate the necessity for dealing with the different phases of land settlement and the necessity for bringing them all under a co-ordinating body, so that we shall not have them working at cross purposes, as it were, in the development of their various activities.

I think it will be agreed that associated with the bureau it is necessary to have also a man of outstanding agricultural knowledge. That, too, is a vital phase of land settlement. It is not so much a matter in which the Department of Public Lands shall say, "We will cut these areas up for the production of certain crops." As a matter in which all possible uses of the land must be investigated, we think, therefore, that associated with such a body should be a person competent to advise the Government as to the agricultural possibilities and the development of primary industries generally. As the member for Isis desires to know about the chairman, let me say that we can choose as chairman a man with outstanding knowledge of the State's resources generally. Personally, I shall be very happy to have the services of Mr. Kemp, at any rate for a brief period until the scheme is developed.

**Mr. Macdonald:** Why not get Mr. Payne?

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:**

I hope the hon. member is not going to provoke me into a controversy. I am happy to meet him on any such subject at any time; nevertheless facetious remarks like that are

not going to be helpful to the discussion. I think Mr. Kemp, with his vast knowledge of the agricultural possibilities of Queensland, would be very helpful as chairman if he could possibly spare a little time in the development of the plan at least in the early stages.

**Mr. Maher:** He has enough work already.

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:**

That may be; I know he is a tiger to work, and he seems to thrive on it.

Hon. members will see that the bureau itself will be a body composed of the various interests that are intimately related to land settlement, and in that way there should not be any conflict as to the need or desirability of producing a plan that would be suitable for the various phases of land settlement, agricultural development, and the use of our water and forestry resources.

The advisory committees to which I have referred, it will be noted, need not be composed of officers of the public service either. They may be selected from men within the district where development is taking place, men with practical knowledge of farming conditions, men with business knowledge who may have shown their capacity to handle matters of that kind in land settlement—and you have many of them in the various localities even though they may not be land men themselves. I think it will be agreed that it is essential that the Land Commissioner for the district concerned should have some connection with such a committee. I emphasise that point—that it is expected that the advisory committees will be selected from the areas in which the development is to be undertaken. That in itself will be very useful to the bureau of investigation, and I think it is an earnest of the desire of the Government to extend their field to obtain the best knowledge and advice they can get to help them in laying down a plan that will be a credit to the State in the post-war period.

**Mr. Edwards:** They need not be civil servants either?

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:**

No. The hon. member will see it is quite open to the Governor in Council to appoint any persons to those committees.

One of the duties of the bureau will be the classification of lands throughout the State.

This, I think, is a very important phase of our land settlement that has been overlooked in the past. Wherever there has been a plan to open up land for settlement this person or that person has got it into his head that the land is suitable for grazing or some form of agriculture, and there has been a clamour to the department. After a while the land is thrown open without regard to its possibilities of successful development from an agricultural or dairying point of view, for example. It would be very helpful if the bureau set out, before we embark on any comprehensive policy, on a systematic classification of the land of the State so that areas suitable for grazing, for instance, may

be set aside for that purpose. If I had a map with me I could indicate to hon. members what I have in mind. There is a tremendous area of Queensland that will not be suitable for anything but grazing for many years to come.

**Mr. Luckins:** Have you not got all that classified now in the department?

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:**

I regret to say we have not; I have to be frank enough to say that it has not been classified. The hon. member can appreciate that it will be a fairly big undertaking to classify the areas properly. Not only has there to be taken into consideration the suitability of the land for closer settlement; soil surveys, soil analysis, and all that sort of thing may have to be considered.

**Mr. Macdonald:** There is so much marginal land.

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:**

That is true. There will be these waste lands irrespective of how the lands are classified. One need only travel along the coastal belt in the sugar areas, in which one can journey miles and see land that is nowhere nearly equal to much of the land far removed from the coast. And so it is even in our good brigalow scrub areas. In the south-western and other areas of the State one will find vast acreages of waste land. These can be dealt with separately. Many areas in which efforts at development are being made to-day by means of agriculture would be better set aside for forestry. As I intimated to hon. members when the Estimates were under discussion, the Government had already set aside a sum of money for the resumption of lands throughout the State for forestry purposes. It will require a very careful survey because it may involve the resumption of areas in districts already closely settled to make the forestry block as compact as possible so that it can be handled on proper economic lines. Experience in America shows that the greatest difficulty in developing forestry areas occurs when numerous farm areas are intermixed with forestry blocks, which increases the fire menace and all the other things associated with it. What is visualised by the Government is the need for laying out in different parts of the State substantial areas that might be developed for forestry on sound and economic lines.

The bureau will be required to submit a report on its activities to this Parliament annually, disclosing in that report what surveys have been made and how the plan is being developed. From time to time, therefore, members will be apprised of the work of the bureau.

Another important phase of the Bill is the power to declare developmental areas. The Government have in mind the expenditure of a huge sum of money on water conservation, irrigation projects, and so on, and where such works are undertaken it is reasonable that the area shall be classed as a developmental area so that some control can be

exercised over the subdivision, sale, and leasing of the land. I think members of the Committee generally will agree that it is not right that the individual landholder should be allowed to reap the unearned increment necessarily arising from the expenditure of thousands of pounds of public money by selling his land at high prices. In America they have dealt with this problem in another way. There they have passed what is known as the anti-speculation law. Of course, that brings back the minds of hon. members to what I have said about the British Government, who have pegged values at those existing as on 31 March, 1939.

Under the anti-speculation law in America they have, where they have undertaken the expenditure of large sums of money, sought to fix the values at which land may be sold. They do not in any way prevent a person from selling land in the area, but they fix the value at which it shall be sold. If land is sold at a price in excess of the value placed on it by them, the authority is empowered to withhold the supply of water for use in the development of the land, so that a substantial penalty is involved. In New Zealand the Government have set up a committee to control the sale of land.

**Mr. Decker:** Has it been successful?

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:** The legislation has only just been passed.

In the measure that we are now proposing, power is given to the Minister to approve or disapprove of the transfer of any land or of the subdivision of any land. We have seen enough examples in the past of the results of allowing men to subdivide their land as they thought fit, without paying due regard to the question whether it could be developed successfully on the areas into which it had been subdivided.

**Mr. Brand:** They did not make such a hash of it as the Government did.

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:** Of the vast areas that have been thrown open for selection under Crown tenures, there are very few places in the State that the hon. member for Isis can mention in which the lands have been subdivided without due regard to whether they were living areas. Like other hon. members opposite, he can point to thousands of acres in his own electorate that have been subdivided into blocks of 30, 40, 50, and 60 acres, the owners of which have had to turn the cattle out on the roadways to keep them from starving.

I think it will be generally agreed to be sound policy that if we contribute in a large way to water-conservation undertakings, we must exercise some control over that phase of land development. A minimum area and a maximum price at which the land may be sold may be determined. If the Minister is not satisfied with the recommendation of the Land Administration Board as to the price, if he thinks that the price recommended is not fair or equitable, he has power to refer the recommendation to the Land Court for its determination. It may be that

the board will recommend a value that is too high or too low, and there must be some protection against that possibility.

**Mr. Maher:** Do you give the landowner the right to appeal against any arbitrary decision?

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:** I do not know that that question arises. Hon. members must realise that even under the present opening laws, the capital value is determined on the recommendation of the Land Administration Board.

**Mr. Macdonald:** But you can appeal within three weeks.

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:** No. The Land Administration Board has authority to recommend to the Minister the values at which land shall be opened, and those values stand for the first period of 15 years in the case of perpetual leases, and there is no appeal to or determination by any other body within that period. In this case, we think that as it is a statutory authority, the board should be competent to recommend to the Minister the value at which land shall be sold in these areas. Then it will still be open for the Minister to submit any recommendation to the Land Court. That is only fair and reasonable.

**Mr. Brand:** The idea being that if any irrigation is put in you will have control over the whole of the land?

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:** That is so. Generally speaking, there has been a tendency in the past, where expenditure of public money has been undertaken, for landowners to sell their land to somebody else without any regard to the obligations that they might be inflicting upon the community to see that the new owner becomes a successful settler. The consumer is as vitally affected by land values as the land man himself.

I am more convinced than ever that the first principle to be considered in successful land settlement is land values. If we start from that point and get the right person on the land he has a chance of succeeding. No matter how experienced he may be, or willing he may be, or determined to carry on in the face of difficulties that confront him—and there are many—if he starts off with a big burden of debt round his neck he can never hope to succeed. We already have in Queensland the Public Works Land Resumption Act, which provides for the determination of land values by the Land Court, and it is competent for this Parliament to lay down the principles upon which the court shall determine land values. I say quite frankly—and I do not think my statement can be disputed—that Parliament is the place where the principles upon which land values shall be determined should be laid down, and then it is for the court to apply those principles in accordance with the law. In what I might describe as the Uthwatt Commission's report to the British Government there are proposals that may sound very revolutionary in respect of land in a country like England, but I do not think

that this measure is the right one in which to set out the principles of valuation.

**Mr. Moorhouse:** Could not the values be pegged?

At 3.11 p.m.,

Mr. MANN (Brisbane) relieved the Chairman in the chair.

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:**

That is a matter for consideration, but it is outside the scope of this measure. The Public Works Land Resumption Act has been on the statute-book since 1906 and we do not appear in any way whatever to have reviewed the principles of land valuation; but having due regard to all the public development that has taken place since that time I think it would be worth the while of a subsequent Parliament to examine the Act so as to relate it to our land-settlement plan. That is a matter that may be dealt with later. I have no set idea on the subject at the moment but I think there should be an examination of that legislation. The hon. member for Wynnum may accept my assurance that I do not think this measure is the proper one in which to embody the ideas relating to land values.

**Mr. Luckins:** Land valuation will be collateral with this Bill?

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:**

It should be, and with that view I think the hon. member will agree. The necessity for the development of some sound plan before we embark upon a land-settlement policy is very necessary.

**Mr. Edwards:** Would it apply to freehold?

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:**

It will apply to any form of tenure in this State. Power to resume is contained in the measure.

**Mr. Decker:** Freehold?

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:**

Freehold land or land under any Crown tenure.

There is also power in the measure to call upon any owner of land, freehold or other land, who has not developed it to the satisfaction of the Land Administration Board to submit plans showing that he has in mind development of that property within a reasonable period. I think that is essential when we have regard to the fact that the community has spent thousands of pounds on roads, railways, schools, and other public amenities. I think it is only reasonable that any land within reasonable vicinity of those public amenities and transport facilities should in some way be brought into a developed stage and not be allowed to remain a liability on the State.

**Mr. Edwards:** It is a good step towards socialisation.

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:**

The hon. member for Nanango wants to drag in the old boggy, regardless of the fact that the community will still be called upon to

spend thousands of pounds on the upkeep of these facilities. Are we to allow these people to continue to hold huge tracts of land and not endeavour to develop them and at the same time reap the benefit from the growth of population or the expenditure of further sums of public money? I think the time has come when we have to call a halt to that. I think the principle has been recognised all over the world and it would be a pity if we could not recognise it at this stage in an advanced State such as Queensland.

**Mr. Brand:** Actually, you are going to control all sales of private land?

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:**

That is so. We aim at control of sales of all land within any area that is declared a developmental area. The hon. member for Isis will just note that qualification.

**Mr. Brand:** Yes, I note the qualification.

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:**

The area must be declared a developmental area. That is provided for in the Bill, of course.

**Mr. Brand:** I suppose all private landholders will get the axe, as Payne did.

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:**

Hon. members opposite, despite all their plea for the man on the land, fail to recognise the main source of his difficulties.

**Mr. Brand:** No, they do.

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:**

If I had the time I could relate just how many of our settlers—I did so briefly on the Estimates, but I could relate them at length here—are struggling in the electorates of the hon. members for Isis and Albert, because they are paying out in interest exorbitant amounts because of the over-capitalisation of their land. Here we are attempting to do something that will enable them, once they are settled on the land, to have a reasonable chance of making a success and not to be just like so many horses for the fellow who gets around and lives very lavishly on the income derived from them. There has been too much of that in the past. The hon. member for Isis knows much better than any other hon. member what is happening in the sugar industry.

**Mr. Brand:** I do.

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:**

The hon. member knows the necessity for the measure of control that had to be undertaken there. We know it has been of some value to the industry. Probably the measures taken have not gone far enough, but I know they have gone a long way towards fixing reasonable values in the sugar areas. We have heard a good deal of what this State is suffering from because of low prices and drought, but the price of land in those areas is no guide to the state of their production because in very many cases it is very much higher than in the sugar areas.

**Mr. Plunkett:** Are you going to fix the price of production in those areas?

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:**

The hon. member for Albert should not ask that question. He is a member of a statutory board in the butter industry, the price of whose product is fixed by legislation; in fact, the Government of this country has guaranteed a price for it. There is no reason why a guaranteed or stabilised price cannot be obtained for other primary products. The butter industry had to fight for what it has to-day, and the sugar people had to fight for what they got in a stabilised price. As land values are pegged it is possible that something may be done by the landholders themselves to see that they get a proper value for their production.

New Zealand has departed from the old principle of determining the value of land on an unimproved basis. Lands that are to be resumed under the New Zealand measure have to be valued on the productive capacity of the land, which is an entirely new principle. If you are going to value land on its productive capacity, necessarily the prices for the products have to be taken into consideration. That appears to me to be coming very much nearer to a sound principle of land valuation—what the land can produce, not so much what the demand may be for it.

**Mr. Edwards:** You must be aware that one farmer may be worth 100 per cent. more than a neighbouring farmer working similar land.

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:**

That is true. There is no disagreement over that phase of the problem. That factor has operated in the past, and we know it will continue to operate in the future. If we attempted to deal with that aspect of land production hon. members would say that we were interfering with the liberty of the subject.

**Mr. Plunkett:** So you are.

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:**

Nothing of the sort. What we are doing is to enable us to have some control over the value of the land. We say to the landowner, "You can utilise that land to its utmost capacity, the more efficient you become the more you get out of it, but we are going to say at what value the land is going to be sold." Despite what control is exercised in the initial stages of land settlement, there will be no restriction afterwards as to whom the holders may sell to.

We have heard many people crying about the foreignisation of the North, but the very people who are responsible for that are the owners of the land who sell the land to the foreigner. No suggestion has been made from the other side of the Committee that we should take any measures to prevent Bill Jones, a British subject, from selling his land to a subject of an enemy country.

**Mr. Brand:** He cannot do that to-day.

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:**

We are doing it to-day under the National Security regulations.

**Mr. Brand:** Not a subject of an enemy country.

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:**

Yes, you are doing it to-day.

**Mr. Brand:** If he is naturalised?

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:**

If he is naturalised it is necessary for him to get the consent of the Commonwealth Solicitor-General. I indicated to the Committee some years ago that this Government had a policy in that connection, having due regard to the world war. We have not failed to recognise the need for something of that kind; nevertheless, the difficulties will continue as far as the individual selector is concerned as long as the landholder himself continues to have the right—and I do not say he should not have the right—to sell his land to whom he thinks best. I think any hon. member with land experience will admit that we have throughout our State many hundreds of misfits on the land, and on the other hand we have men who have been reared entirely in the city atmosphere who have gone out with the courage and determination that are essential to successful land development and become very successful farmers, many of them more successful than the sons of farmers themselves.

Generally speaking, the Bill is one that should commend itself to the Committee; it is a step in the right direction of co-ordinating the various phases of land settlement and development in this State. It not only has a close and important bearing upon civilian land settlement but it will be the necessary approach to the settlement of our returned soldiers after the war.

**Mr. Nicklin:** What will it do in connection with returned-soldier settlement?

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:**

We are going to try to plan now so that we can develop our land and water resources. In that connection I think the hon. member for Murrumba will realise that much of the area that will have to be taken over in the future for closer settlement purposes is outside areas that could be looked upon as having a favourable rainfall; and it would be very unwise for this or any other Government to encourage new settlers to go out into those areas where not only is the rainfall very meagre but the water resources themselves are difficult to utilise in their present condition. With a comprehensive investigation into that part of the problem and the co-ordination of its two phases—water development and land development—the Bill must have an important bearing on the settlement of our soldiers.

**Mr. Moorhouse:** How long is the war going to last?

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:**

The hon. member may be able to get more information from other sources than I am able to give him. If I knew that I might be enticed into doing a little speculating, like the land speculators.

**Mr. Moorhouse:** What I mean is this: this plan cannot be drawn up in five minutes.

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:**

There is a necessity for the setting up of

this bureau of investigation to develop a plan. Anybody who thinks that we are going to proceed immediately with land settlement when the war stops is, of course, assuming a great deal. It must be remembered that no land settlement was undertaken for something like 12 or 18 months after the last war. In this instance, I think that before we embarked upon any settlement of soldiers, apart from civilians, we should have to see to it that the settlers from the ranks of the returned soldiers had some knowledge of the problems they were going to face. I understand the Commonwealth Government have been considering a scheme whereby some of these men are to be trained to make them acquainted with the problems of land development.

That, I think, is a very necessary approach to the settlement of soldiers on the land. There will be many men who have never had any experience in land matters who may wish to take up land industry as a career, and before they embark upon that—apart from the facts that public moneys are involved and much assistance will necessarily have to be given to these men—it is necessary to see that they go on the land equipped with a reasonably adequate knowledge of the undertaking.

**Mr. Edwards:** That can only be done by practical farmers.

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:** The hon. member must realise they must get it somewhere. We do not want them to go on the land unless they have the knowledge beforehand.

**Mr. Edwards:** Quite right.

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:** Many a man may go on the land and make a success of it, although he had no knowledge, but I think it will be agreed that that is not the general rule. The necessity for the development of both land and water resources should commend itself to the Committee. This Bill is the first attempt at that co-ordination of effort that has been made in any legislation brought down to the House. Of course, Governments in the past have considered the problem as it confronted them. The position, as the Government see it, is that the land that is to be available now for future settlement really depends for its success on the proper development of its water resources.

**Mr. Edwards:** What consideration are you giving to the water for the land?

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:** Much data have already been compiled through the Sub-Department of Irrigation and Water Supply. Members in the course of the next week or so will be advised of the various projects that are listed for consideration and investigation in their own electorates. I have gone to the trouble of taking that out to inform them of the works we have in mind in their districts. I submitted during the course of the discussion on the Estimates proposals that have been submitted to the Commonwealth amounting

to approximately £15,000,000 and might be considered by the Commonwealth Post-war Reconstruction Committee in conjunction, of course, with the State in some respects. I have had those projects taken out to indicate to hon. members just what the Government have in mind, so that they will be able to inform their own minds what the Government have really done so far in this matter.

**Mr. Brand:** When do we get them?

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:** Hon. members will get them any time now. I commend the measure to the sympathetic consideration of members of the Committee.

**Mr. MAHER (West Moreton) (3.30 p.m.):** I view Bills of this kind with a good deal of suspicion, because they are often compiled more with the object of window-dressing on the eve of an election to gain the maximum propaganda effect than with any intention of real business. From the resume of the Bill the Minister gave at this stage, I conclude that the hon. gentleman has the power to order the carrying out of any of these requirements without the need for a Bill of this kind at all.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** Where would you say that power exists?

**Mr. MAHER:** If the Minister intends to embark upon a big irrigation scheme and he desires to resume land in the vicinity for developmental purposes to make it available for settlement as irrigated blocks, he has only to obtain the authority of Cabinet for the appointment of a resumption board. It could go into the locality clothed with certain powers, take evidence from those in the vicinity as to land values, and fix a price on which the land could be resumed. Moreover, the Land Court could be given power to hear appeals from the owners in respect of the resumption values fixed by such a board.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** We do not deal with resumption values in this Bill.

**Mr. MAHER:** Of course, that is the subject of another Act on the statute-book; the Minister has the power in that statute to help him in a matter of that kind. There is nothing to stop the Minister from giving instructions that the men who are not carrying out developmental work on their holdings, as they have undertaken to do under the terms of their leases, shall be prohibited from dealing with them, in accordance with the penalty provisions. He already holds that power. It is exercised to-day.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** What about freeholds?

**Mr. MAHER:** The freeholder is certainly in a slightly different position, but I should say that most of the powers that the Minister is taking he already enjoys by virtue of the position that he occupies. If he feels that certain things have to be done in the settlement of land, he has only to give the necessary directions to carry them out.

This Bill provides for an investigation bureau comprised of five persons and for advisory committees to be set up in any area that is required for developmental purposes. There can be such a thing as too many committees. I remember the old saying of a man I used to know that there was only one effective committee. It comprised three people, one of whom became ill and went to hospital for the rest of his life, and another who had gone for a long overseas trip, leaving him in charge of the ship. In other words, one good, keen, live man can often achieve a great deal more than a series of cumbersome committees that get in each other's way. I should say that the Department of Public Lands itself has considerable powers. There are competent officers on the Land Administration Board. Why not clothe them with authority to make these investigations, to classify areas of land into grazing and agricultural belts, to investigate through the Sub-Department of Irrigation and Water Supply the artesian and sub-artesian areas, and to establish such schemes of water conservation as the Minister has in mind? I should say that in recent years, since Mr. Forgan Smith became Premier of Queensland in particular, we have seen a rather picturesque attempt to introduce Bills of this kind, designed, of course, for propaganda purposes, and providing for bureaux, committees, and bodies to operate outside the scope of the old-established departments of State. In other words, those old-established departments which have discharged important functions in the development of the State, have done everything asked of them in the past, and have laid down the basis of land settlement—so far as the Department of Public Lands is concerned—are being ignored and more or less side-tracked, and the State is faced with the responsibility of finding finance to carry them on as well as to finance the many committees that will be working side by side with them. I say that they are largely redundant and useless and that the work they are charged by legislation with doing could be done by the parent department itself. After all, this is an important thing.

I will say that the Sub-Department of Irrigation and Water Supply is able to deal with all the problems that are likely to arise in providing for the expansion of irrigation areas when the war is over. It is all right to propose these vast schemes and to hold forth a sort of land-settlement Utopia when the war is over, but we have to consider the practicality of these schemes. I do not desire to throw cold water on them, for I know that it is important that we should forge ahead with many of them, but we have to take into account the important fact that even to-day with the distinct shortage of man-power and despite the demands of the A.I.F., the A.M.F., the naval forces, the R.A.A.F., and the ships of the United States Navy which put into this port from time to time, together with the requirements of the United States Army and the needs of the big civilian population of Queensland, our farmers are producing more vegetables

from irrigated and non-irrigated lands than apparently the markets are able to absorb.

**The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock:** Only at certain times.

**Mr. MAHER:** Some balanced system must be reached, otherwise those certain times will not occur at all. We are fast approaching the time when, because of the difficulties of marketing and of getting a payable price for his products, the farmer will put his plough in the barn. He will not go on with the job of tilling the soil, planting the seed, and reaping the crop unless he is going to be paid. Look at the situation on the market to-day. Look at the difficulty of disposing of the onion crop and at the recent suggestion of dumping of good vegetables. I am merely sounding this note, and this is at a time in Queensland when because of abnormal conditions there was never a greater demand for the products of the agriculturist or irrigationist.

At a time like this, when there is a shortage of man-power, apparently there is a greater volume of production than can be absorbed.

Recently as one of the representatives of the Taroom Shire Council, I attended a meeting of the Central Queensland Development League. There were many excellent men there who were eager to resuscitate the Dawson Valley irrigation scheme including the construction of the dam across the Dawson River at Nathan Gorge at a cost, I suppose, of over £1,000,000 with the object of settling 5,000 irrigationists in the vicinity of Theodore. I pointed out to the men assembled there that as a unit of this Parliament I should have to pass judgment upon the wisdom of expending that sum of money to settle 5,000 irrigationists. I should be obliged to justify my vote for such a scheme, and that desirable as it appeared to be, there must be some assurance to me as well as to other members of this Parliament, that the produce grown by the 5,000 irrigationists could be marketed. That is the important point to be considered. The State of Queensland has unbounded resources and possibilities for irrigation and for production from the soil generally, but the question is: where are the markets? If we had a city like Sydney where Rockhampton lies, then obviously this would be a marvellous scheme to undertake, but of course Rockhampton has its limitations and a great irrigation scheme on the Dawson River would be up against market difficulties. Even the limited number of irrigationists who are there to-day find it hard enough to make a living. I know the Minister has in mind the need for irrigation on the Dumaresq River, where I think there is better scope for irrigationists because it is within reach of the great market of Sydney.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** I think you are inclined to work the parish pump now.

**Mr. MAHER:** No, it would not help me personally because it is not in my electorate. I am merely mentioning that it is open to the Sydney market through the Boggabilla railway, and therefore it would have a much better chance of success than one of similar magnitude further north.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** They could produce fat lambs.

**Mr. MAHER:** I am trying to suggest to the Minister that the approach to this irrigation scheme must be on the basis of settling men at some specialised form of agricultural production such as the growing of the soya bean, which is new and for which there will be a market in the post-war period, or for fat-lamb raising or for something for which there is an actual demand.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** Growing fodder crops.

**Mr. MAHER:** Growing fodder crops, too.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** Queensland imports a great quantity of hay from New South Wales.

**Mr. MAHER:** Yes, I agree with the Minister in that respect. No matter how cheaply the land is bought, no matter what measures are taken to classify the areas, to subdivide them, and to settle a large number of men in the post-war period, all of it is naught if they are unable to grow and market profitably the products of the soil.

The Minister is seeking to link the development of our water resources with a planned development of the land. I take it that is the main object of the Bill. It really gives him the power to declare developmental areas contiguous to water supplies for the purpose of irrigation. It can be said that that is very largely the object of the Bill. It is necessary of course to resume land for closer settlement in any locality where water is being provided on a large scale. I have not had an opportunity of perusing the Bill and I cannot at this stage just discuss the real objects that the Minister has in mind and I am making my observations merely from what I have gleaned from the Minister's remarks.

I am wondering whether the Minister has taken into account sufficiently the necessity for including in this Bill adequate special provision for setting apart resumed land for discharged members of the forces. The Minister certainly made reference to it in passing, but I did not catch any indication by him that the Bill contained anything that gave any assurance that he had in mind resuming areas of land on which to settle discharged members of the forces when the war is over. After all, that is a very important aspect of post-war land settlement—to make provision for the men who have served their country, and who, on their discharge, will show a preference for a life on the land. In considering a Bill of this kind it is highly important that we should give some consideration to that aspect of the matter. Therefore, I move the following amendment:—

“Add to the question the words—

‘including adequate special provision for the setting apart and resumption of land for discharged members of the forces of the present war.’ ”

The amendment really speaks for itself. In discussing the desirability of the introduction of a measure in terms presented by the

Minister we are also entitled to express by way of amendment the need for making provision for our boys who may on their return wish to take up rural life.

Queensland is a big State. It has a vast area of grazing and agricultural lands. Consequently there should be no real difficulty in resuming a sufficient quantity of land to meet the needs of men returning from the war. I have often suggested, not only on amending Land Bills, but on the Estimates of the Department of Public Lands, that there is plenty of scope for the Minister to make bargains with existing lessees in a way which would not entail a very great cash outgoing. I am certain that many lessees would bargain with the Minister and surrender a part of their holdings in consideration of a quid pro quo in the way of an extension of lease on the balance of the area. In that way good areas could be obtained in many grazing districts that would enable the Minister to get men settled on the land at a minimum of cash outgoings. That is important.

Furthermore, the successful settlement of soldiers or others on the land means the provision of money to help them to improve it. The Minister stated there was a principle in the Bill whereby those who failed to make the improvements required could be dealt with. That is obvious, and is expressed in the leases of all concerned. The question is one of money. What is required in these big areas is sufficient credit or loans at a very cheap rate of interest, with repayments over a long period, to carry out these improvements—ringbarking the land, and the making of water either by sinking sub-artesian bores, or wells, bores, or making dams. If that was done obviously the productive capacity of many hundreds of thousands of acres would be greatly increased. We should address ourselves to that problem because it is of outstanding importance. I have drawn attention to it again and again, particularly in my policy speeches in 1938 and again in 1941, because I am quite satisfied that there are millions of acres of brigalow scrub and forest areas throughout the middle-western, central-western, and southern regions of the State where with such improvements greatly increased flocks and herds could be carried.

To-day, the carrying capacity of many holdings is restricted because of lack of water and of ringbarking. Anybody who has flown by aeroplane over the country areas of the State will agree with me that when one looks down one sees vast brigalow scrubs lying green beneath them, all of which indicates the need for financial assistance to carry out ringbarking and provide water and thereby heavily increase the carrying capacity of that very rich and fertile scope of country. There is also room for the Minister to make resumptons of land so that the young fellows from the country who return and who are desirous of taking up grazing land may do so.

All that, I think, can be done without the powers contained in this Bill, but so far as the Bill is aimed at serious effort by the

Government to settle men on the land and to make provision for the boys returning from the war, it is welcome.

I wish to place particular emphasis on this point: I hope that no attempt is made to interfere unduly with the rights of freeholders and lessees. There are certain basic rights that both enjoy. They should be respected. The fact that a man has bought a freehold and improved it and produced wealth and paid taxes and lived there for years gives him certain rights that should be respected. The same applies to lessees who take up land from the Crown, pay their rent, and meet their obligations and improve the Crown estate; these men, too, are entitled to consideration. Any attempt to peg down values or to try to beat these men down in the price local values suggest they should get for their properties in declared areas for resumption must be stoutly resisted. I hope the Minister does not intend to undertake any crusade against worthy citizens of this kind, whether they are freeholders or leaseholders.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** That would not be justifiable.

**Mr. MAHER:** It would not. It is all right to say they are not entitled to get a certain price, but any man who lives in Western Queensland, who has battled through fire and flood and drought for a long time and reared a family and paid his way, is entitled to get at least what the market value in his district dictates that is the fair value of his land. Any resumption board properly constituted and fairly supervised will recognise that principle and give it to him. When land was resumed in New South Wales for irrigation purposes, the resumption boards invariably took those important factors into account, and saw that the man who was being dispossessed of his property for purposes of closer settlement received a fair return for the land and improvements that he gave in exchange. Any system that attempts to deprive these men of their fair rights in that respect must be strongly resisted. I hope the power the Minister describes in respect of the control of sales will be very carefully and justly exercised.

**Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumba) (3.55 p.m.):** Like the hon. member for West Moreton, after listening to the introductory remarks of the Minister, I agree that before any judgment can be passed on the Bill it should be closely examined to ascertain its full implications. The Minister has joined with his colleague, the Secretary for Labour and Employment, and the ex-Premier, the Hon. Forgan Smith, in introducing into this Parliament Bills that have high-sounding and flowing titles in which the words "plan" and "co-ordinate" and "facilities" and "committees" and "bureaus" play an important part. After hearing the Minister detail the set-up of this authority it is proposed to establish, it seems to me that we are going to get another bureau—another series of committees. I do not know what result we are going to get from their activities.

I hope, Mr. Mann, that the results to be achieved by the introduction of this planning, co-ordinating, and providing for the development and use of the land and water resources will meet with better success and a better fate than Bills of a similar type that have come before this House. The Co-ordination of Employment Facilities Act remained dormant for a considerable time and with great effort produced a mighty book of statistics. The National Education Co-ordination and the University of Queensland Acts Amendment Act is still lying on the stocks waiting to be launched. It is stuck and wants a little bit of lubricant to push it down the way.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** No, that has been under close investigation.

**Mr. NICKLIN:** I hope the Minister's efforts in this respect will meet with greater success, and when Parliament agrees with the Bill that it will be put into operation, something will be done, and some results will be achieved.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** When we meet in August next year I hope to have something to put before you.

**Mr. NICKLIN:** Next year the Minister may be criticising actions that another Government may take with regard to the legislation he is introducing.

Looking at the title of the Bill we have before us, we find that it is a Bill to "plan, co-ordinate, provide for the development and use of the land and water resources of the State of Queensland." All very desirable objectives. Then it proceeds—"in a manner best calculated to increase the population, settlement, and development of the State generally, and to secure its civil defence and economic wellbeing, and for purposes incidental thereto." To that the hon. member for West Moreton has moved an amendment that should be taken into account in any plan to co-ordinate and develop land and water resources at this particular time; i.e., the making of adequate provision for the returned soldiers from the present war. I heartily endorse the amendment moved by the hon. member and before dealing with the principles of the Bill I should like to speak generally in regard to the effect of the amendment and the necessity for ensuring that any Bill dealing with the land that this House agrees to should make adequate provision to take care of the discharged soldiers.

The Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Land Acts, 1917 to 1932, under which soldier settlement was carried out after the last war do not apply to soldiers of the present war, but solely to soldiers of the last war, and consequently the many excellent provisions they contain—and undoubtedly they were of assistance to many returned soldiers who wished to undertake land settlement—are not now available to the returned soldiers from this war. I do not know exactly what the Minister proposes to do in respect of soldier settlement after this war. The hon. gentleman says they are included.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** Do you favour separate soldier settlements?

**Mr. NICKLIN:** Not necessarily. The Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Act did not make provision for soldier settlements entirely. It dealt with the whole question of soldier settlements and under its provisions a discharged soldier was quite entitled to get assistance to take up land in any part of the State that was approved by the board or whoever administered that Act. These same provisions should be included in a Bill such as we are considering to-day or the necessary amendment should be made to that Act. There should be some adequate provision somewhere. As to what is required to deal with these soldier settlements properly and exactly how it should be tackled is not a matter for discussion just at present—whether, for instance, it should be by group settlement, community settlement, or by individual settlement. We should ensure now that any soldiers desiring to go on the land after this war shall have adequate legislative assistance to enable them to do so.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** So they will.

**Mr. NICKLIN:** They will, but only equal with those of any other members of the community. No special assistance will be given to returned soldiers under this Bill.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** How do you know that?

**Mr. NICKLIN:** According to what the hon. gentleman has already stated if he accepts the amendment that has been moved by the hon. member for West Moreton it will become an obligation on this Committee to amend the Bill to make adequate special provision for returned soldiers. They are entitled to some measure of preference and help in settlement, just as this and every other State in the Commonwealth accorded preference and help to returned soldiers after the last war. What were the provisions included in that last Act that could have been embodied with advantage in any legislation dealing with soldier settlement at the present time? The Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Act gave power to acquire land for the purposes of the Act and the issue of debentures to provide the necessary funds. It made provision for the establishment of group or community settlements and gave power to set apart land for soldier settlement. It made special provision as to rentals and other conditions applicable to soldier settlers. It made provision for town and suburban leases to be allocated to discharged soldiers and the conditions applicable thereto. That dealt with those cases in which suburban lands were acquired for building houses for returned soldiers at that time. There was special provision for advances to discharged soldier settlers. It made provision for advances for dwellings and for relief to borrowers in arrears as well as provision for relief by remission of rent or interest or reduction of capital values, &c. Those were admirable provisions that could well be included in any measure dealing with land

settlement at this time when we know that we have to deal with this problem of placing our returned soldiers on the land.

Up to the present I have not been able to ascertain exactly what the Government have done in regard to the settlement of returned soldiers. Judging from the reply that the Minister gave to a question I asked, apparently, very little has been done. All that he said in answer to my question on 12 October last was—

“Vacant and available Crown lands are being withheld from settlement until after the termination of the war. The Government has under consideration the question of reserving suitable areas for post-war settlement.”

This answer is significant for two reasons. The first is that if this is as far as the Government have gone after over four years of war, and after many hundreds of soldiers have already been discharged, it shows that they have given very little attention up to date to the question of settlement of returned soldiers. Then the Minister's answer carefully avoided any mention of discharged soldiers. Apparently, all the Government intend doing in regard to soldier settlement is to provide that a returned soldier must come in on equal terms with any other person under the provisions of this Bill.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** You have nothing to justify a suggestion that that is going to be so.

**Mr. NICKLIN:** I am saying that that is the impression I have now and I should be very pleased to be disillusioned and to know that the Minister and his Government have made some definite plans to deal with soldier settlement after the war. That is a matter that should have been in the forefront of this Bill, and this Committee should have had some indication from the Minister as to what was intended. I doubt very much whether he would have even mentioned soldier settlement if the subject had not been introduced by this side by way of interjection. Apparently, there is nothing in this Bill that makes any specific or special mention of provision for soldier settlement, and by accepting the amendment the hon. member for West Moreton has introduced we shall ensure that that special provision is made, and that is more desirable and necessary at the moment.

The measure that we are considering is very wide in many respects. Some of the powers it is proposed to confer upon the Government will have to be examined very carefully in order to ascertain their exact implications and effects.

We all admit that there is need for planning and co-ordinating land settlement, and there is also the need to ensure that our land is adequately and properly used. Even under the existing legislation the Government have very wide power to give effect to many of the desirable features associated with land settlement, but that does not mean that it would not be advisable to co-ordinate land settlement and water facilities into one

measure that would have the effect of bringing about a fair and equitable control of the land facilities of the State. The Minister mentioned the age-long controversy between settlement and forestry, but it is a matter that can never be properly settled unless there is some authority to make the final decision that this land should be allocated for settlement and that land for forestry.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** It is strange that even at the present time there is a controversy with the Department of Mines concerning the control of 76,000 square miles required for subdivision and settlement purposes.

**Mr. NICKLIN:** If this Bill will overcome that problem it will be desirable to that extent.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** The matter is being examined by the Government at the moment.

**Mr. NICKLIN:** We must give close attention to those areas that are dependent upon adequate water supply for increased land settlement, but it is not simply a question of establishing irrigation facilities at one point without taking into account what is to happen with the produce from that area. There is not a bit of use in opening land for settlement unless we take into account what is to happen to the produce grown.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** Do you think we should restrict the growing of certain commodities?

**Mr. NICKLIN:** There is a very great deal in the idea of restricting production to certain commodities for which there is a market. There is not a bit of use in growing commodities beyond market requirements when there is no possibility of disposing of them and giving the grower a proper return. One of the causes of failure of soldier settlements after the last war was that certain community soldier settlements were established without taking into account what was to happen to the products to be grown. What would have happened to the older pineapple growers in this State if the Beerburum settlement had become a really successful pineapple-growing area? Unfortunately, it was a partial failure in pineapple production, yet the pineapples grown there created such a situation as almost to ruin the other pineapple-growers of the State, and it became necessary for the Government to pay a subsidy on the production of the pineapples from Beerburum to enable the growers to remain there. These are the things that will have to be taken into account in any land settlement, especially in settlements established to grow certain crops. If care is not taken to see that there is a market for the produce the schemes will inevitably be a failure and thus ruin many good lives, as was the case with many of the soldier settlements established after the last war.

Another feature of the problem, and a feature that must be watched very closely,

is whether the Government are entitled to take land for developmental purposes without any check or adequate control from private owners who have developed it to a certain extent, and by their efforts and hard work have created homes and farms for themselves. Under circumstances such as that it is not right that the Government should step in and say what the value of a farm should be and that its owner shall not sell above the price determined by the authority set up by the Government.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** The Bill does not provide for that.

**Mr. NICKLIN:** I am glad to hear the Minister say so, for he led us to believe otherwise.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** Oh no. I referred to the subdivision of land and sales.

**Mr. NICKLIN:** I understood the Minister to say he was going to take very stringent control over subdivisional sales.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** Yes, that is so, within a developmental area.

**Mr. NICKLIN:** He also spoke of lands outside developmental areas.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** No.

**Mr. Macdonald:** You could declare any area a developmental area.

**Mr. NICKLIN:** There may be a good deal of virtue in a power to deal with lands whose backward development is holding up the adequate development of an area, but I always thought members of the Government suggested that the land tax and the super land tax would bring that about. If it is found necessary to have additional powers to attain the same object, the Government must, when enacting this Bill, abolish the land tax and super land tax.

I trust that the Minister will accept the amendment, as soldier settlements are a particularly important phase of post-war land settlement. I reserve judgment on the other provisions of the Bill until I have had an opportunity of studying its provisions fully, because I believe some of them require careful study before one ventures on any opinion on them.

**Mr. PLUNKETT (Albert) (4.20 p.m.):** Land settlement is a very interesting subject. The settlement of the land has great possibilities, for good or evil. This Bill has certainly a very high-falutin title. All the things enumerated in the motion could be achieved if land settlement could be increased and developed.

The development of our lands hinges on three things: the success of this Bill will depend not so much on the establishment of the proposed board as its personnel. That is its most important feature. If the members of the board are not carefully selected and if they do not possess some knowledge of land, then the whole scheme will fail. It is of no use selecting a few men in the city to form

the board to tell the people in the country what they have to do, as such a policy must inevitably bring failure in its train. Much good can be accomplished by this Bill if the work done under it is well and truly co-ordinated, and the basis of that co-ordination must be between the people who will settle on the land and the board that will direct their activities. That is the only basis of success.

The next point is that the land to be thrown open for settlement must be able to produce. Success or failure of settlement must depend not only on what the land produces but on the value of its production. It is no use having land that will produce in abundance if you cannot sell what you produce. That is happening in many cases where we have over-production.

The scheme outlined can be developed into a very big one, and we can achieve its object if we combine our land and water resources and utilise them for the benefit of those who are engaged in production. It is rather a strange thing that we have known for years that Queensland is periodically visited by droughts and floods, and the Government have not done much—and it is really their job to deal with irrigation; it is too big a scheme for the individual—to overcome the difficulties that have been experienced. We find in the closer-settled areas much of the rich land is lying idle at times because the water is running away to waste and we have not had enough sense to harness the water and make it available for stimulating the crop that is growing on top of the bank. It is nearly time we tried to co-ordinate land production with water irrigation. If we can do what it is proposed under the Bill, we shall have accomplished a very big job. As I said before, it is not much use talking about settling anybody on the land—returned soldiers or anybody else—unless some provision is made to deal with their products so that they will be able to make a reasonable living. I could not help thinking the other day, when the Department of Public Lands Estimates were being considered, that every hon. member talked about how it should be done and the best way to do it, but not one mentioned the matter of a price for the product in order to make it profitable for the grower. Unless the man who produces can get a payable price for his product he will fail. I say that seriously. We have now reached the stage at which we have price-fixing—even before the war we had it—but it was mainly on price-fixing for primary products. There is an urgent need to co-ordinate land and water resources and to co-ordinate price-fixing as well, otherwise there will be failures.

It seems to me that Queensland offers great facilities if common sense is used in the production and sale of production and in saving in the year of plenty. If we calculated the value of the produce that is allowed to go to waste because there is no market during our peak period it would run into hundreds of thousands of pounds. To-day vegetables are going to waste because we have no dehydration plant to treat them, although such a plant would not be very

costly. Other countries have to make provision for their peak periods, but Queensland, whose peak period is more accentuated than those of the other States in the Commonwealth, owing to the seasonal conditions operating here, has not made provision to deal with it. We find that it is only the outlet overseas, very often at a lower price, that has enabled the producer to keep in his business. The same is true of production on the land generally. Provision for dehydrating vegetables, for instance, so that they would be available in the time of scarcity that always comes should be a Government activity. I am reluctant to say it, but we find that something has been done in this regard, but it has been done in the Southern States. We have not a dehydration plant in Queensland, but there are two in Tasmania. Anything of that kind, although it may be called a war effort, all seems to be done in New South Wales and Victoria.

**An Opposition Member:** A Labour Government here!

**Mr. PLUNKETT:** No, I am not blaming the Government altogether; I am not blaming any Government. It is nearly time we woke up to the fact that we are a primary-producing country, and there is no limit to what we can produce if we harness our water supplies to irrigate the land and increase its productivity. Generally speaking, in the closer-settled areas along the coast, if the rivers were weired we could double or treble production, whether of butter, vegetables, or fruit.

However, this seems to be an attempt to do something. Even though we might make a mistake, let us do something, and we shall profit by our mistakes. If we sit down until we can see huge profits staring us in the face we shall never do anything.

We have been at war for four years and many of our people have gone from the land. These will have to be repatriated to the land in some way, and that need has inspired this Bill. I think that goes without saying. Every Government have endeavoured to plan what is to be done for the boys who come back from the war. The obligation is on them to do that. This is a Commonwealth matter but it must be done in co-operation with the State Governments. From that point of view there should be an amendment to this Bill. We must admit that something has to be done and if the amendment is included it will show that we are prepared to do something. As I said previously, if we are to settle people on the land, we must see to it that the land will produce and the prices received by the producers will enable them to carry on, otherwise what is contemplated by this Bill will, in my opinion, be a failure.

**Mr. EDWARDS (Nanango) (4.28 p.m.):** I was interested in the explanation given by the Minister but unless one followed him very carefully one would scarcely notice that the Bill involves the nationalisation of the land.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** Why would that be necessary? We still control 90 per cent. of the land in the State.

**Mr. EDWARDS:** There is nevertheless a little bit more land than that. Moreover, if one did not follow the hon. gentleman carefully one would scarcely notice that there was a great deal of propaganda in the Bill, which is being brought forward on the eve of an election.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** I did not notice that.

**Mr. EDWARDS:** We have had before in this Parliament so many of this kind of Bills.

**A Government Member:** Why are you not broad-minded, like the hon. member for Albert?

**Mr. EDWARDS:** It would be quite impossible for the hon. gentleman to be broad-minded. Many land Bills and Bills in connection with irrigation and that sort of thing have been before this Assembly and there is no doubt that had some of the works projected been carried out, Queensland would not be in the same position as it is at the present time. The other day the Premier reviewed the growth of population. He said that Queensland since 1825 had reached the million point. I do not know that the Government have been very successful in attracting people over the border into Queensland. I really think that had much of their legislation never been put into effect—Bills dealing with land settlement and that sort of thing—there would have been 3,000,000 or 4,000,000 people in this State.

**Mr. Power:** You were glad to come over the border.

**Mr. EDWARDS:** In those days I was always glad to do anything. However, that is the position as I see it. The Minister this afternoon mentioned that it is absolutely necessary to have practical men or men with practical training. That is the very thing that we on this side of the Committee have been advocating for many years past and unless the Government realise that necessity we shall never get anywhere.

I will give the Theodore settlement as an illustration. When that settlement was first advocated in this Chamber I was very dubious about whether it would ever be a success, because of its isolated position. Goods must be produced in places from which they can be marketed successfully. However, I withheld my criticism until I saw what was being done. Mr. McCormack, who was Premier of the State, very generously and wisely took a number of members of Parliament to Theodore and showed them over that settlement when it was being opened up. I must confess that I am not an expert but I have seen many irrigated areas in the southern States that have turned out successfully. I thought that Theodore would be a failure and I expressed my opinion and gave reasons for it. In the first place much of the soil is puggy and after water has been run over it it is

difficult to get it sufficiently dry to cultivate successfully. Then, we all know that that area has a good rainfall.

If a good deal of water was put on that land by the flooding process and this was followed immediately by a downpour of sub-tropical rain the land would be unworkable not only for months, but perhaps for the season, so that from that point of view it was doomed to failure from the start.

When I was told that it was intended to grow fodder crops and to fatten lambs there I predicted that it would be a failure if those fodder crops were to be marketed in Brisbane, because Theodore is one of the hardest places in Queensland from which to get products to the market. There was no possible hope of competing with the fodder crops grown from near-by places such as Forest Hill.

That is the type of thing we have been doing for a number of years, but if the Minister is sincere about considering every possible angle of land settlement and doing everything possible to give these people a water supply once they are settled some good may come from this Bill. We all know that in most areas if water is not obtainable it is possible to make only a catch-as-catch-can living from the land.

The Minister stated that it is essential that the settlers shall be practical men. That is true of all land pursuits. I have seen as many as three and four men fail one after the other on a certain block of land and a fifth man make a complete success of it.

When referring to the amendment moved by the hon. member for West Moreton the Minister stated that it was necessary that the returned soldiers should have some practical training. These soldiers are grown men who have seen a good deal of the world and the best way of giving them practical experience is to put them on the land with practical men. Another way is to adopt the system followed by Victoria after the last war. A board was established, and in order to keep prices of land from soaring as little as possible was said about what this board was to do. It took under offer land in certain districts at the price at which the owners were willing to sell. It usually bought a block between two practical farmers and settled a soldier on it. The soldier saw how his two neighbours, experienced and practical farmers, worked their land. Every day he had the benefit of their advice and experience, and in many instances he was successful. One of my own nephews took up land between two farmers when he returned from the last war and he has been extremely successful.

Reference was made to the grouping of soldiers after the last war. Anybody can appreciate what a serious blunder that was because, when it came to doing some practical work in some cases none of the men knew anything about it. Nothing but failure could be expected under those conditions. Of course, it must be admitted that the land was unsuitable. In fact, some of it was so bad that I venture the opinion that the most successful practical

farmer in Queensland would not have been able to do anything with it, and if that is so how could these inexperienced soldiers be expected to make a success of the venture?

This has been a long-drawn-out war. Many of our boys have suffered great trials and tribulations, and numbers of them have fought on many fronts. I hope the Minister will accept the amendment so that there will be a clear understanding that the first consideration will be given to the soldiers in the matter of land settlement.

#### **The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS**

(Hon. E. J. Walsh, Mirani) (4.39 p.m.): The amendment is unnecessary, and nobody knows it better than the mover and seconder. What has been done by the Government since the outbreak of war in the interests of those serving in the forces is far and away ahead of anything done by any other Government in Australia. This Government are not unmindful of their obligations to the men when they are discharged from the services, but it should be obvious to hon. members that this measure is not designed ostensibly for soldier settlement. As I said before, the machinery contained in the Bill constitutes an important approach, not only to civilian settlement, but also to post-war soldier settlement. Obviously the Government are going to take into consideration the fact that service men will be entitled to proper treatment, but that is a matter to be dealt with in another measure.

Again, we cannot overlook the Commonwealth's obligation in this respect. Indeed, I hope that no Government in Australia will move towards any plan for soldier settlement until the subject has been adequately discussed in conference with all the Governments, including the Commonwealth Government. What is required is some uniformity in the concessions or the help that is to be granted to the members of the fighting forces. If the hon. member for Nanango had been following the activities of the Commonwealth Post-war Reconstruction Committee he would have realised that it was set up ostensibly for the purpose of dealing with this matter, and that the Department of Public Lands in this State has supplied a great deal of data which the chairman of the committee—he is Minister for Lands in Western Australia—has said personally to me will be very useful to them in the making of their report to the Commonwealth Government.

The subject of soldier settlement is not merely the matter of passing a pious resolution in this Chamber. It is not the things that we say that matter, but the things that we are going to do. When the plan emerges from the Commonwealth Government it will be time enough then for us to say whether it contains all the desirable features that will make soldier settlement successful. That phase has been discussed in this Chamber ever since the war began. There has been some reference to it on the Estimates for the Department of Public Lands, and properly so, because it is a very important phase of post-war reconstruction.

I have gathered from the remarks of hon. members opposite that they feel that there should be no such thing as individual soldier settlements. I have heard the opinion frequently expressed in this Chamber that there should be mixed settlements after the war.

#### **An Opposition Member: Hear, hear!**

At 4.43 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

#### **The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:**

I gather from their statements and from those "Hear, hears!" that they still think that that idea is a sound one. We know the mistake that was made in soldier settlements after the last war. Already plans have been developed for future soldier settlements. May I inform hon. members that the Victorian Government communicated with the Queensland Government the other day to ascertain what had been done in the matter? Apparently they wished to know so that they might be able to follow the plans adopted in Queensland, as they have done in respect of numerous other matters originated in this State.

I think hon. members opposite will agree that the amendment is entirely superfluous. Obviously the Government must recognise their obligations in this respect, and I can assure hon. members that investigations are proceeding in the matter.

The Leader of the Opposition mentioned the reply that I gave in answer to a question directed by him to me earlier in the session that Crown lands were being withheld from selection until after the war. That is true.

It must be remembered that only a small proportion of the area of Queensland remains unoccupied. When we refer to Crown land we mean lands at present not occupied under any Crown tenure. Despite the pressure that might come from hon. members opposite to have this parcel of land or that parcel of land thrown open to selection, the department will continue to resist it so that such lands will be open to selection by soldiers as well as civilians after the war. It must be remembered that the great bulk of our land is occupied under some form of tenure—leasehold or freehold, as the case may be—and that the same approach to providing lands for settlement purposes has to be made irrespective of the tenure it is held under. It is unreasonable to suggest that because a man has a pastoral leasehold or grazing leasehold, his rights are not as important as the rights of the freeholder. We have to consider his equity in those things, just as we have to consider the equity of the freeholder. The hon. member for West Moreton may suggest that we have huge tracts of land held under pastoral lease and other grazing tenures, but I do not know of any considerable areas situated within the more desirable localities that can be thrown open for development purposes. We have in the area in which the hon. member has properties substantial areas, but because they are held under pastoral lease it does not follow they are suitable for settlement purposes. Against that

we have considerable areas held under various freehold tenures, such as prickly-pear development selections, quite apart from those held under perpetual lease. Some of them are very substantial areas and more or less undeveloped owing to the fact that over a large number of years they have been held under conditions that did not tend to the development of primary production. I know some of the areas, as I have travelled over them, but I do not propose to indicate them to the Committee at this stage as I do not think it desirable to indicate what areas the Government have in mind for resumption. There are many areas through which I have travelled that I am convinced are very suitable for closer settlement.

**Mr. Moorhouse:** If prices were pegged you could tell the Committee.

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:**

That is a matter, as I have indicated to the hon. member for Windsor, that must have consideration. It is not provided for in this Bill, and no good purpose will be served by continuing to argue an aspect of policy to be determined in the future.

**Mr. Kerr:** Would not the Valuation of Land Bill have some bearing on the fixation of those prices?

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:**

Not necessarily so, because we must remember that much of the valuing that will be done under that measure will be for local-government purposes, and local-government valuations do not always reflect the true value of land.

**Mr. Luckins:** Many are higher and many are lower.

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:**

That is so. I do not want to be dragged into a discussion on the principles of the Valuation of Land Bill. That is something to be dealt with on a future occasion.

There is no reason for this amendment. The powers contained in the Bill provide machinery for the resumption of certain areas whether for civilian or soldier settlement. It provides for the development of water resources in conjunction with the resumption of lands. Any suggestion that the Government are not giving consideration to the necessity for doing something in connection with soldier settlement after the war is unworthy of the hon. gentleman. I am satisfied from the investigations that have been made up to date that what is being done in this matter will enable us to develop a plan that will be satisfactory for future soldier settlement.

The hon. member for West Moreton made reference to the fact that he thought there was a certain amount of waste and expense in co-ordinated activities. He thought that setting up numerous bureaux and committees was adding further expense to the community and no results were forthcoming. I cannot see any justification for that line of thought. When I went to the Department of Public Lands first the Public Estate Improvement

Branch was working as a road branch of the department, which was quite a good thing. In the early days, as the hon. member for Cooroora knows, we had no Main Roads Commission, but after we had built up that organisation since 1920, the Public Estate Improvement Branch seemed to me to be entirely superfluous. We had this department with its separate plant and everything else working in an entirely opposite direction to the Main Roads Commission, and I remember that on one occasion when I was asked to approve of the purchase of certain plant to carry out certain undertakings of the Public Estate Improvement Branch I questioned whether plant was not available through the Main Roads Commission or through the local authority in whose area the work was to be undertaken. I found out, after referring the matter to the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works, that plant was available belonging to the local authority, which meant a saving to the community in the purchase of rollers and graders. This machinery, which was lying idle for a few months of the year was, therefore, used. That is an example of the value of co-ordination in public services. We know, despite what might be said to the contrary, that there is a tendency in all Government departments to look after their prestige and dignity—one department working at cross purposes with the other. As a member of the Government I have seen the value of having Mr. Kemp as Co-ordinator-General of Public Works, in which position he has been able to get all the departments interested in projects together and to communicate to the Government and to other departments how work should be carried out, instead of having them fighting like bulldogs or fox terriers amongst themselves. The hon. member for West Moreton can see in his own district results of some value from co-ordinated effort in the construction of weirs and similar things. I think it is a mistake for hon. members to suggest there is no great value to the community in co-ordinating the various activities of the public services throughout the State; I think it goes a long way towards saving many thousands of pounds to the community. I can remember one instance in which it was costing the Brisbane City Council something like 5s. 9d. a yard to move certain overburden in a locality in the Greater Brisbane area, and when the Main Roads Commission undertook the construction of the work it was able to bring the cost down to 2s. 6d. a yard, because it was able to use the material in another way. That is further evidence of the saving to the community as a result of the co-ordinated effort of various public utilities.

**Mr. Dart:** It may have had labour-saving machinery.

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:** No, it had no more labour-saving machinery than the Brisbane City Council had.

The Leader of the Opposition referred to the necessity of seeing that markets were made available for production. There is something to be said for that. We know at present it is not possible for any section of

primary producers to undertake the building of a butter factory in any locality without the approval of the committee set up under the Department of Agriculture and Stock—a committee that has on it, I understand, various representatives of co-operative associations—who indicate to the department where they think the butter factory should be erected. It may be we would have to get to the stage that we got to in the sugar industry and say, "You can grow only a certain crop or plant a certain area." We have not arrived at that stage yet.

**Mr. Macdonald:** Your party called that a policy of despair.

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:** No, the hon. member is entirely wrong.

The hon. member for Albert gave his blessing to the Bill generally, and I think the remarks of the hon. member for Nanango were in a similar strain. I do not propose to accept the amendment moved by the hon. member for West Moreton, because I think it is entirely unnecessary and the Government already have plans in train for soldier settlements after the war.

**Mr. YEATES (East Toowoomba) (4.57 p.m.):** If this Bill is going to be anything like what it looks on paper, it will be a good one; but I want to warn hon. members that sometimes you cannot judge a book by its cover. Some Governments have a happy knack of bringing out a book with a quiet-looking cover but there is a catch in it somewhere.

There is a nigger in the woodpile. I am not casting any aspersions or making any insinuations in advance. The Bill sounds well and I will deal with it when it arrives presently from the Government Printing Office. Meanwhile I must say that I want Queensland highly developed. I have been greatly worried over the years because we are so slow, notwithstanding the good work done by the pioneers, from Mellwraith and others up to the Kidston-Morgan Government and then on to the Denham Government when the late J. T. Bell was the Secretary for Public Lands. I want it to go further. I want 5,000,000 people to be in Queensland within the next 20 years. Surely that is little enough to expect—another 4,000,000 to the present population. That must be accomplished first of all by an increased birth rate. That will have to come before a committee of the medical fraternity and the churches to ascertain how best that can be done.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**Mr. YEATES:** That is by the way. I want a real live immigration policy. That can be done by this Government or whatever Government are in power after March next. They should co-operate with the Federal Government and go in for a sound and large scheme of immigration.

**Mr. POWER:** I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member for East Toowoomba in order in discussing immigration on this Bill?

**Mr. Maher:** A reflection on the Chair.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! If the hon. member who raises the point of order will study the motion before the Committee he will see that it includes the words, "in a manner best calculated to increase the population, settlement, and development of the State generally." However, I ask the hon. member for East Toowoomba to discuss the general intent of the motion.

**Mr. YEATES:** I will now refer to that vast area in the wilderness, so to speak. I will begin by going way out to the other side of Thargomindah and gradually traverse the State. Coming this way from Haddon Corner, on the South Australian border, there are vast areas of land. Some interjector may say, "Yes, but they are nothing but a desert." I do not agree. Coming across from Haddon Corner into Thargomindah, the capital of the far south-western part of the State, there are vast areas, much of which were under the rule of the late Sidney Kidman for years. I suggest that that country be divided into blocks of 150 square miles; 2,000,000 sheep can be carried there with the aid of artesian water run along bore races. It is low mulga country. Then coming nearer home and running down the line to Yuleba and to Warra across to Thallon and to the south-west at Hebel and back to Wyandra, there is a tremendous area of brigalow country: around Tara, on the Moonie and right away down to Meandarra including 50 miles of thick scrub brigalow. The prickly-pear has been eradicated for many years because of the scientific research. Splendid work was done in that direction. We are far behind the times in settling that country as it should be settled. I submit a proposal to the Minister that he should repurchase leaseholds of 10,000 or 15,000 acres of brigalow or belah country by negotiating with the owners and making some satisfactory arrangement and then subdivide it into living areas, which in that part would be something about 3,000 to 5,000 acres.

I suggest also that the Government should not shy off repurchasing freehold estates. I know that they are a bit shy about that, but there are not many left in the closely-settled areas, and I ask them to consider this suggestion carefully. I can tell them privately where there is probably 80,000 acres that could be cut up into about 200 farms for wheat-growing and dairying.

**Mr. Power:** Are you the agent who has it for sale?

**Mr. YEATES:** No, I am not going to sell it to the Government, and if I did what business would it be of the hon. member's? I advocate areas of from 250 to 400 acres in the district. All that land is suitable for cultivation. In the Western and Central districts there are some large leaseholds coming in for review in the next three or six years, and I suggest that they be subdivided into living areas of nothing less than 40,000 acres.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! The hon. member is getting outside the terms of the amendment.

**Mr. YEATES:** The amendment provides for the proper settlement of returned soldiers, and I heartily support it. I am not so keen about setting aside a particular area. These returned soldiers should have preference in any kind of land settlement. They should get concessions that are not available to the civilians. The Minister says he has instructed his department not to allow any leases to be subdivided or balloted for, and he is wise. Some of that good country on the Dawson River that is eminently suitable for fattening cattle could be divided into living areas of 5,000 acres. It would be admirable for some of our returned soldiers, and I commend him for not opening it up until after the war.

All being well, I intend to leave here next Tuesday, if the Government have no contentious Bills behind the scenes, and go to Western Australia to inspect the wheat-growing that has been undertaken in the so-called desert there. I understand that all the land of the mallee scrubs has been taken up, and some of the Western Australian people might like to come to Queensland. If there are any who wish to follow in the footsteps of the hon. member for Nanango, who came from Victoria to take up land, I shall speak in high terms about Queensland from morning to night in an endeavour to encourage them to come here. I will be an ambassador.

**Mr. Maher:** Get some information from the Minister about sugar before you go.

**Mr. YEATES:** If the Minister will give me the very latest on the sugar problems I shall be glad to talk about them.

Assuming that there are no niggers in the woodpile, the Bill seems all right to me, but I most certainly do not intend to commit myself now. I have been caught before.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** You are not accusing me of having caught you, surely?

**Mr. YEATES:** No.

**Mr. COLLINS (Cook) (5.9 p.m.):** This Bill fills a long-felt want, and I agree with the Minister in introducing it. I feel with many other hon. members who have studied land settlement that until we proceed further with irrigation no great progress can be made in this State in sheep-raising and cattle-raising, including dairying. The fact that we are not carrying any greater number of sheep or cattle to-day than we did 40 to 45 years ago is proof of that statement. We cannot make progress in land settlement unless we develop the State properly. Queensland contains probably the richest pastoral land in Australia, but its productive capacity at the moment is limited by the low rainfall and even the uncertainty of it. The Bill postulates extensive irrigation, which is a splendid step forward in closer settlement and the more profitable utilisation of the land. We have seen the devastating effects

of drought from time to time, and as I have said before, drought is the biggest tax that the people of Queensland have to pay, especially in relation to the wool, cattle, and dairying industries. From time to time the Government have had to allocate money for the relief of people affected by drought, and on other occasions railway freights and fares have had to be reduced to help the sheep- and cattle-raisers to overcome the problems of drought. The sums expended in that way would have gone a long way towards providing considerable irrigation facilities.

There is no use in putting people on poor land where it is impossible for them to make an adequate living. Virtually all the land in Queensland is held under some form of tenure, very little of it, fortunately, being freehold. Almost all of it that is suitable for closer settlement is occupied under some form of tenure to-day and if we are to make progress provision will have to be made for the resumption of some of it in suitable areas. In the making of the resumptions no hardships will be imposed upon the people who pioneered the country, because they will be compensated for the land that may be taken from them.

**Mr. Maher:** There is a suggestion of pegging prices down and that is not healthy.

**Mr. COLLINS:** I cannot see any harm in the pegging of prices, but we must not impose an added burden on the taxpayers by paying more than the land is really worth, and we must not do an injustice to the men who have pioneered the land. The policy of resumptions is nothing new in this State. Even after the last war we resumed considerable areas even of freehold land for soldier-settlement purposes and land may be resumed to-day. No injustice was done to previous owners in the resumption of land and there is no reason to fear, as hon. members opposite do, that there will be any injustice in the future. This State must progress, but to do that we must put more people on the land than there are to-day. I agree with the hon. member for East Toowoomba that we want not thousands of people on the land but millions, and I believe that land in Queensland can be properly used to provide those opportunities. We also had the statement by the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth that from a defence point of view it is necessary that at least 20,000,000 people should be put into this country and that about 10,000,000 of them should occupy the northern part of Australia; Queensland, being in the northern part of Australia, should make provision accordingly.

Anything that will help to provide irrigation facilities in a big way is something that should be gladly accepted by hon. members. I have heard hon. members opposite strike the warning note that we should not produce crops for which there is no ready market, but I have always been an advocate of controlled production for known markets, because I have had a wide experience of gluts on the one hand and of shortages on the other, a state of affairs that is detrimental to the community and certainly a discouragement to the man on the land.

We must not be too pessimistic, because the advent of a big population will expand our local market out of all recognition. The local market is the best market and the only market in which we can control prices. A rapidly expanding population would be one of the healthiest things that could ever happen to this country, and would lead to a greater measure of prosperity than we have witnessed for many years. We have only to see what the influx of soldiers has done in this country to realise the fact that with every man and woman capable of working earning our local markets have greatly expanded. Think of our prosperity if present conditions could be multiplied tenfold. We need not be pessimistic about finding markets for our products. If we do, we shall be adopting a defeatist policy, and I am sure no-one wants to be guilty of that. If the late Sir Thomas McLlwraith, one of the greatest progressive Premiers we have had in this State, and other men in the early 80's and 90's had been afraid of markets they would not have spent millions of pounds in constructing railways from the coast out to Charleville, Longreach, and Cloncurry. No market existed then for frozen or chilled meat. The frozen-meat export trade was only in its infancy, and the product was an indifferent one. To-day, with the new chilling process, we have much to hope for in our export trade. Lack of markets did not stop the State from embarking on big development schemes in those days, and we should not fear that possibility to-day in considering such a Bill as this. We should go on with such progressive legislation as this to do things for the development and defence of the country. People must ever be the first line of defence. A well populated country is its greatest security. This measure is a bold attempt to do something that probably should have been done earlier, but there were many reasons why it was not done. We must try to overcome them in the future.

Irrigation schemes that are contemplated must lead to considerable thought. While I do not say we should spend millions and millions on big irrigation schemes, I do not by any means condemn big schemes. I have in mind what has been done in irrigation in New South Wales, which has done a great deal more than Queensland. The Murrumbidgee scheme and Burrinjuck scheme in New South Wales and the Golden Valley scheme in Victoria, with its locks and weirs, are of considerable magnitude. The fact that water flows from these schemes without pumping leads one to believe that to be the best form of irrigation to adopt. On the other hand, a great deal of land is not level enough for this means of reticulation. Community pumping plants must be considered in conjunction with small schemes. The Dawson Valley scheme and the Nathan Gorge dam are something I would like to see revived.

Cotton is one thing for which we have a big market. Like wool, there is a great demand for it if we can produce it at a payable cost, and in all production costs are necessarily a vital factor? I believe that if suitable irrigation for cotton was developed

as was originally expected when the Nathan dam was put under way, cotton-growing would have increased 10 or probably 100 times compared with the crop that is grown to-day, and it would have been grown more profitably instead of unprofitably as in many cases now and in the past. It is a great pity the scheme was allowed to fall to the ground. I know that big mistakes were made, but he who does not make mistakes does nothing, and we have to learn from our mistakes.

**Mr. Macdonald:** You do not think cotton production will bulk largely in farm economy?

**Mr. COLLINS:** I think it will come into farming economy; it is a good crop in rotation with dairying. I am not well versed in cotton. If you can get a crop of 2,000 lb. of cotton to the acre, as they can with suitable irrigated land, it is a profitable crop.

**Mr. Macdonald:** Can it be harvested?

**Mr. COLLINS:** Yes, it can, because it is harvested as a crop all over the world.

**Mr. Macdonald:** Mechanically?

**Mr. COLLINS:** I thought the hon. member said "Can it be harvested?" I am sorry I do not understand Gaelic. (Laughter.) We have seen what irrigation has done recently to increase vegetable-growing. In the course of the year we expanded vegetable-growing out of sight, yet we have only touched the fringe of it. With irrigation applied to the pastoral industry, the dairying industry, and the cotton industry we could increase the output of our products to an extent that we probably never dreamed of in the past.

Land has to be resumed, and I am glad the Minister takes that fact into consideration. We have to put soldiers on the land and put civilians on the land, but it is no use putting anybody on the land unless he has the elements of success to start with—good land and sufficient rainfall or irrigation to insure him against a succession of bad seasons that has made the occupation of the land in Queensland a precarious occupation in the past, and in many cases a disastrous one.

**Mr. Macdonald:** Plus a guaranteed market?

**Mr. COLLINS:** That is all right if you can get it, but we still have to go on. It is no use sitting down and waiting for all these things to be perfect before we start. As I said before, I should like a guaranteed market, but doing nothing is a thing I like worse than anything else I know of, and I should prefer to go on and force the position. We are part of a great Empire, and we have the possibility of opening up all the Eastern markets when this war is over, and these may be a greater outlet for us than we have ever dreamed of.

**Mr. Maher:** Where the coolie gets 1d. a day.

**Mr. COLLINS:** What about the Atlantic Charter that gives every man reasonable and equal conditions?

**Mr. Maher:** You read the report of Mr. Forgan Smith's delegation to the East.

**Mr. COLLINS:** I know the hon. member thinks the East has possibilities as a market for Australia. I think it is a great potential market.

**Mr. Maher:** The coolie would not be able to buy.

**Mr. COLLINS:** We will put the coolie on the basic wage and then he will be able to buy. I think nearly all our products that have been exported could be used in this country if the people had an additional purchasing power. As it is to-day, only about 23 per cent. of our beef is exported, which shows we have a big potential market in this country; and the increase in population that will come as a result of better land settlement conditions, particularly irrigation, will tend to bring about an era of prosperity in this country such as we have never seen before.

**Mr. DART** (Wynnum) (5.27 p.m.): I think the crux of the Bill is the development and use of the land. We, as Queenslanders, want to see Queensland developed.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I think the hon. member has overlooked the fact that there is an amendment to the motion.

**Mr. DART:** I intended to deal with the amendment eventually. Queensland is a primary-producing State and consequently I support the amendment so ably moved by the hon. member for West Moreton. I am rather surprised at the Minister's not feeling inclined to accept it. I do not know why he procrastinates, because he will have to accept it eventually. The amendment will just about make the Bill what it should be, and consequently I support it. The Commonwealth Government may have formed a committee to investigate matters affecting the settlement of soldiers on the land, but up to the present no information has been supplied us as to what it is doing. That is another instance of procrastination. At present the Repatriation Department in Queensland is prepared to put men returning from the war into positions. Hundreds of men have already returned from overseas and other places, and they are being placed in private enterprise and some perhaps in public positions, but so far we have not heard that any have been placed on the land.

This Government should set an example as to what should be done for the returned men, and to-day they have an opportunity of including in the motion something of which I approve in many ways. The Bill, if it included the amendment, would be very helpful and then we as Queenslanders could claim that we had done something towards helping the returned men. If we set the example the Commonwealth Government will clamour to get in first. I say advisedly that the Minister should accept the amendment. We are here as a Committee of the Whole House, endeavouring to do something to help others and not as a committee of any particu-

lar party. This is a splendid scheme in the way of land settlement and we could not do better than endeavour to help the people on the land and those who want to settle on the land. There may be some provisions of the Bill that will be objectionable, but many of the proposals that have been mentioned appear to be quite good and perhaps the Minister will be able to eliminate the features with which we do not agree. That would be helpful to the man on the land. He should get consideration as well as the city man. We know there are members present who advocate the development of secondary industries. I, too, favour that move, but we must not forget that Queensland is a primary-producing State, and the man on the land should always be encouraged to produce more.

I have had some experience on the land. I do not stand up in my place and utter something merely because another member has said it. I have had practical experience on the land and know something about it. In my time I had a selection in Queensland that comprised some of the best lucerne land in the State, but where I grew 300 tons of lucerne very well, the same farm to-day is not producing 20 tons. That land is getting old and the crops must be changed.

Irrigation must come. It is long overdue. The Minister has told us of 4,000 applications for licences for water from creeks. Such licences are given while the seasons are good, but as soon as a drought overtakes the district the Government restrict the right to pump and thus deprive the settlers of the use of this water. The system of licensing for the use of water in streams is very good up to a point, but usually when extra water is most required the settler is deprived of it. That was done in the Brookfield district and the hon. gentleman cannot deny it. That was done where the hon. member for Toowong is to-day occupying land.

But the Government are going one better now by building weirs, which will ensure to the people a water supply during dry periods. Irrigation is important, but there is a danger that those people who are at the head of affairs will not be able to direct the settlers as they should. They may lack practical knowledge as to when or whether certain crops should be grown.

With our splendid climate many crops can be adapted to the soil. The other day I brought up a sample of Cromwell beans for the Leader of the Opposition to hand to the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock. I am hoping to get some return from this crop. I do not think any hon. member of this Parliament has heard of them before.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! The amendment deals with making adequate provision for the settling of returned soldiers.

**Mr. DART:** And I am referring to what those returned soldiers will be able to grow when they are settled on the land. They will be able to grow Cromwell beans. I might explain that the Cromwell bean is grown in America for canning purposes. There are many other avenues of agriculture that could

be exploited with success. We should not be worrying to-day because a few loads of cabbages are being dumped. Cabbages are not the only thing we can grow. Perhaps the land on which they were grown could be used more profitably for producing other crops. It must always be remembered, however, that if these soldiers are to be successful on the land they should be treated properly by the Government. There should be not only a maximum but also a minimum price for primary products. Minimum prices rule for both butter and sugar now, and that principle should be adopted with all primary products. Even though the Commonwealth Repatriation Commission seems to have made no provision for settling returned soldiers on the land, that is no reason why we should not give the lead and include it in this Bill. Our men are coming back now. I met one this morning who will be going on the land. We should be doing something now for these men. We should be preparing now, not waiting for three years before making provision for settling these men. The amendment moved by the hon. member for West Moreton and supported by the Leader of the Opposition should be included in the Bill in order that we might be able to do something for these returned soldiers. I shall deal with pegging prices when the Bill is before us. I heartily support the amendment and trust that questions of political propaganda will be brushed to one side so that this Parliament may get right down to business and give some consideration to the soldier who is doing such an excellent job for us at the moment. We have a certain responsibility to help the returned men, and if we are aided by the Commonwealth something really worth doing will be done. Even though we may have had failures in the past we should not lose heart. Past failures do not mean that we shall not be successful in the future. If this amendment is included in the Bill we must be successful.

**Mr. KERR (Oxley) (5.38 p.m.):** I heartily support the amendment suggested by the hon. member for West Moreton because I believe that not only this but every Government in the Commonwealth have an obligation to the discharged soldier. Provision should be made in these blue prints—actually they are nothing else at the moment—for some measure of security for these men after the service they have rendered on our behalf. I feel that I should be lacking in my duty if I did not express the opinion that not only should we give every consideration to the returned soldiers in post-war land settlement but we should give them every consideration in other phases of industry also. That should be the first consideration of any Government, State or Federal.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** I do not think that there is any disagreement on that point.

**Mr. KERR:** I have not seen anything concrete in a Bill or a post-war plan that will bear out the hon. gentleman's assertion, so I think it is high time something along those lines was included now.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** You appreciate the point that the repatriation of discharged soldiers is primarily a matter for the Commonwealth Government.

**Mr. KERR:** Yes, in co-operation with the State Governments. Hon. members opposite have frequently boasted that they show the way even to the entire world. They have led in many things for which they should receive some credit, but I should like to see something worth while done now for the returned men.

I should like to take this opportunity to compliment the Minister on the eloquent and efficient way in which he outlined the proposal contained in the Bill. His attitude inspires confidence and leads one to believe that he honestly means most of what he says. Therefore, I appeal to him to consider the amendment seriously. The Bill does not go far enough. The motion says that it is a Bill—

“to plan, co-ordinate, and provide for the development and use of the land and water resources of the State of Queensland in a manner best calculated to increase the population, settlement, and development of the State generally.”

I am in entire accord with that object; the wording of the motion has a very pleasant sound. It goes on to say—

“and to secure its civil defence and economic wellbeing, and for purposes incidental thereto.”

What I am concerned about is the fact that no consideration has been given to the question of stabilising prices.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! The hon. member is getting away from the amendment.

**Mr. KERR:** I should have liked to see two or three other features included in the Bill, such as the matter of handling surplus products. That might easily have been incorporated.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** It is hardly appropriate to do that in a land settlement Bill.

**Mr. KERR:** What is the use of producing stuff from the land if it is to be dumped into the river? There should be some means of conserving the produce to meet possible future shortages and the only way that I can conceive of doing it is by canning or by dehydration.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**Mr. TAYLOR (Enoggera) (5.43 p.m.):** I take it that the Secretary for Public Lands has introduced the Bill after consultation with the Federal Government concerning their proposals for the post-war settlement of returned soldiers and members of the defence forces generally on the land. If he has not been in consultation with the Federal Government then he can have no knowledge of what they intend to do in the repatriation and settlement of the returned soldiers and so the

Bill will be more or less a dead letter. However, I take it that the Minister knows what he is doing in this regard and thus the Bill will provide the necessary machinery to enable the Government to face the problems of the post-war years. The big question that should be taken into consideration is what will be the position when the scheme comes to fruition. By that I mean: can we co-ordinate and plan our production to prevent what is occurring even at the present time in that there are no markets or stipulated prices for certain primary products that appear to be in over-supply?

In the last post-war settlement scheme I was president of the Returned Soldiers' Labour League and on various occasions I had to visit soldier settlements on sustenance and repatriation matters. To my surprise, I found in practically the majority of cases that the authorities responsible for settling these soldiers on the land simply took land in the various centres, cut it up into blocks of a given size, erected a shack or three or four-roomed house on each block, and then said to the digger, "There you are, get in and do the job." In many cases, no provision was made for irrigation or water, or very little, indeed, and practically no provision was made for a recognised stable market. The only thing done in this State by the Labour Government, and it was a very good effort at the time, was the establishment of the State cannery in order to cope with the glut pineapple crop and turn it into a product which could be marketed at any time of the year. Unfortunately, that scheme fell by the wayside. The Beerburum scheme was adopted on the advice of a gentleman named Rose, by the Queensland War Council, but the land was not the type of country to inspire the settler with confidence. That was proved conclusively by practical experience, for as fast as a settler grew one pineapple he had to dig its value into the ground again in order to get production. In other words, what he got from 50 or 100 cases of pines sold to the State cannery, plus what he sold privately on the open market, went, after paying cost of production and cartage, to pay for fertiliser for the ensuing crop. Consequently, he had very little left and the time arrived when most of the diggers walked off Beerburum and left the Government with the baby. I hope that the word "planned" mentioned in this Bill has a real meaning and that the Government will see to it that they first plan to get good country; secondly, to see that the transport system to the various railheads and markets is such that they can be used in all weathers; and thirdly, to organise a system of distribution. Therein lies the secret of much of our trouble in post-war problems.

Then, again, there is the question of an adequate price for the products. All these things must receive consideration. It is useless considering settling anyone on the land unless these points are considered very closely by those responsible for handling this Bill and its administration. Take the case of a man who came from the land into one of the fighting services. A number of these men are back from the front and have been discharged.

Had opportunities been provided for them at the present moment—and this is the Federal Government's job—a start could at least have been made with these men, and they would have provided a nucleus of a settlement scheme.

It would have given the Government an opportunity of showing what they were prepared to do as the pioneers in solving this post-war settlement problem. I have in mind the case of man who was discharged from the forces and then got married. He was an excellent man with sheep, and had he had the opportunity to take up a piece of country for sheep-raising he would never have looked back.

I have had a fair amount of experience in land settlement because in my youth I travelled over the best areas of Australia, both pastoral and agricultural. For many years I worked as a shearer, and in the summer I worked on the farms harvesting crops. I know that in the west of New South Wales, way back in 1904, 1905, 1906, 1907, 1908, and 1909, there was a huge amount of country on the Darling and immediately east of Broken Hill that became available for settlement by reversion to the Crown as leases fell due. That area was cut into blocks ranging from 10,000 to 30,000 acres of grazing land, plus 640 acres for a homestead block for the house and horse paddock. The people who went on that country were not soldiers, and many of them had not had previous experience on the land, but the scheme was handled so efficiently that the settlers made good, and to-day are well established. There is ample opportunity under the Bill to initiate that kind of settlement. I know there are huge areas of land in Queensland that, if provided with proper water facilities, would not have much wrong with it. We could augment the rainfall by providing irrigation and reforestation, but those things are too far away for present necessities. What we require to do is to get down to tin-tacks and settle the boys who are here and those who will arrive not only to-day or to-morrow but for the next 12 or 18 months and thereafter.

Irrigation for the agriculturist will have to be developed in Queensland and developed very quickly to be of use in soldier settlement. A similar scheme to that in the Warringa Basin will not be possible here. I mentioned that work when I first came into this Parliament. As a youngster when I left school I went to work on that job as horse-boy for the contractor. I saw one of the main retaining walls built, a bank  $6\frac{1}{2}$  miles in length. I lived at Tatura and had to ride a bicycle 6 miles to work every morning. I saw that scheme put into operation. On my return from the last war I worked on a job alongside the Burrinjuck scheme, experting in a shearing shed within  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles of the Burrinjuck. In the wet weather when there was no shearing my job was to explore the Burrinjuck and find out all I could about it. I went down the Murrumbidgee many miles. During my shearing years I travelled in a line from Narrandera to Hay, on to Oxley and other stations. I know the country in which Griffith and Leeton are situated and

the same can be done in Queensland with careful planning. That work is an object lesson to those who take charge of the administration of this Bill.

The real basis of land settlement for the human being is that man must be able to live on the land. Unless he can do that he will become a drag on the taxpayers of the Commonwealth. Unfortunately that was the lot of many soldiers because of their failure to live on the land: not because in the main they contributed to their failure, but because of the contributing factor of the bad way in which the settlement schemes were administered. Those in charge of this Bill must take notice of those things. A similar state of affairs will be the result of this Bill unless careful consideration is given to the matters I mentioned.

**Mr. Luckins:** We should profit by our mistakes.

**Mr. TAYLOR:** There is this to be said, that if a man has the opportunity, particularly the younger returned soldier, of settling on a block of good land that will provide the necessaries of life, he will obtain from that land virtually three-quarters of his living requirements. The other quarter is obtained from the sale of his products.

Every country in the world commended for its land settlement has always given consideration to irrigation. Dr. Bradfield propounded a scheme of irrigation for this State which would be valuable to the pastoral areas.

The possibilities of this Bill are enormous and I suggest that something must be done to develop the lands in the far northern and north-western parts of the State. It is absurd to suggest that the future development of Australia is to be confined to the coastline. The development of this State and of the Commonwealth will have to be in the far northern and far north-western areas, and, that being so, it might be as well to give some consideration to the question what can be done with the huge volume of water that flows down the Leichhardt, the Thomson, the Flinders, the Burke, the Wills, the Cooper, the Diamantina, and others that flow from the Gulf south. Most of that water finds its way into Lake Eyre in South Australia and disappears into what is known as the subterranean basin. I do not know whether it is, but it might be possible to set up some form of colonisation on those rivers and to utilise irrigation for the purpose of growing foodstuffs. Something has to be done with that part of Australia. Australia must be populated in the far North. It is well known that wherever water is used to any extent in that country production has proved to be extremely good. I was greatly surprised to find on a trip that I made with the late Attorney-General that Cloncurry got its water supply for the whole town from wells sunk in the bed of the Cloncurry River. If the whole town can be supplied from small wells, then it is possible to do something on a larger scale for closer settlement in the country to which I refer. The man in charge of the pumping plant there grew some very fine vegetables, yet we say that Western people

must depend on the coast for those necessary vitamin-giving vegetables. The reason why production has not been accelerated in the West is that no-one has considered the question of water conservation and irrigation along the lines suggested by this Bill.

**Mr. Riordan:** They grow good citrus fruits there.

**Mr. TAYLOR:** Yes, some of the finest citrus fruits of Australia are grown at Charters Towers. We can do wonders with the land if we can apply water to it.

I think that the amendment has merit, but I do not believe that it is the intention of this Bill to shirk or evade the question of settling returned soldiers. It is certainly a serious omission that they are not provided for, because the primary purpose of the Bill is to settle returned soldiers on the land.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** That is subject to entirely different legislation.

**Mr. TAYLOR:** The Minister may say that.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** I will prove it, too.

**Mr. TAYLOR:** I know that the Minister can do that up to a point. If that is so, then the Bill is only an empty shell. However, it must give a fillip to land settlement and in that event it will bring the soldier settler within its jurisdiction. I knew that the Minister had something up his sleeve because he did not put his cards on the table when he introduced the Bill.

There will have to be a State scheme in co-operation with a Commonwealth scheme for land settlement in the post-war period. Perhaps this Bill is only a planning and co-ordinating one, but even then it is very necessary to consider some important phases of the subject when a Bill of this kind is brought down. It may have been better for the Minister and the party to give consideration to the inclusion of provisions that will have a bearing on the problems associated with the settlement of returned soldiers and their dependants in this country, unless, of course, he expects to see the returned soldiers settled in another way. That can occur, but I do not think the Minister expects it to happen. As Secretary for Public Lands, it is his duty to see that the land offered to the Commonwealth Government for the purpose of soldier settlement is the very best and that the very best irrigation schemes are submitted. If the Government have not even at this late hour of this session given consideration to the matter of settling returned soldiers, it is time that they did. Most of the cost will have to be borne by the Federal Government, but the State Government cannot escape their share of the responsibility by saying that it is not the business of the State. It is the business of the State up to a point. After the last war soldier-settlement schemes were considered by the Queensland War Council and State departments, which did most of the work while the Commonwealth

Government found the money. On this occasion the plan may be altered and so I emphasise that the time is ripe to give consideration to the subject.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. WALKER (Cooroora) (7.25 p.m.):** Being blessed with a fairly good memory, I can recall the form of land settlement that took place 35 years ago under the administration of the late Joshua Thomas Bell. At that time the Kidston Government had been in power for 12 months or two years and I was a supporter of it about nine months afterwards when a Coalition Government was formed. In those days the group settlement idea was conceived and a number of groups were settled in the Kin Kin and other districts. The men who comprised each group knew each other, and knew their weaknesses, too, but those who selected them chose practical men with a knowledge of agriculture and particularly a knowledge of dairying and farming. Hon. members now in Parliament who may have had a part in adopting that system can be proud of the fact that there was not a single failure in 50 to 60 groups established. To-day, the men who comprised those groups are prosperous, principally because they were able to select their own associates. Another factor that helped to make the scheme a success was that the introduction of paspalum grass had revolutionised the dairying industry, especially in the southern part of the State. Of course, mistakes in land settlement were made, even in those days. Surveyors were scarce and it was a costly matter to have a number of surveyors on hand.

To-day, the Government may have many, because they have not large scrub areas left to survey. Very few hon. members know that mistakes made by surveyors in those scrub areas are causing no end of trouble, even at the present time. One has only to get into touch with country local authorities to learn the trouble they have had in having resurveys made for road purposes. If one picks up a parish map, one will see surveys going from north to south and east to west. That type of survey wants knocking on the head. The first thing a surveyor should do is to survey the road that must go through the area. It may cost a little more to survey that road in such a way as to serve all the settlers, but that will not affect the surveyor. He must next survey the water, then decide on the area required as a living area, no matter how ugly it may look on paper. He should see to it, too, that to each area is allocated a given amount of agricultural land. We know that there is not much ridgy country as a rule close to river flats, but on the country at the back of the flats there are some high ridges and some forest land, the timber of which is handy for fencing. These are all matters that must be considered if we want successful settlement and a contented community. There is nothing so galling to a settler as to see his neighbour turning over 40 or 50 acres of good agricultural land while he is left with a bare minimum. That is one of the sorry phases of land settlement and a cause of the friction

that arises from time to time. The Minister knows that to be true. He knows also the errors that have been made with regard to roads, as he has received deputations on the subject. Quite recently I introduced a deputation on that subject to the Secretary for Public Works. A settler was cut off from road communication and compelled to travel an additional 4 miles to reach a certain town.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** Many of those difficulties arise from the private subdivision of estates.

**Mr. WALKER:** The areas I have referred to were virgin land. Surveyors have made similar mistakes to those I have mentioned in resurveying big areas. The Minister need not agree to all surveys that are submitted to him. I know that local authorities have a certain amount of power in the matter, as any subdivisional plan must be submitted to them for their approval; nevertheless, the Minister has power to veto any survey that is not in accord with requirements. If that is not one discretion the Minister can exercise, then I should like to know it.

The Minister made reference to soldier settlement that took place in the last 20 or 23 years. He also suggested that returned soldiers should be settled among other agriculturists to pave the way for their success. There is a certain amount of truth in what he says. Persons who have had no previous farming experience should be settled alongside a hard-headed farmer, who takes into consideration not only the seasons but the crop he can grow and the conditions under which it should be grown. That type of settlement is desirable even for the purpose of getting split palings, for the experienced man will put the soldier on the right track.

The Minister also referred to some of the areas on which returned soldiers had been settled. One or two decent areas were allocated for the purpose. I will give the Committee one. The then Secretary for Public Lands, the late Mr. Coyne, asked me if I had any objection from a personal point of view to a soldier settlement at Calico Creek. Of course, I had not. That to-day is one of the finest settlements in Queensland, because the settlers got the right class of land. We need have no fear of the success of soldier settlement if the right class of land is obtained.

Most of us have travelled over Queensland. In the far North there are certain areas of virgin land that are now growing pine, silky oak, and other fancy timbers. They are reserved for forestry purposes, because it is our duty not only to preserve some of the timber for posterity but also keep the green trees for other purposes, too—such as to induce rain.

I do not know where we can get areas similar to those we had a few years ago. It is only fair to say that the Minister will have great difficulty in getting good land. Hon. members representing rural areas know that what I say is true. You may be able to repurchase some estates for the purpose of settlement, but it is essential to give each

settler a living area, not too big or not too small, otherwise we shall have calamities similar to what took place after the Ryan Government took office. In order to lay a good foundation, a survey should be made of the whole of Queensland. I invite the Minister to take the House into his confidence in regard to the work that he has already done. If a survey has been made, let him tell every hon. member, so that they will know what they are talking about. Some of them have some savvy; some of them have that practical knowledge, which the Minister said was needed in soldier settlements in the past.

Another matter that requires consideration is the conservation of water or the putting down of bores. I understand the Minister has been doing a little of that on the Burnett River, but the House has not heard about it. I fluked it by talking to a certain man who told me certain things had taken place.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** We do not boast of what we are doing; we do it.

**Mr. WALKER:** Then all I can say is there has not been much "do it" up to the present time, because nothing has been done in that direction. I appeal to the Minister to take members on this side of the Committee into his confidence. Our object is the same. Nothing gives us greater pleasure, nor is there anything more pleasing than to see a group of settlers established with a happy outlook. We are all imbued with the same desires. I can understand men exploiting people on the racecourse, but it is not done in establishing industries. If we intend to use irrigation let us have a report made to see what the possibilities are. With the assistance of a water-conservation scheme a larger number of people could be settled over a given area. If a proper survey was carried out we should have a better idea of what the land would produce, and each settler should be given a sufficient area to enable him to earn a decent livelihood. That is what you call closer settlement. If hon. members, particularly Ministers, went on tour and saw the areas I referred to, they would be astounded. I refer to the Kin Kin and Mary Valley areas, and the Nanango district, where one can see prosperous people who are producing something we can sell. I am not talking about war conditions because some industries need subsidising to-day, although it is regrettable to think it is necessary. Ability to produce something for which we can find a market is a factor that must be taken into consideration. The question of a subsidy cannot go on for ever, and a subsidy cannot be applied to all industries, because if so we should go broke. There are many agricultural products that could be grown and sent to other parts of the world at a profit under normal conditions. If we can do that, then we are carrying out a good land settlement policy, and one that we will be blessed for in the future, as the late Mr. Bell is blessed by the people who are living on the 20 or 30 group settlements in my own area. Although the latter

are suffering from war conditions to-day, that is only a fleeting thing, and the time will come when the position will be remedied.

I suggest to the Minister that he take us into his confidence in this matter. We do not want any political advantage out of it; we want to see a successful plan of land settlement put into operation. I hope the hon. gentleman will give returned soldiers preference and that he will give them all the good land that he possibly can—land that is not in what I might term the uncivilised part of Queensland, but land out of which they will be able to create prosperity.

**Mr. LUCKINS (Maree) (7.41 pm.):** I have listened with a great deal of interest to the many hon. members who have listed the troubles that come from the land. I want to trace the history of land development in this State and to keep well within bounds I will remind the Committee that this is a Bill to plan, co-ordinate, and provide for the development and use of the land and water resources of the State of Queensland in a manner best calculated to increase the population—

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I draw the notice of the hon. member to the fact that an amendment has been moved.

**Mr. LUCKINS:** I will confine myself to the amendment, Mr. Brassington, as I shall have an opportunity to speak on the other matter at a later stage. The amendment moved by the hon. member for West Moreton should be the concern of all hon. members of this Committee. It seeks to give some small measure of justice to those men and women who have contributed so much to the safety of this State. Surely we cannot deny to them an opportunity to re-establish themselves by the co-ordinated efforts of the Government and their own energy on satisfactory conditions.

Attempts made previously have been doomed to failure because there was too much interference by the Government and legislation. That has reacted detrimentally to the interests of these men. I blame all Governments for the failures. Throughout history we find that interference by the Government in the working conditions of land settlement has always resulted in failure.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** You cannot justify that statement. If the Government did not give a lead there would be no settlement.

**Mr. LUCKINS:** A Government may legislate for the laying out of the land and provision of facilities, but when they interfere with the rightful working conditions of the people they court disaster. It is well known that throughout history the natural result of interference by people who are not qualified to give advice and help is failure. Facilities should be provided for returned soldiers by throwing open good land. I do not mean land that has been neglected or discarded by other owners, but good land. These men are entitled to the best land we can give them,

and I am prepared to advocate the resumption for closer settlement of areas now held, but as the Minister mentioned, not being put to their proper use.

**Mr. Devries:** Why confine it to returned soldiers?

**Mr. LUCKINS:** The returned soldiers are entitled to the greatest consideration at the hands of this country. If any hon. member in this Chamber wants to deny that they are entitled to the best consideration that any Government—

**Mr. Devries:** You do not believe what you are saying.

**Mr. LUCKINS:** I do believe what I am saying. We as public men and legislators have a duty to see that those who have given their best in the service of this country, and whose mates have laid down their lives for our protection, are well cared for and well protected and that their future is assured.

**Mr. Devries:** You said that after the last war, too.

**Mr. LUCKINS:** I am saying it in this Chamber. I represent a metropolitan constituency the electors of which do not require any land settlement because they are naturally industrialists in the city, but I am willing to extend to men in other districts of Queensland the protection and security to which they are entitled.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** To assist the soldiers, do you think that land values should be pegged?

**Mr. LUCKINS:** Unfortunately, land values do not come within this Bill and I am amazed that my learned friend, for whom I have had great admiration up to the present, should so endeavour to delude me by the pointed question he asked me so determinedly as even to suggest that the pegging of land values has something to do with it. The issue is clear-cut, reasonable, and just, and it is: are we public men prepared to acknowledge that the returned soldier is entitled to the best we can give him? The obligation lies on us to give him that right, that privilege, and that concession to the greatest extent possible. I would go a little further and say we wish to be able to say to these men who desire to go on the land, "The Government offer you the best facilities in the district, including financial assistance with actual cash up to £500, and to teach those of you who are not already versed in the arts and sciences of farming." Those are the facilities that should be offered by this Government—a gift of cash up to £400 or £500 and a period of six or eight months' training to enable them eventually to become a wonderful asset to the State. The cost would be returned in the years to come with compound interest.

I commend the amendment to the earnest consideration of all hon. members. It requires no explanation by me or any other hon. member. We all know that it is the duty of this Parliament to give these men the best of care,

attention, and facilities, and a welcome. It is not expecting too much to ask the Government to make the people's land available to these soldiers under such conditions as will give them comparative security in the years to come.

**Mr. MOORHOUSE (Windsor) (7.46 p.m.):** I feel that this Bill has been introduced at the behest of the Commonwealth Government. It must have been, because this State has given to the Commonwealth Government powers over employment and unemployment.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** We have not transferred the powers of land settlement to them yet.

**Mr. MOORHOUSE:** We have given them power over employment and unemployment, and I give Dr. Evatt credit for being able to put such an interpretation on "employment and unemployment" as to make it cover this Bill quite easily. He is a very smart man, otherwise he would not be where he is, and that is fortunate for Australia.

No plan would be complete unless it considered the returned soldiers. This Bill cannot be complete because it is going to form part of a Commonwealth-wide scheme for rehabilitation. That must be obvious to everybody, and I only wish that the Minister would set our minds at rest by telling us all he knows about the Bill, and he can do that if he wishes. He knows exactly what is behind the Bill. He knows also that the returned soldiers will have to be catered for. I desire to emphasise that I do not want to see schemes for the settlement of returned soldiers like those introduced after the last war, and I am sure that the Minister and other hon. members agree with me. What I do want to see is preference given to returned soldiers in the type of land offered for settlement. Those soldiers who will come back here and who may desire to go on the land actually have bought that land by the sacrifices they have made in defending the country. If we had no militia, if we had no A.I.F., Australia would be overrun by the Japanese. If it were not for those defenders of Australia—and, in that term, I include the navy and the air force—there would be no White Australia to-day. The country could well give this land free of cost to those men. Why should they have to pay for it when they have already paid for it in blood and sacrifice? I want to see a scheme that is big enough to rehabilitate everybody who will need it, and the Commonwealth Government will see to it that it is wide enough for the rehabilitation of the 2,000,000 people who will need it. Those people are not only returned members of the fighting forces but also those who are engaged in the munitions and other industries. What is the good of a scheme of settlement if the best land is going to lie idle? I am pleased to see that the Government propose to take unto themselves power to resume and use for settlement land that is not now being used by its present owners.

So far as the surveys of land are concerned, I hope that this Bill gives the Minister power to refuse to allow a survey to be approved and

land to be sold under it unless it complies with all requirements so far as roads, water, and other facilities are concerned. Before any estate can be subdivided and sold in Brisbane the survey must be approved by the Brisbane City Council.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** Other local authorities have similar power.

**Mr. MOORHOUSE:** I am referring to large areas and not just a couple of acres, and I should like to know if the Bill gives the Minister the power to demand that these surveys must be subject to his approval. Local authorities can be influenced by certain people. It may be necessary in making the surveys that proper access, entrances, and bridges should be provided, and if the surveys are to be subject to approval by the Minister he can see to it that they are provided by the vendors of the land who usually make a huge profit out of a resurvey. If that provision is not in the Bill I shall be very disappointed. In private surveys of big areas the Minister should be empowered to see that in a township area adequate provision is made for the amenities usually available in the bigger towns. That will be in the interests of the womenfolk in particular, and they may not have any objection to going to the country in those circumstances. Otherwise, many a man may be inclined to go on the land while his wife may not be in favour of leaving the city. That is why I suggest that when these surveys are made they must be submitted to the Minister for his approval so that he can direct that the ordinary amenities be provided. I hope the Minister will seriously consider embodying my suggestion in the Bill if it is not already there.

**Mr. BRAND (Isis) (7.54 p.m.):** No legislation dealing with land settlement would be complete unless it included adequate and special provisions dealing with the settlement of returned soldiers in the post-war years. It is possible for Parliament to make that determination now. We should not repeat the tragic occurrences of the last war in connection with soldier settlement. Whatever may be the Minister's reason for not accepting the amendment—

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** Purely window-dressing.

**Mr. BRAND:** Hon. members have every reason to be suspicious of a high-sounding motion seeking the approval of the Committee for the introduction of the Bill, especially when we find that it makes no adequate provision and certainly no adequate special provision for the men who are fighting for this country.

Not so long ago a Bill was passed through this Parliament that endeavoured to emasculate the Land Court, which is the protection of the men on the land. We are told that under this Bill there is to be the right of an appeal to the Land Court, but the Land Court has not the right to inform its mind in a way that it may think just. A former Secretary for Public Lands in a Labour Government, the late Hon. P. Pease, regarded land

settlement as of paramount importance in this country. He believed that the conditions that were extended to the workers of this country should at least be extended in the courts of justice to land settlement and he made provision accordingly. As a matter of fact, he took a set of conditions *holus bolus* from the Industrial Court and included them in the Land Act for the direction of the Land Court.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** Where did you get that brief?

**Mr. BRAND:** I made the brief myself.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** It is too obvious.

**Mr. BRAND:** Just imagine the Minister attempting to be a mere pocket dictator! Fancy the Minister saying, "Who prepared that brief?"

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**Mr. BRAND:** I should expect that from anyone—

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I remind the hon. member that there is a specific amendment before the Committee.

**Mr. BRAND:** Yes, Mr. Brassington, I know that, and I am endeavouring very hard to speak to it. We are vitally concerned about any land settlement Bill. We are concerned whether there is to be the right of appeal to the Land Court, as we are told by the Minister, where the determination of values is concerned; and whether that Land Court will have the freedom of action that has been granted to the Industrial Court for the protection of the workers. Unfortunately, we are suspicious that within this Bill there is another attack upon the Land Court, a court that is regarded by the primary producers as their court of justice, the court that will see that they receive fair play. Naturally, when we see the Bill we shall know just where the nigger in the woodpile is.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** If he is as big as you, we shall have no difficulty in seeing him.

**Mr. BRAND:** When the Minister is finished, I will proceed.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**Mr. BRAND:** So far as we can see, this Bill portends an endeavour to set up quite a different set of conditions of land settlement from what we have had in the past. At the outset I want to admit quite clearly that there should be some revision of the law by which land will be put to its best use, that those who own land shall be required to put it to its proper use. I remind the Minister that land settlement in Queensland has been the most important duty of the Government. It plays the greatest part in the whole of our economic structure. Land settlement in this State has been a fine job. We heard the Premier not many hours ago

speaking of the great progress made in our primary industries because of land settlement and we have it on record that settlement of land has been a wonderful achievement. I want to remind the Minister, through you, Mr. Brassington, that land settlement in this country has been built up on individual enterprise. We have attempted in the years gone by to put into practice the idea of socialised land settlement. The Government of the day set aside some magnificent land for communal settlement. We know that where those settlements were set up, some of the finest land is to be found. What was the result? Complete failures. Not one of those settlements survived. They all failed as land settlements, and such settlements will fail if we lose the confidence of the men who go on the land.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** What was the cause of the failure?

**Mr. BRAND:** The cause of the failure was simply that the men who were put together on the land could not agree. Individual enterprise has shown that it can develop land where the communal system cannot. I am wondering whether the Minister, with his far-reaching socialistic ideas, is proposing under the set-up in this Bill to try to bring back to this land socialised land settlement. We at least have had this admission from him this afternoon: that it is proposed to try to control the prices that will be paid for private lands. We know from what he has stated that provision is being made for setting up a bureau that will include members versed in agriculture, land laws, forestry, and water supply, with a chairman who understands everything about land.

The province of this bureau will be to survey all parts of Queensland so that it can make recommendations to the Government of the day—and it is just as well that we know it is going to be a new Government—as to the best areas for settlement in Queensland, whether it is land owned by the Crown or land owned by private persons. I hope the basis of the bureau will be wide and that the wisest men who can be got will be appointed, because they are not going to have any easy job. We cannot forget that, after all, the Department of Public Lands has not done too badly in Queensland. I am not going to subscribe to the belief that the Department of Public Lands has failed completely in its land-settlement policy in this State—no-one could reasonably suggest it has, but I do believe that if it were not for the Government's policy sometimes we might receive a better deal from the officers of the Department of Public Lands that would help successful settlement of the land in Queensland.

There is an attempt to try to get control of the sale of lands of private people where it has been found necessary to declare a developmental area. Of course, it is easy for the Minister in charge of the department to declare such an area whenever there is a desire by the Government or the Minister to try to get control of such land. The Minister

gave us a good reason. He said that in the sugar industry such a control existed, that the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board controlled the sale of cane lands.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** Oh, no.

**Mr. BRAND:** I said control.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** The sale of land; oh, no.

**Mr. BRAND:** I said "control," and that control is exercised because it has power to refuse to agree to the transfer of the cane assignment unless it approves of the price to be paid for the land. The Minister cannot say that has been altogether too successful.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** Why not?

**Mr. BRAND:** No-one can say it has been too successful. To my knowledge it has meant that some of the grand old pioneers who built up the industry have not got the prices to which they felt they were justly entitled.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** That is pure bunkum.

**Mr. BRAND:** The Minister can have his own opinion. I am entitled to mine, and I am going to express it and he is not going to stop me. Talk about bunkum does not worry me in the slightest. All I say is that it cannot be said that the system I have referred to is too successful; and in the sugar industry there is a division of opinion as to its success or otherwise.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** The speculators want to control.

**Mr. BRAND:** I have never subscribed—and I challenge the Minister to prove that I have—to the rights of speculators in any industry. We have been fighting it on this side of the Chamber all the session and we have not got very far. We have been fighting against speculators in connection with those things that they grow on the land, and we cannot get action taken by the Government against speculators. We are not worrying about speculators; we are worrying about those things that will tend towards successful land settlement. I warn the Minister again that he must be careful that he does not make a mistake in regard to our industrial structure. I do not believe there is anything that would injure the land settlement of this State more than for the people on the land to lose confidence in the justice of land settlement generally. Whatever we do we must be just. I hope the Minister is going to be just in anything he brings forward to put on the statute-book affecting the Land Act or the land settlement generally.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** You have never known it otherwise.

**Mr. BRAND:** I cannot say that the Minister has altogether been just to the land-owners of this State or the settlers of this State in the action he took quite recently in trying to do something to the Land Court that everybody in Queensland knows was the result

of an individual pique he had against the personnel—

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** You got a good cash-in that time.

**Mr. BRAND:** I do not know.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**Mr. BRAND:** I do not intend to proceed on those lines if I am out of order, but the Minister has to appreciate the fact that the people must be inspired with confidence. I know investigations have been made in respect of water conservation and irrigation that will be of great value to the lands of Queensland. The Minister himself has investigated certain proposals and he has been concerned about what will happen to the added value that such a scheme would create and how the State would come in on that. Any value added to the land as the result of any irrigation scheme will remain with the State. It may belong to the individual, but individuals are the State and the value is still with the State. Without the individual there would be no State. It is immaterial what an individual may hold; in the ultimate it belongs to the State. Who to-day can say that all our earnings and all the value of ownership is not represented in the State, particularly in this time of war when the Commonwealth Government are calling upon the values in this country for the continued prosecution of the war? We know perfectly well that whatever those values may be they at least stand to the credit of the State, and any enhanced value that may result from an irrigation scheme, even though an individual may claim it, is for the betterment of the State. I hope the Minister in his wisdom will be big in his approach to this the biggest problem we have to face and that he will not be niggardly and try to claim for the State all that may come to it to the detriment of the producer—the man on the land.

**Mr. Macdonald:** A capital levy.

**Mr. BRAND:** That is an old plank of the platform of the Labour Party. They are trying to get it now in a little way. I am very suspicious that the high-sounding name given to this Bill is there to conceal something.

**Mr. Luckins:** They have clouded the issue.

**Mr. BRAND:** Before the Bill reaches another stage I want to know that there is a protection against those things that we fear may be in it to the detriment of land settlement.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** It is quite a simple title: Land and Water Resources Development Bill.

**Mr. BRAND:** Although a big title was given to it in the first place I did hear that it had been whittled down somewhat. Possibly it is now a small title.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** Where did you hear that?

**Mr. BRAND:** Apparently, the hon. gentleman knows.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** I am very interested.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**Mr. BRAND:** I gave the hon. gentleman greater credit. This is a very serious matter. Under this Bill there is an attempt to depart from established principles, those laid down throughout the years, which have proved to be very successful. We are now going on along to another order which I believe is called Socialism but we may find that people who are the backbone of the country and who are producing the foodstuffs from the land on which they live with a view to ownership will not have sufficient confidence to continue on the land. We must be very careful indeed in the attitude we adopt towards the man on the land to-day, with all the disturbances and the difficulties that confront him. He is doing magnificent work. The old men and women have returned to the land to help weather the storm whilst their young are fighting for our freedom. They are to-day doing a wonderful job and doing it by individual effort. Individual effort has been the basis on which the British Empire has been founded and we cannot depart from it lightly. It may be that the Minister's idea of a socialised land-settlement policy is the better, but I have my doubts. I do not think that those who live in the backblocks of this country will agree with it unless there is some recognition of their ownership to their land and the right when the time comes for them to retire to get what they can for their land to enable them to live thereafter in reasonable comfort.

It is a fact that men and women who live on the land all their lives feel, when they become too old to carry on the work, that they would like to retire to more congenial surroundings, either in the city or at the seaside, where they may enjoy the evening of their days in peace and contentment. Whatever value might have accrued to their land after they have spent a lifetime in the bush denying themselves all the comforts of life, is only their right, and who is to say that they should not obtain the fullest amount they can when they sell that land? It is impossible to express in pounds, shillings, and pence the value of the hard slugging of a lifetime on the land. The Minister knows that. He knows that a good deal of hard work is put into the land by the people, and for this they get no return, and when land-valuing schemes are framed this fact is never taken into consideration.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** That is why I am so keen on improving their conditions.

**Mr. BRAND:** The Minister gave no indication that he was willing to give these people the value of all the toil they have put into developing their land, or that that is to be considered in any land-valuing system. All

I have heard from the Minister is that this land-valuing system is the forerunner of a land-settlement scheme as proposed by him to-day. He is not going to give the man on the land any consideration for all this hard toil. Before we depart from a system that has been so successful—and it has been more successful in this than in any other State—we should be very careful to lay down a plan on sound and safe lines. We should see to it that the new order that is proposed to-day will be such as will retain that confidence that men and women have had in the land over the years, the confidence that is essential if we are to prosper. These people have been doing a good job on the land and I urge the Minister to see to it that we keep them there.

Question—That the words proposed to be added (Mr. Maher's amendment) be so added—put; and the Committee divided—

## AYES, 15.

Mr. Brand	Mr. Nicklin
" Dart	" Plunkett
" Edwards	" Walker
" Kerr	" Yeates
" Macdonald	
" Mahe	<i>Tellers:</i>
" Marriott	" Luckins
" Moorhouse	" Taylor
" Müller	

## NOES, 25.

Mr. Brown	Mr. Mann
" Bruce	" Moore
" Collins	" Power
" Copley	" Riordan
" Dunstan	" Slessar
" Farrell	" Smith
" Foley	" Turner
" Gair	" Walsh
" Gledson	" Williams
" Graham	
" Healy	<i>Tellers:</i>
" Jones	" Clark
" Keyatta	" Devries
" Larcombe	

## PAIR.

AYE.	NO.
Mr. Clayton	Mr. Cooper

Resolved in the negative.

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS**

(Hon. E. J. Walsh, Mirani) (8.23 p.m.): Hon. members opposite appear to have had a pretty wide discussion on the motion, and that was natural if they are interested in rural areas. I suppose they feel that they have covered the 670,000 square miles of Queensland and have made a survey of the entire State in an attempt to advise the Government as to how they should act in the matter of future development.

The hon. member for Cooroora raised the question of the subdivision of areas and the allocation of roads, which of course is a very important matter in a plan for settlement. I know from my own experience as a member of a local authority the great difficulties that confronted the councils as the result of some of the surveys, made many years ago. Up on the hill-tops it is quite impracticable to construct roads. The hon. member for Cooroora was right when he said that in those early days the surveyors were paid by contract, the price varying according to the difficulty of the terrain over which they operated. In any plan this

Government have undertaken for the purpose of land settlement they have provided that roads shall be properly laid out and constructed before the land was opened for settlement and that policy is in marked contrast with the policy laid down in the early years mentioned by the hon. member for Cooroora. The policy of providing means of access before land is made available for settlement has been observed by this Government for the past 10 years at least. Ministers for Lands from the other States in Governments opposed to Labour were amazed on coming here to learn the development that has taken place in Queensland as a result of the Public Estates Improvement Works.

At 8.26 p.m.,

Mr. DUNSTAN (Gympie) relieved the Chairman in the chair.

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:**

The hon. member for Cooroora is conversant with that aspect of our policy. He suggested that I might take hon. members into my confidence and relate to them just what has been done. I do not believe in wasting the time of Parliament in saying too much about what we are doing but I do like to have the satisfaction of knowing that at least we are doing something worth while. However, I should like to tell hon. members that having anticipated the passing of this legislation before this session concludes, I already have a committee investigating a plan to be proceeded with for this year and that the same committee is expected to advise me as Minister so that I may submit to the Government a plan for the next five years.

It will be the function of this committee not to submit a plan for one year, two years, or three years but for 10 years if possible, so that the development of the land may be planned some time ahead. The committee is composed of men well versed in these matters. With this committee is associated the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works, Mr. Kemp, who is taking a personal interest in this scheme. He is a man who has, particularly since the war started, had the opportunity of traversing a tremendous part of the State and been able to see areas that could be opened up successfully. I am sure that hon. members, despite their travels, have not been able to examine the State as Mr. Kemp has done. Apart from that, the Surveyor-General's Department, with all the difficulties confronting it since the war started, the Pacific war in particular, has been able to prepare for me a map showing the various areas that might be examined with a view to post-war settlement. All these things are under way and the necessary approach has been made to something worth while in future settlement.

I have already told hon. members that in the course of the next day or so they will have in their hands the proposals we have submitted to the Commonwealth Government that concern their electorates. The hon. member for West Moreton has very consistently been on my doorstep in connection with projects in his area. When he gets his list he will notice that the projects we have under consideration in his electorate have been

marked as A priorities. If I listened to some remarks from hon. members opposite, probably I should not proceed with the plan as I have it in view. I might, for instance, be tempted to curtail some of the plan if I took the remarks of the hon. member for Isis seriously. He does not appear to think that there is anything necessary to be done in this regard at all.

**Mr. Brand:** You did not listen to me.

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:**

I listened to the hon. member very carefully, and I shall have something to say on his remarks before I sit down. The hon. member for Maree mentioned the interference of private interests in the development of land. He should know, as an ex-member of a local authority in this city, particularly, that the Government in various legislative enactments have handed over to local authorities very wide powers in respect of the subdivision and the control of land in their areas. Why people should get it into their heads that because a man has a freehold title that necessarily entitles him to use that land in a way he may desire, even though it conflicts with the interests of the community I do not know. For years local authorities have prohibited within city areas advertising on hoardings in certain localities. That, in itself, is a restriction of the right of the freeholder. He may get a little more income by exhibiting an advertisement on a hoarding erected on his property than if he is prevented from erecting it, but the local authority steps in and, in the community's interest, says that he is not entitled to do so; consequently, he is deprived of a little extra income. In recent years, too, since petrol bowsers have been erected, the local authorities have defined where they shall be placed. These instances show that it has been recognised by the governing bodies that individuals can use land only so far as that use is consistent with public interests. As the Attorney-General reminds me, too, factories are prohibited within certain localities. All these prohibitions are necessary. It is just as desirable that we, as a Government, should at this stage take some definite action to see that land is not merely made available for speculative purposes. If we have, as I have said, delegated to local authorities the power to say how land shall be subdivided for residential purposes, how much more necessary is it for the Government to take to themselves power to say how land shall be subdivided for the development of rural industries?

Hon. members have stressed the value of land settlement in our financial and economic structure. That is true. If you get the production figures you will find that Queensland production, despite all the sneers of hon. members opposite about the effect of Labour's policy on land settlement, is very much more per head of population than that of any other State in Australia. And, of course, that could be substantially improved if we develop this plan of co-ordinating the use of water resources with land settlement.

The member for Isis said that this Bill was cut down. He would suggest that he got some

information in regard to the Bill as it was originally drafted. I am surprised to learn that anybody should convey to the member for Isis that the Bill has in any way been reconstructed—and he may at least indicate to me where he got this information.

**Mr. Brand:** I did not say anything of the sort.

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:**

I know that in my experience as a Minister—and you would have had the same experience, Mr. Dunstan, when you were Secretary for Public Lands some years ago—that in the preparation of a Bill there are many drafts and it has to be revised, viewed, and revised again. It may be that you have six or seven drafts. Is the hon. member suggesting the final draft of this Bill was in any way cut down?

**Mr. Brand:** No.

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:**

I am pleased to have the hon. member's assurance that that is not so.

**Mr. Edwards:** You are a bit touchy on that.

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:**

I am pretty quick on the uptake, as the hon. member for Nanango knows, and I do not lose any opportunity of extracting information I think might be of value to myself and the Government.

The member for Isis raised the question of the control of land values. I emphasise that this is a very important phase of any land-settlement policy in this State. If we have neglected it in the past there is no reason why we should continue such a policy as will allow land values to be transferred from one person to another. Simply because a man has a lease from the Crown on very easy terms and low rental is no reason why we should allow him to transfer the land to somebody else at a very high value and thereby interfere with the successful development of the land. It must be remembered that the community at large are the people who in the final analysis are concerned in land values. Hon. members will come along and bleat about the difficulties of the man on the land, but it is no good trying to shed crocodile tears on my shoulders because I have had all those experiences—and they do not do you any harm either. At the same time, hon. members overlook the fact that in assessing the difficulties of the man on the land the consumer must play a very important part in any contribution that might have to be made as far as the prices of products are concerned. As the member for Isis knows, people come along and submit costs of production. They say, "This is what I paid for the property, this is the interest charge on it," and so on, and they expect these things to be taken into consideration in fixing the price of bread, meat, butter, sugar, and all the other things the consumer has to buy. It is time we took a stand to see to it these values were controlled in such a way that the consumer is not exploited and the land

man has a reasonable chance of making a success, and not be the medium of earning an income that will merely pay interest and redemption on his property over a number of years.

**Mr. Brand:** Do you think you could get the value of the labour you put into your farm if you sold it?

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:**

The hon. member for Isis, I am sure, gets the full value out of his. I say this: over the period I may have been farming I have been in a much happier position than if I had to face all the difficulties and insecurities and so on of the man who is wondering where his next job is to come from. At least I have been able to live on the land and make a profit, and at the end of the term when I am not able to carry on I can say that I have an asset, I have so much that I have built up, which the average working man cannot have.

**Mr. Brand:** Answer my question.

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:**

I am telling the hon. member now. Generally speaking, the land men do not accept the view of the hon. member for Isis; I know that only too well. One has only to look at this side and see the number of representatives in a Labour Government who represent rural constituencies and farming communities. In my own locality I have over 2,000 farmers, as the hon. member for Isis knows, who are an important factor at voting time.

I want to refer to the control that is exercised as far as the sugar lands are concerned. In this Bill we are making specific legislative provision that will ensure that we shall have some authority to fix the maximum price at which land shall be sold in any proclaimed developmental area. In the sugar industry, as the hon. member for Isis knows, it has been purely administrative. There is no legislative provision but there is power under the Act.

**Mr. Brand:** Yes, there is.

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:**

Excuse me—there is power in the Act, which says that the Central Cane Prices Board shall have the authority to determine the terms and conditions on which an assignment shall be transferred. If one wants to forgo one's cane assignment on the land the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board has no authority whatever over the sale of one's property. A man can do what he likes with it, but if he wants to transfer the assignment on that land—that assignment has been brought about by the Crown, it must not be forgotten and at no premium at all to the farmer—it is a different matter. That is a definite protection to those engaged in the industry. There has been that control, and I know and the hon. member for Isis knows that over the years it has operated in the interests of the growers themselves and the consuming public. I know of the organisation with which the hon. member is associated: big millers who come down, all waxing fat on the interest they have earned over the years. I

have been at their conferences at which they have persistently year after year moved that this control be done away with. One gets them as commission agents and various other types who themselves have never worked their cane farms. They have numerous interests and made large commissions on sales of cane farms before the control was brought in. So far as future land settlement is concerned, we must see to it that that does not happen in Queensland. I hope I shall live to see the day when areas will be resumed and a design laid out for future settlement in such a way that there will be a large body of prosperous farmers and land men generally throughout the State of Queensland.

Motion (Mr. Walsh) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING.

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

COAL AND OIL SHALE MINE WORKERS (PENSIONS) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

**The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. V. C. Gair, South Brisbane)** (8.44 p.m.): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

I feel that there is little or no necessity for me to say very much about the principles of the Bill. I elaborated on them at the introductory stage of the Bill and a very full discussion ensued. As the Bill has been circulated since that stage, no doubt many erroneous ideas as to the effect of the Bill have been eliminated from the minds of certain hon. members opposite.

The Bill contains but two principles. The first is to discontinue the deduction of war pensions from the amount payable as miner's pension. It was evident from the discussion that took place on the initiation of the Bill that hon. members opposite experienced difficulty in finding just where the provision to deduct war pensions from miners' pensions existed in the principal Act. The hon. member for West Moreton said—

“If the Minister can show that the present Act debars a soldier from receiving a miner's pension and war pension as well, then I am open to be convinced on the point.”

He went on to say—

“I feel that the Minister is trying to create the impression that he is giving to the miners something to which they are not entitled.”

There we have clear evidence that the hon. member was not acquainted with the provision in the principal Act for the deduction of war pensions from the miners' pensions in computing what pension should be paid under the Act. As the Bill has been circulated since then, no doubt the hon. member has corrected the erroneous idea that he had at

that time and perhaps he will make the amende honorable in the course of this discussion and at least say that we are correcting the position and that when the Bill is passed we shall disregard war pensions in computing miners' pensions. The Government believe that war pensions should be considered more as gratuities than as income and for that reason we provide that they shall be disregarded.

The second and only remaining principle is that which provides for the refund of the total contributions made by female contributors when they leave the industry to be married. I understand that between 12 and 15 would be the total number of females covered by this Act. Some of that number are desirous of continuing their contributions, whilst others feel that it is unfair that they should contribute and in the event of their leaving the industry to be married receive no benefit.

The matter was submitted to me and I conferred with my colleague and friend, the Attorney-General, who is chairman of the tribunal. We discussed it from many angles. First it occurred to us that it might be of benefit to the female employees if we exempted them entirely from the provisions of the Act. We found, however, that some were desirous of contributing and, therefore, we were disinclined to take from them the right of being contributors to the fund.

Then it occurred to us that the position might be covered if we amended the Act to provide for optional contributions for these female employees. This difficulty, however, presented itself that when a young lady entered the mining industry she might be disinclined at that age to contribute to the scheme, but after many years in the industry and after passing the age when the chances of marriage became less she might want to contribute, and in such a case it would be difficult for us to debar her from contributing.

The only alternative was to provide for a refund in full of the contributions to the female employees who leave the industry to be married. On the initiatory stage I referred to the clause as a concessional one.

**Mr. Macdonald:** Not many of them will miss the marriage market.

**The SECRETARY FOR MINES:** I hope not, for the sake of the country as well as their own; I hope they will all be happily and successfully married. In such an event the tribunal will have the greatest pleasure in refunding their contributions in full.

I do not think I have any need to say any more. I am confident the Bill will receive the support of the House.

**Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumba) (8.52 p.m.):** The Opposition endorse both the principles in the Bill. I do not suppose that there are a great number of female workers in the industry but they should not be deprived of the right to receive their contributions in full on leaving to be married. Because

of the small number involved the cost on the fund will not be very great. When they leave the industry they will not be a further charge on the fund and it is only right that the contributions should be refunded.

A war pension should certainly not be computed in arriving at the pension to be paid under this scheme and I cannot understand how the provision of the Act to that effect was missed when it was approved by this Parliament. After all, a war pension is earned by a man who has suffered an injury in war service and it should not be deducted from a pension under this scheme. Payments made by way of invalid, old-age and widows' pensions, child endowment, State children allowance, and the earning capacity of a pensioner who may be incapacitated by injury in a mine, are rightly deducted from the amount of pension to be paid under this scheme, but a war pension is in a different class and should not be deducted.

The pension fund is in a particularly healthy state. During the last financial year the income amounted to £77,627 and the expenditure to £29,228. Up to 30 June last the balance in the fund, after providing £18,000 for reserve, was £53,965. That is a very healthy position. There is no doubt that the scheme got off to a healthy start and is now sufficiently sound financially to withstand any financial shock to which it may be subject in the future. I commend the principles of the Bill and support its second reading.

Motion (Mr. Gair) agreed to.

#### COMMITTEE.

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Brassington, Fortitude Valley, in the chair).

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

Bill reported, without amendment.

#### THIRD READING.

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

#### STATE ADVANCES ACTS AND OTHER ACTS (RATE OF INTEREST) BILL.

#### SECOND READING.

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. A. Bruce, The Tableland) (9 p.m.):** I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

I was so astounded when the Leader of the Opposition accused the Government of using the introduction of this Bill for electioneering purposes and said that its purposes could have been achieved by regulation that I sought certain information from the officers of the Government. The Leader of the Opposition not only stated that the Bill was not necessary, but that the time of Parliament should not be wasted as it was being wasted merely as electioneering propaganda. I have already explained fully why the introduction of the Bill was necessary. The amusing fact presents itself that while we had

numerous complaints against the practice of governing by Order in Council or by regulation the Opposition have now gone into reverse gear. Their leader complains that Parliament should not have had an opportunity to discuss the principles of the Bill, because its object could have been achieved by Order in Council. This is a complete somersault of the Opposition's attitude over many years. In fact, their leader has persistently stated that they objected to the issue of Orders in Council. After years of tirades against government by regulation and bureaucratic government he now works himself into a passion, because we give Parliament an opportunity of discussing an important subject, a reduction in the rate of interest on loans for the erection of workers' dwellings and workers' homes. I remember when the ex-Premier, the Hon. W. Forgan Smith, introduced the Bureau of Industry Act in 1935, which sought to ratify certain Orders in Council. The then Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Moore, pointed out there was no necessity for its introduction, but said that he appreciated the action of the Government in introducing it as it was infinitely better that Parliament should have a say in the borrowing of large sums of money than that it should be done by the Governor in Council. The then Premier frankly admitted that the Leader of the Opposition was right and that the Government and the bureau had complete authority to do all that was sought without the introduction of the Bill. However, the House welcomed the introduction of the Bill as it gave hon. members full information as to the financing of the Story Bridge, and the opportunity to discuss it. There was an instance where a Bill was introduced although there was no legal necessity to do so, and the action of the Government was appreciated by the Opposition. Here there is a legal necessity for the Bill—although the Leader of the Opposition does not agree—but it meets with a hostile reception from members opposite, because it gives Parliament, which constitutionally is the place where questions of State finance are determined, full opportunity to discuss financial proposals.

Apart from the question whether a Bill is necessary, it seems a peculiar attitude on the part of the Leader of the Opposition to object to Parliament's discussing matters of finance. Surely he forgets his elementary lessons in constitutional law and the right of Parliament to control State finance. Surely, in his desire to scream "Political propaganda," he forgets that the right of Parliament to control the finances of the State was won after years of bitter constitutional struggles in the Mother of Parliaments, in the course of which one king at least lost his head. Any schoolboy would tell him that Queensland, like the rest of the Dominions, follows the practice of the Imperial Parliament in that full control over finance and taxation is confined in England to the House of Commons, and in Queensland to the Legislative Assembly constituting Parliament. The hon. member surely wandered far into the wilderness as far as constitutional practice is concerned,

and I am sure that the Opposition as a whole did not concur in his rather puerile criticism.

Nobody on the Opposition side at any time opposed the Bill with the exception of some suggestion of reducing the interest rate by 1 per cent. instead of  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. That was the only argument against it, with the exception of the attack by the Leader of the Opposition who made out that it was not necessary to bring the Bill in at all and that it was only brought in because an election was looming. He swept aside all the arguments in regard to constitutional government in his desire—urged by I know not whom nor why—to scream "Political propaganda." We are all aware that the function of the Bill is to reduce the interest rate on loans for workers' dwellings and workers' homes by  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. This Bill, which should have gone through without any comment except commendatory comment was used—of all the Bills that have come up—as the one on which to charge us with carrying out political propaganda. This small Bill was in the mind of the Leader of the Opposition as the one on which we were trying to get votes from people in order to win an election. Later on they used the same argument in regard to the Libraries Bill, but it was a particularly wild scream in regard to this Bill. Under the circumstances, I do not think there is any need to add to what I have already said.

**Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumba) (9.7 p.m.):** I do not feel at all chastened by the very nice little homily on constitutional law that the Minister read so very nicely to us a moment ago. He seems to take great exception to the fact that I, as Leader of the Opposition, should have suggested that anything should be done under an Order in Council. He stands up in his place to protest at the suggestion that he or the Government should ever have the temerity to do anything by Order in Council or by regulation. But there is a good deal of difference between an Order in Council for which authority is specifically set down in an Act, and regulations under the Act. That is the point I took—not that it could be done by regulation, but by specific Order in Council under the Act.

As to the question of political propaganda, far be it from me ever to suggest that the Government were guilty of anything of a political nature, especially when an election is in the offing. Let us analyse some of the legislation brought down this session—legislation that could have been brought down last session if hon. members of the Government had any desire to give any concession to borrowers from the State Advances Corporation or from the Bureau of Rural Development and other similar authorities. Just prior to an election these things are handed out here and there, and the hon. gentleman gets very upset because it might be suggested that it is political propaganda.

**The Secretary for Health and Home Affairs:** Your case is that there should not be a last session of Parliament before an election.

**Mr. NICKLIN:** My case is that there should not be a selection of legislation for the last session before an election. We frequently find that these little handouts and little concessions are saved till just before an election and then brought to light. I feel very sorry that the Minister is so upset at my suggesting that he should ever introduce into this House anything in the nature of political propaganda.

Much of the trouble that has occurred in regard to this Bill might have been obviated had the Minister given us a clear and lucid explanation of the provisions of the Bill. After hearing the hon. gentleman explain the Bill we did not know exactly what it meant. Some of the clauses in the Bill at the present time are very hard to understand and apparently in the introductory stages of this Bill, when we inquired as to whether borrowers from the State Advances Corporation were paying two different rates of interest, the Minister did not know.

**The Secretary for Public Works:** I explained it to you.

**Mr. NICKLIN:** The hon. gentleman did not know whether borrowers from the State Advances Corporation were paying two different rates of interest. This is another example of differential treatment by members of this Government—one lot of borrowers paying  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. interest and another 4 per cent.

**The Secretary for Public Works:** With the old contracts we could not alter the rates, but we are altering them with the new contracts.

**Mr. NICKLIN:** This is a rotten principle, anyhow, Mr. Speaker—this principle of two differential rates of interest for similar sets of borrowers from an institution such as this. It should never have been introduced in the first place, and it was introduced by Order in Council, too, in 1939, when the interest rates for new borrowers were increased. The same objectionable clause, which can be read in two or three different ways, is also in this Bill, under which any difference in the rate of interest can be made by Order in Council. There should have been provision in this Bill, as was suggested by the hon. member for Toowong, whereby the rates of interest rose or fell automatically according to the conditions operating in the money market. We should pass a Bill that makes provision for an automatic rise and fall in the rates of interest according to the rate on Government bonds or some other barometer that sets the rates.

When one comes to examine this thing and discovers that two differential rates of interest are being paid by the borrowers from the State Advances Corporation and that this is not such a very great concession after all, one is inclined to the opinion that it is not political propaganda because it is not worth it. It is only worth a few pounds.

**The Secretary for Public Works:** You do not seem to know where you are.

**Mr. NICKLIN:** Let us find out exactly what is the concession the Government is making by the introduction of this Bill. They are only making a concession that should have been made long ago to those borrowers who were charged  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. more than the remainder of the borrowers. Those from 1939 have been charged  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. interest more than those who borrowed prior to that date. How many are actually involved? These are the figures—

—	Workers' Dwellings.		Workers' Homes.	
	No.	Amount.	No.	Amount.
1939-40	515	£ 280,279	6	£ 3,200
1940-41	624	357,145	22	13,179
1941-42	321	189,347	2	1,222
1942-43	3	2,456	..	..
Total	1,463	£829,227	30	£17,601

1,493 loans totalling £846,828.

Those are all the loans to which the  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. reduction in the rate of interest applies and the amount involved will be £4,234 a year.

**The Secretary for Health and Home Affairs:** That is very useful to poor people.

**Mr. NICKLIN:** It is quite useful, but it is nothing to make such a loud song about when the differential rates are taken into consideration.

**The Secretary for Health and Home Affairs:** You would not suggest when we had to raise the interest on the new contracts we should raise the interest on the old contracts, too?

**Mr. NICKLIN:** I do not suggest that at all, but there could have been a better way of doing this than of employing the time of the House year after year on each occasion when there is a difference in the rate of interest. It can be increased by Order in Council but legislation must be introduced to reduce it.

**The Secretary for Health and Home Affairs:** You cannot vary a contract by Order in Council. You can neither increase nor decrease interest on existing contracts by Order in Council.

**Mr. NICKLIN:** It has been done.

**The Secretary for Health and Home Affairs:** No, it has not.

**Mr. NICKLIN:** That does not get over the position that is being created of a provision for differential rates of interest for various sections of borrowers from the State Advances Corporation, nor does it get over the necessity of having legislation brought down from time to time when interest rates vary. Why not make a job of it and make provision for the interest rates to be varied according to the fluctuations in the money market? That could be done very easily in this legislation.

**The Secretary for Health and Home Affairs:** That would mean that if the

money market went up the interest payments of present purchasers of homes would go up.

**Mr. NICKLIN:** That is not what I said at all. I said that variations in interest rates could apply to new contracts.

**The Secretary for Health and Home Affairs:** That does not cover the old contracts when you are lowering them.

**Mr. NICKLIN:** If all of them are being lowered that is all right, but I still contend that this could be done by one enactment instead of carrying on as we are, bringing in small alterations to provide for reductions of interest rates just before election time. Had that been done, perhaps it would not have been necessary for me to have hurt the Minister to the quick by suggesting that he would never do anything of a political nature in order to gain political capital for his Government.

It is not much use wasting any further time on this measure. We agree with the principle of reducing interest but at the same time we say that the position under which there is differential treatment so far as interest to be paid by the various classes of borrowers is concerned, should not have been brought about.

**Mr. BROWN (Logan) (9.19 p.m.):** No-one who has bought a worker's dwelling or a worker's home has been asked to pay more interest than is set out in the contract he signed. On the contrary, those who signed contracts to pay 5 per cent. interest have had two reductions, one to  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., then a second to 4 per cent.

The Leader of the Opposition says that that does not amount to much after all. It means a good deal to the working man. If a man has built a worker's home or a worker's dwelling at a cost of £500 it means that he will be paying £2 10s. a year less. This is a reduction of 1s. a week, which means a good deal to the working man. America and Germany have sent over to Queensland for all the rules and regulations governing the building of homes for workers here. We have led the world in the matter of home building for workers. In no part of the world can a worker get a home more easily than he can in Queensland, and there is no part of the world in which a bigger proportion of the workers have their own homes. The hon. member for Hamilton said the other day that the Americans were better educated than the Australians, yet we find that America has to send to Queensland to be educated as to how easy it is for a worker to have a home of his own. Our education is far ahead of that of America.

This is a progressive step and I hope the Government will be able to reduce the interest rates still further. Some people have already asked me when this Bill will become effective. I have told them I did not think it would come into effect before the beginning of the year—it might but I did not think so, as I did not know what the Government intended to do.

I cannot see how the Opposition can argue that this is an election stunt when they also point out that only a small amount is involved. However small the amount, it is to the advantage of the workers to have a reduction in their interest rates. I hope that the rates will be still further reduced so that they may get out of the clutches of the landlords and all have homes of their own. It is a very simple matter for a worker to get a worker's home. This scheme is essentially one for the working man with a limited income, because it is provided that if a person's income exceeds a certain amount he cannot obtain the benefits of the scheme. The maximum value of a worker's dwelling that may be built is £750. At one time a worker who desired to build a house costing £1,000 could pay the additional amount himself, but the Government will not permit of that now, because the scheme is one entirely for the workers on smaller incomes. If a man already has a house he cannot get such a home. This is the best legislation ever passed by this Government and it must be good when Germany and America want a full explanation of our schemes. I am sure that as finances permit the Government will reduce the interest rates still further and so make it still easier for the workers to have their own homes.

**Mr. BRAND (Isis) (9.24 p.m.):** It was very interesting to hear the hon. member for Logan say that the Workers' Dwelling Act was the best Act ever passed by this Parliament.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! The hon. member for Logan wandered all over the compass, but the hon. member for Isis will not. (Laughter.)

**Mr. BRAND:** The point I was about to make is that a tribute must be paid to the Governments of the past who were responsible for passing the Workers' Dwelling Act. It was not a Labour Government. It was not a Labour Government who introduced all the legislation in the interests of the welfare of the people of this country. It is remarkable that a great deal of our social legislation was introduced by Governments who are not Labour. We can give the present Government credit for reducing the interest rates, but this concession is long overdue, especially in view of the financial outlook to-day, which is that interest rates should be reduced to the lowest possible point. We must also bear in mind that the interest rates mentioned in the Bill touch the homes of the workers and it is only right that the Minister should recognise the justice of reducing the rate by  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. so as to ease the burden on the workers.

When we reach the post-war years and decide on great home-building schemes the Government of the day will have to establish the principle that the interest rate must be much lower than is prescribed in this Bill. That rate must be fixed at the lowest possible point. It is necessary in the interests of the nation that homes must be built for the people. There is a clamour to-day for them.

People find it extremely difficult to get them, and when the war ends there must be a great movement to build homes for the people. Any indication by the Government to the people that the interest rates will be still further lowered so that the cost of the homes will not bear heavily on the people will create a confidence in the future that we so much desire.

I should not like to charge the Minister with introducing this Bill with an eye on the next election. I do not like to insinuate that a desire for political propaganda was underlying his action in bringing the Bill down. I try to believe that there is a genuineness behind the action of the Government in making this long overdue and much-needed concession. We are passing through an age far different from that from which we have emerged. We have reached the plastic age when building materials have been revolutionised by scientific invention. In the post-war period building materials will be so advanced that homes better than those we now enjoy will be built at a much smaller cost than to-day. A Government who are alive to their responsibility of building homes for the people in the future will make provision now for that day.

I rose to pay a tribute to past governments for legislating to provide homes for the people. The statute has been of wonderful assistance to the people, particularly the workers, and is one that I have great pleasure in speaking to. I only hope that the Government will take the necessary action to relieve the present unhappy state of those people who are so sadly in need of homes.

Motion (Mr. Bruce) agreed to.

#### COMMITTEE.

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Brassington, Fortitude Valley, in the chair.)

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

Bill reported, without amendment.

#### THIRD READING.

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

#### WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

#### SECOND READING.

**The SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND HOME AFFAIRS** (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, Ithaca) (9.36 p.m.): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

I am quite confident that the Bill will meet with the approval of all members of the Chamber. It was introduced in an attempt to give more even justice to the people who suffer injury through their occupation and to correct anomalies that have arisen over the years. We have an excellent Workers' Compensation Act as it stands, the value of which is shown by the fact that, during the

last financial year, 24,183 claims for accident and industrial diseases were made. Very few people realise the tremendous number of claims made by workers who receive injury through their employment or suffer some industrial disease caused by their employment. We hear of the odd cases that are disputed, although very rarely a case is disputed and goes into the court; and many of the cases that are disputed that go to court are sent there because it is necessary to obtain an interpretation of some part of the Act. Of the 24,813 claims dealt with last year, only 377 were rejected by the Commissioner. Of that number, only 51 objections were made; in the other rejected cases the persons concerned accepted the decision of the Commissioner as being fair.

**Mr. Macdonald:** They might have been too poor to dispute it.

**The SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND HOME AFFAIRS:** They are not too poor to dispute it; they all have unions. There is no difficulty if claimants for compensation wish to dispute any decision that they think is not just and equitable. The union will take up a claim and no costs are involved when the union handles it.

**Mr. Macdonald:** The claimant may be a rural worker.

**The SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND HOME AFFAIRS:** The rural worker has a union, too. When one considers that of 24,183 claims only 377 were rejected one sees that the office has an excellent record. Even if all the rejections were accepted it is indicative of the splendid service the State Government Insurance Office, under the Workers' Compensation Act, is rendering to workers in industry.

The limitation of salary to £520 a year to enable an employee to claim compensation has been rendered obsolete by the increased earning capacity during the war period.

The Bill, therefore, proposes to raise the limit to £650 a year. It looks as if members of Parliament might be eligible under this amendment, but I do not think that the amount was fixed with that in view. The real basis is the higher salaries earned by workers during the war period. However, many costs have increased also during this period and taxation has increased to such an extent that the high salary received by workmen to-day does not exist in fact in the budget of the housewife. To take into consideration the higher rate that the workers are receiving temporarily would mean that many of them would perhaps not be in a position to receive compensation, because if a man is seriously injured his salary ceases to come in.

It is proposed to make the measure applicable from 1 July last.

A very important improvement is the payment of the full value of a limb or organ that is lost in an accident after the weekly payments have been completed. Under the present Act, if a worker loses an arm, leg, or hand there is a set sum in the Act as

compensation payable to him for the loss of that organ. It frequently happens that an injured worker has to receive medical treatment for a long period, perhaps in an endeavour to save the limb. Naturally, the State Government Insurance Office insists on adequate medical treatment and that every attempt shall be made to save a limb and many cases have arisen in which the weekly payment made for compensation over a long period of medical treatment has eaten up almost the whole of the lump sum that would be payable to the claimant. This Bill alters that practice and provides that even after treatment has ceased, irrespective of the fact that a large sum may have been paid out in weekly contributions to the injured person, he shall get the full value of the limb lost. Nobody would dispute the justice of that. From a purely actuarial point of view, from the point of view of an insurance office, it would be considered that as the insured was only insured for a specified sum for the particular loss he was entitled to that sum only, irrespective of when he got it. But the State Government Insurance Office being conducted as a social service, the workers' compensation branch cannot afford to take the purely actuarial viewpoint, and consequently we are departing from the strict actuarial practice and making this alteration.

We are giving full pensions to the men who have been employed in the mining industry for a certain period and who have developed miner's phthisis. We have a section in the old Act that provides half benefits to sufferers from miner's phthisis who have worked a lesser period in the industry. Looking at it dispassionately one would come to the conclusion that if a man in the mining industry develops phthisis, irrespective of whether he worked 10 or 20 years, he is still a phthisis sufferer and we have agreed to pay the full benefit in all cases that are accepted as phthisis caused by employment in the mining industry.

The wife of a pensioner is to receive an allowance of 5s. a week. In the Workers' Compensation Act the amount is 10s. a week. I want the House to understand distinctly that that is not an attempt to pay the wife less, but that 5s. a week is the maximum payment that we can make without affecting the pension payable by the Commonwealth Government. If we make it any more than 5s. a week, the amount by which we exceed the 5s. will come off the pension payable by the Commonwealth Government and the recipient of the payment will be no better off. We are therefore bringing the payment to the wife up to the maximum that can be allowed without affecting the Commonwealth pension.

Those are the provisions of the Bill and I think they will meet with the approval of all hon. members. The Act has worked very satisfactorily in the past, but conditions have changed over the years and we recognise the justice of the claim by the workers for these improvements and consequently this Bill is introduced.

**Mr. NICKLIN** (Murrumba) (9.45 p.m.): The Opposition endorse the provisions of this

Bill, in particular that which provides that the weekly payments to an injured worker shall not be deductible from the lump sum that may be due to him under the Act. This is a provision that we advocated when the Act was being amended last session.

There is no doubt that the Workers' Compensation Act has been of great benefit to the workers of this State. They have had legislative protection since as far back as 1886, when the Employers' Liability Act was passed through this Assembly. The liability of employers for compensation in respect of accidents was first provided for them. Compensation was payable at that time, however, only when accident was due to some negligence on the part of the employer, his servants, or agents. Since that time we have progressed considerably and the workers of this State now have really excellent protection and service under the Workers' Compensation Acts and the various amendments that have been passed since the original Act was introduced in 1905. That Act was an improvement on the Employers' Liability Act in that it provided for compensation for all accidents irrespective of how they were caused. At that time the maximum payment was fixed at £400. In 1916 a further improvement in conditions was made, and workers' compensation became the monopoly of the Government through the State Government Insurance Office. The maximum insurance was extended to £750. There have been a number of changes since then, but most of them have been for the benefit of the workers and others have meant increases in weekly payments in accordance with increases in the basic wage. I do not think the present maximum of £750 is of more value than the £400 that was payable in 1905. The cost-of-living index in 1916 was 698, and in June, 1943, it was 1083, so that the equivalent of the £400 in 1916 is £621 now. Actually the increase that is being made by this amending Bill to bring the maximum yearly income of the worker up from £520 to £650 is in accordance with the cost-of-living index. This provision is certainly very desirable especially when we consider the higher earnings that many workers are receiving at the present time because of abnormal conditions. When the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs mentioned that by bringing the amount up to £650 it possibly would include other risks such as were attached to being a member of Parliament I was wondering what premium classification we should come into. No doubt it would be a very high rate, because being a member of Parliament is a very risky undertaking. (Laughter.)

**Mr. Moore:** Especially at the end of the third year.

**Mr. Maher:** Why rattle the bones in the cupboard?

**Mr. NICKLIN:** The repeal of the provision that makes the weekly payments to an injured worker during total incapacity deductible from the total lump sum is certainly very wise indeed as in many instances persons who were entitled to lump-sum payments for

injuries received found that most of the amount has been eaten up by hospital and medical expenses. When they finally left the hospital there was very little money coming to them. This will certainly be an improvement that will be appreciated by all who are unfortunate enough to draw compensation in cases such as those covered by this amendment.

The maximum payment in respect of certain industrial diseases, mainly phthisis, attributable to mining, quarrying, and working in flour mills is £375, including weekly payments to wives and children. That amount is now being raised to the full amount, which is a good concession and considerably overdue. A man so afflicted is really an invalid—and, in most cases, much more badly off than a man who has suffered the loss of a limb or a part of a limb. He should receive the maximum amount of £750. There is an allowance of 5s. a week for wives, which to-day is paid by the Treasury, but will be finally deducted from the amount of £750 provided in the Bill.

The workers' compensation branch has been particularly successful from a revenue point of view, because the State has a monopoly. The receipts have been very buoyant during the last four years and over that period the department has been able to transfer £340,000 to the general reserve fund of the office. This branch was created to provide benefits to injured workers, and this money should not be transferred to the general reserve. It means that one of two things, or both, should be done. Either the benefits should be increased or the premiums should be reduced. In 1939-40, the premiums amounted to £724,000 and the total compensation paid was £524,000, while £100,000 was transferred to the general reserve fund. In the next year £110,000 was transferred, in the following year £110,000, and for the last financial year £20,000. In 1942-43, the ordinary domestic section of the workers' compensation branch showed a profit of £183,834 and the miner's phthisis a profit of £13,592. In view of the buoyant revenue and the fact that the big sum of £340,000 was transferred to the general reserve fund, the concessions contained in the Bill appear very small, indeed. There is no doubt that the general scheme of workers' compensation can be reviewed in many instances. For instance, the premiums charged in rural industry are very heavy, having regard to the number of accidents that occur, and other industries are in a similar position.

The provisions contained in the Bill are very desirable and they are endorsed by the Opposition.

**Mr. DUNSTAN (Gympie) (9.56 p.m.):** In approaching the debate on this very valuable measure, I think I may be pardoned for saying that it is an outstanding example of the farsightedness of Labour's policy of reform. The genesis of all these schemes of workers' compensation goes back to the establishment of the State Government Insurance Office and the fierce battle we had with the Upper House and the representatives of the private companies when we were endeavouring

to place that reform on the statute-book. It was a classic example of opposition to a reform established by this Government. I have just been reading part of the history of that reform when a member of the then Opposition said it was the most drastic measure ever introduced into a British Legislative Assembly and that it sounded the death warrant of the Labour Government then in power. Apart from all that, I should like to say that I had the honour some time ago of presenting to the Labour Convention a motion proposed by the Gympie branch of the Australian Labour Party advocating this reform, particularly with regard to the removal of the reductions in miner's phthisis cases where medical expenses and operation costs were taken away from the lump sum stated in the schedule for that particular injury. The Treasurer of the time, to whom we submitted the motion carried at convention, is now the Premier. He promised that as soon as financial possibilities presented themselves he would see that effect was given to it. I am very pleased to know that the Treasurer has now fulfilled his promise.

This Bill gives full benefits in those cases where ex-gratia payments were made within the discretion of the Commissioner in miner's phthisis cases where the worker had been a long time out of the mining industry. It is a very good provision, indeed. It has to be realised in the matter of costs that the miner's phthisis fund for a long time was dependent on the general workers' compensation fund, because the premiums that supported the miner's phthisis fund had greatly declined because mining companies had gone out of existence. The unfortunate thing so far as the worker affected with miner's phthisis or silicosis is concerned is that it develops with the advancing years of the ex-miner, long after he has ceased to be an employee in the industry. To a large extent, that burden has been borne by the general workers' compensation fund.

The provision to give full benefits in these cases instead of half-payments will be appreciated by all the ex-miners and workers generally. We recognise that phthisis does not develop amongst these industrialists only, because phthisis can be contracted from flour and coal dust as well as dust in metalliferous mines. In metalliferous mines the silicate dust, which is derived from silica, the angular, sharp particles from the stone, brings about a very serious disability in a large number of miners who worked in the industry many years ago.

I congratulate the Treasurer on introducing this measure, which is another instance of the benefits derived from legislative action following the establishment of the workers' compensation section in the State Government Insurance Office.

**Mr. MANN (Brisbane) (10.2 p.m.):** It is very pleasing to members of the Committee, particularly those representing industrial areas, that these amendments are being brought forward in order to bring the Workers' Compensation Act more up to date. Last year certain amendments were brought

down to improve the Act. In fact, the various amendments that have been introduced from time to time have all been made with the laudable object of making further improvements to the Act. I am particularly pleased to see the way in which the Leader of the Opposition received the amendments. They are very important because they deal with the payment to workers who have been injured in industry.

The raising from £520 to £650 of the income the worker in industry can earn and still obtain the benefits of the Workers' Compensation Act is a good thing because in these days of long hours and overtime many workers had their earnings brought up over the present limit. While we know that the National Security regulations cover these workers it is a good thing to see the Government bringing the Act up to date and raising the amount so that these workers will come within the ambit of the Act without having to employ the National Security regulations.

The second amendment makes provision for workers to receive the full amount for an injury that results in the loss of a limb, an eye or any other major injury set out in the schedules. It is a good thing the amendment provides that he shall receive the full amount and that there shall not be deducted from it the amount he may have received in weekly payments, which hitherto have been deducted from his lump-sum payment. Agitation has been raised by union secretaries and others interested in the welfare of industrialists concerning this matter and it was under discussion at the Labour in Politics Convention. I am glad to know the Government has taken this matter into consideration and have brought forward an amendment providing for the full payment and eliminating deduction of weekly payments from the lump sum. I know the Treasurer gives sympathetic consideration to this branch of this important office.

I suggest that in the near future, if the possibility presents itself, he may give consideration to a further amendment of the Act so that medical and hospital expenses incurred in connection with an accident shall be borne by the Insurance Commissioner. I know that if it is practicable the Treasurer, who is very sympathetic, will give it consideration. To-day the minimum payment to a worker is virtually two-thirds of the basic wage plus 10s. a week for his wife, and 10s. a week for each member of his family under the age of 16. A married worker on the basic wage who is injured receives a total of £3 13s. and if he was working he would be receiving £4 17s. I make a further suggestion, that in view of the buoyancy of the revenue of the State Government Insurance Office, the Government might give further consideration to the matter and raise the minimum payment up to the award wage the worker receives in the calling he follows. I know that if it is practicable the Treasurer will give it serious consideration in the sympathetic way in which he deals with industrial problems that are placed before him.

The other amendment provides for the full payment for miner's phthisis and that has

been fully elaborated by the Minister. I only wish to add that I think the amendments are necessary and desirable and I commend the Treasurer and the Government for bringing them forward.

**Mr. MACDONALD (Stanley) (10.7 p.m.):** It is very apparent why this measure is brought forward. I wonder if the members present really appreciate its significance; personally I do not think they do. To have a proper appreciation of what this measure means one has had to live with an accident complex. Unfortunately I had it for some years. Many years ago I was working hard and had very little money as wages and out of those small wages one could put aside very little. Always I was haunted with the idea that an accident would befall me—it ultimately did—and I should have to go into hospital and remain some time there and when I got out I should not be in a fit state to take up employment, and having no money should be dependant on charity.

At one time, when riding a horse, I was very badly smashed about the arm but when I came to that stage at which I was about to exhaust my hard-won earnings luckily I was able to get work. This Bill will expel from the minds of the people that dreadful feeling of financial insecurity and will give that greatest of all senses, the sense of financial security for the time being and anything greater than that I have no knowledge of. I commend the Bill.

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. A. Jones, Charters Towers) (10.10 p.m.):** I think that every hon. member in the House will agree that the amendments to the Workers' Compensation Act brought forward by the Treasurer are necessary and will be appreciated by the large body of people in the industrial activities of the State. As a member representing one of the old mining fields of Queensland—Charters Towers—one of the areas in which great industrial activity took place a few years ago, I can say that it will be appreciated by the large number of persons who contracted phthisis on that field. There may have been more phthisis sufferers in that area than in any other field in Queensland, probably with the exception of Mount Morgan. The action of the Treasurer in bringing forward this amendment will be appreciated, I know, by those suffering from miner's phthisis, particularly those in receipt of half benefits. Since I have represented Charters Towers I have on many occasions brought forward this matter and have pointed out that I thought that if a man suffered from miner's phthisis the question of half benefits could scarcely occur inasmuch as there can be no question whether a man who suffers in this way is entitled to half or full benefits. I have always contended that, and I am particularly pleased that the Treasurer has seen fit to amend the Bill to enable persons in receipt of the half benefits to be brought up to the full rates under the Act. Any hon. member in this House who has come in contact with sufferers from miner's phthisis, particularly the hon. member representing the district of Mount Morgan, will have some

knowledge of what it means. I know that on many occasions when applicants for this pension come forward for medical examination they dread the decision that they are suffering from this disease. They know that it is virtually their death sentence. From time to time in my own electorate I have met people suffering from this disease who looked to be in good health, but when I next visited the electorate a few months later I found they had passed to the great beyond. It is a dread disease and anything that can be done by this or any other Government to give these people relief is appreciated.

In this connection I pay tribute to the Attorney-General. There has been difficulty in getting a supply of brandy for phthisis sufferers in my electorate and the Attorney-General has, on every occasion co-operated and done everything possible to get the Commonwealth authorities to make available a supply of brandy to the different firms in Charters Towers for these patients. That action is appreciated by the Charters Towers Miner's Phthisis Association. I might explain that in Charters Towers there is an association of men affected with phthisis and these people are concerned only with assisting members of the organisation to better their conditions. The action of the Government in agreeing to this amendment bringing half-benefit cases up to the full rate will be very much appreciated by that association. On almost every occasion I have visited Charters Towers over the past two years I have received deputations from this association requesting me to make representations to the Government to favourably consider increasing the half-pension rates to the full-benefit rates.

I realise that the Government are doing all they possibly can. If they increased the full-benefit rates by 5s. the invalid pension received by these men would be reduced by 5s. and they would be no better off. At the moment the pensioner in receipt of full-benefit rates is receiving the maximum that he can enjoy without detrimentally affecting his invalid pension. I have been greatly concerned about this question, because there are many sufferers in the Charters Towers area who have contracted this dread disease at a time when Charters Towers was looked upon as one of the leading mining centres of Australia. There are scores of men there who are so afflicted. I meet them continually, I know their difficulties, and, knowing them, I know how much they will appreciate the action of the Government in bringing down this amendment.

**Mr. CLARK (Fitzroy) (10.17 p.m.):** I appreciate this Bill and the miners of Mount Morgan certainly will be grateful for it. I am pleased that the Treasurer has thought fit to increase the amount a man is entitled to earn before he is precluded from receiving a pension. Under the present provision if a man received over £500 a year, and two weeks' holiday pay, that was enough to prevent him from receiving compensation if he suffered from an industrial disease. In one case in my electorate a widow was deprived of compensa-

tion because her husband received over £520, including two months' holiday pay that was due to him.

I am pleased also to see that no longer will the weekly payments a man receives while he is suffering from an injury be deducted from the lump sum payable to him, and I desire to pay a tribute to the Treasurer for bringing this forward, because I know of many cases, in Mount Morgan in particular, in which men who have lost fingers, toes, hands, eyes, and so on, had very little left when the weekly payments were deducted from the lump sum.

Before I came into this Parliament and since I have been here, I have been a fighter for the abolition of that half-pension provision for miner's phthisis. I have had long experience of this disease and it is my opinion, although I am not a medical man, that if there can be a half phthisis there can also be one-quarter phthisis and three-quarter phthisis and that, therefore, there should have been one-quarter and three-quarter pensions. In my opinion there is no cure for the disease. So far as Weil's disease, Q fever, and other industrial diseases are concerned, a man may draw the full £750 compensation, receive a clean bill of health from the doctor and return to work; but not so with miner's phthisis. Once a man contracts that disease he is always a sufferer from it. I have always contended that phthisis sufferers have been the worst treated of all sufferers from industrial diseases, and I am pleased to know that this amendment is being brought forward with a view to improving their lot.

There are other provisions in the Act that I should like to see amended, and I know that they will be amended by the Treasurer when the time is opportune. I congratulate the hon. gentleman on introducing the Bill. A miner's phthisis sufferer cannot undertake any work, because he may be well to-day and in bed to-morrow. I have had the privilege, which is given to very few men, of being present at post-mortem examinations on miner's phthisis sufferers and I know the exact condition of the lungs. They are terrible to see, especially in the advanced stages, and one wonders how it is possible for a human being to survive with lungs in such condition. That is why I have taken such a great interest in miner's phthisis. I am hopeful that in the future more care will be taken to keep down dust and the hot fumes that arise from dynamite explosions. Ventilation plays a very important part in this disease. Men will rush back to their work to clean it up immediately the shots are fired, and I think that vigorous measures should be taken, especially in the metalliferous mining industry, against these men, even to the extent of fining them for rushing back into the smoke and dust after the shots are fired. In the early days of Mount Morgan when there was very little water, it was almost impossible to see men a few yards away because of the dust. This is how they contracted miners' phthisis. Fortunately, we are operating under better conditions at Mount Morgan to-day with the open-cut system instead of the underground

system, but I am fearful that even so there will be fresh miner's phthisis cases from Mount Morgan and elsewhere in the near future. It is impossible to stamp out dust entirely and many more men will be stricken down sooner or later. I know that the people at Mount Morgan will be very pleased with the Bill.

I think it is unfortunate at times that we have to depend on the medical profession to say whether a man is actually suffering from the disease or not. I know of cases in which a medical man has given a certificate to the effect that a miner was suffering from silicosis. Not being satisfied, he has consulted another doctor who has also certified that he is suffering from silicosis. The miner has then made application for a miner's phthisis pension to the State Government Insurance Office, which sent him to another doctor, and unfortunately at times he is sent back to one of the doctors who previously examined him and gave him a certificate to say that he was suffering from silicosis, but on the second occasion that very doctor will issue a certificate to say that he is suffering from myocarditis and slight silicosis. Now, that miner has great difficulty in getting his pension, because of the variation in the doctor's certificates.

**Mr. Marriott:** That does not speak too well for the administration.

**Mr. CLARK:** We have to depend on the medical profession to do these things. They are trained in medicine and we cannot argue the case with them. On the first occasion he gives a certificate to say that the man is suffering from silicosis, and on the second occasion that he is suffering from myocarditis with slight silicosis. In most of those instances the applicant is debarred from compensation except at the discretion of the State Government Insurance Office. That office should take a more lenient and sympathetic view in such cases. I know that it has brought some applicants to Brisbane for examination. I know of one applicant who was sent to six different doctors by the State Government Insurance Office and three doctors certified that he was suffering from silicosis and three certified that he was not. Silicosis is one of the worst diseases a man can suffer from. I am very pleased that this Bill has been brought down to liberalise the compensation payable in those cases.

**Mr. L. J. BARNES** (Cairns) (10.29 p.m.): I endorse the remarks of the hon. member for Brisbane. Claimants under the Workers' Compensation Act should be entitled to receive at least the basic wage. This Bill is but a small step in the right direction, particularly when we consider that £340,000 has been transferred from the workers' compensation fund to the general reserve fund of the State Government Insurance Office. I say shame on the Government for permitting that. The Government should see that this money is utilised and not transferred to the reserve fund. Each year a certain sum has been transferred in this way, whereas each year the payments should have been liberalised and the fund shown a loss. As the hon.

member for Fitzroy mentioned, many claims for compensation for phthisis have been rejected. The Minister himself said that approximately 320 people accepted the decision when their claims were rejected. Many of these claimants are in such an embarrassed financial position that they are prevented from making an appeal. It is all very well to say that the union will appeal for them.

**The Secretary for Public Lands:** Very few people know more about these matters than industrial organisers.

**Mr. L. J. BARNES:** I am not talking about people connected with industrial unions but about those people who unfortunately have no-one to advance their claim. I met a phthisis patient in Cairns, a man who had been in New Guinea for four or five years. When he made the claim it was said he contracted the disease there. He fought the Government for some time and for about 11 months was living on the dole. At the same time his wife was incapacitated and was fighting for the invalid pension. No-one should have financial worries when he is suffering in that way. That is the time when the Government should be willing to help. I know of another case in which a phthisis patient's claim was rejected. His doctor said he suffered from phthisis. He was then 62 years of age and he lived for a few years. It was impossible for him to work yet he could get neither the invalid nor the old-age pension. When he died I asked the doctor what was the cause of death and he said "phthisis." I know the facts of that case. There are hundreds of cases in which claims of sufferers from miner's phthisis have been rejected and no appeal has been made. Cases brought by hon. members before the State Government Insurance Office should be considered a little more sympathetically because they have been reasonably considered before the claim is made. It is apparent that because some stubborn person has made a decision in the matter it cannot be altered.

**The Secretary for Public Instruction:** Medical men often disagree.

**Mr. L. J. BARNES:** Quite so. I think the unfortunate part about it is that we could probably make wiser appointments in some of our Government medical men; in some cases it would be an advantage if somebody else was made Government Medical Officer.

I have paid into this fund as an employer approximately £18 a year, and it is one fund that I paid into with a feeling of contentment, although I know that one goes stamp-crazy from paying into Government organisations. That was one fund I fully appreciated. I realised the conditions of the worker throughout the country, who, through ill-health and no fault of his own, is left financially embarrassed. Most of this money is collected from private enterprise and it is wrong that the Government should put it into a reserve fund.

**Mr. MOORE** (Merthyr) (10.35 p.m.): The remarks of the hon. member for Gympie

remind me of some of the opinions I read in connection with the debate that took place when the Insurance Act was introduced, and I think some of them are worthy of remembrance at this stage. One venerable old gentleman said that the implementation of the Act would be the death warrant of the Government. A colleague of his said that it would be the death knell of private enterprise, and a third old fellow said that the Bill might be all right but he very greatly distrusted the personnel of the Government of the day. The effluxion of time proved all these statements wrong. During this session of Parliament we have had expressions along the lines of that statement—that some of the legislation introduced in this session was not introduced with the idea of benefiting the people but to gain political advantage for the Government.

Casting one's mind back to the time when this State Government Insurance Office was instituted, and remembering the great benefits the office has given to the people of Queensland, I do not know of any other legislation that has been so beneficial to the people. The office itself has not only given excellent service but it has forced private offices to give a much better service also. Private offices found a very worthy competitor, whose ideals of business were of the highest, and many offices were forced to give a better service to the community and, fortunately, some of less repute were forced out of business.

As to claims, the figures given to the House by the Deputy Premier are very interesting and show that, in the main, claims are considered on their merits and with a good amount of human feeling thrown in. It is interesting to find, on a perusal of the successive reports of the Commissioner, that the great percentage of those cases sent to the court for interpretation favoured the Insurance Commissioner. Long arguments could be advanced on the merits of claims and on the material that is offered to the officers of that department for consideration of those claims. When we come to the differences of medical opinion offered by the medical profession on some occasions, it will be readily recognised that the officers of the department have a hard job to decide. In my opinion, claims are settled by the State Insurance Office much more expeditiously and much more simply than claims are settled by private offices. This is particularly so in regard to the regrettable claims in respect of the death of a worker. The dependants of the deceased are put to as little inconvenience as possible. I have experienced it both ways, and I must say many of the private offices should get rid of what the Government are frequently accused of—red-tape methods—and settle their claims in a much simpler way.

One hon. member—I think it was the Leader of the Opposition—referred to monopolies. Some experiences make one feel that if the State office had a monopoly, particularly of fire and accident claims, it would be better. I had a case recently that savours very much of exploitation.

A constituent of mine had a motor truck insured with a private insurance office. His

truck was involved in an accident and he made a claim. The office offered him £100 in settlement. He came to me as his representative for advice. I do not profess to know very much about that side of insurance, but I could see no reason first of all why there was a hold-up in this claim, and secondly for the amount offered in settlement. After having to threaten the manager of that office, we got the claim settled for £200. The first offer, as I said, was for £100 and the manager stood over the policy-holder stating he should have a round-table conference. That sort of handling of insurance business makes one feel that a monopoly should be given to the State Government Insurance Office.

**Mr. Plunkett:** Was there not an assessor to assess the damage?

**Mr. MOORE:** The assessor exhibited everything but knowledge of assessing in this case.

**Mr. Plunkett:** He was not an assessor at all.

**Mr. MOORE:** He was one of the leading assessors of the town. This is an instance of a private office wanting to show a profit on an accident, but the manager tried to argue that the policy-holder wanted to show the profit. The boot was on the other foot. Let us hope that that is one of the few offices where things are not done properly.

The amendment is very good, and shows that the Government are alive to their responsibilities. The increase in the amount for the loss of a limb is a matter that is surrounded with much controversy of late. Let us say that a limb is lost. The practice has been to make interim payments, and frequently the total amount is thus absorbed. If a worker loses a foot, I understand the loss is compensated at £450. That sum is arrived at on an actuarial basis of loss of wages, compensation for pain and suffering and probably compensation for the physical incapacity to earn the same amount of wages as was earned prior to the accident. Those would be some of the considerations taken into account when arriving at that lump sum. One injured worker may have been taken to the hospital quickly, operated on there, and made a quick recovery. The physical incapacity was probably not as great as in the second case of an injured worker who had to spend a much longer period in the hospital, took a longer time to recover, and suffered greater physical incapacity for the remainder of his life. There was a disadvantage there in the settlement and the amendment of the Act will give the second man fairer compensation, taking into consideration the length of time he was away from work and his greater physical incapacity. That is a matter that the injured worker is entitled to, and again it shows the Government are alive to their responsibilities.

I should like to take advantage of the opportunity to pay a tribute to the staff of the State Government Insurance Office throughout Queensland. This is one of the departments giving great service to the people

and it has been greatly disorganised because of the war. The remaining officers are doing very highly skilled and scientific work, and the Commissioner and his staff are to be congratulated on the good service they are giving to the people.

**Mr. MAHER** (West Moreton) (10.43 p.m.): A Bill of this kind gives Parliament an opportunity to express its appreciation of all industrial workers who follow occupations entailing great risk and danger, which are essential for the nation's progress and welfare. I often think that trade unions stress a little too much the principle of safety first: perhaps members of Parliament when Bills come before the House also attach too much importance to that principle.

It is an excellent slogan and a good thing, too, nevertheless the world's work is done by men who meet dangers. All the big jobs in this country, indeed throughout the world, have the element of danger in them and it is a tribute to the spirit of our industrial workers that they are willing to accept all the risks and dangers and therefore it devolves upon Parliament to offer whatever ameliorative conditions lie within its power so to do.

I have seen men go into the cattle-yard and take the risk of being horned by wild scrub cattle. I have seen them dash into the scrub at full gallop after wild cattle. I have seen men kicked by horses in the yards. I have seen other men thrown from horses and their heads missed by the flying hoofs of the horse by inches. As the hon. member for Fitzroy so graphically described this evening, men contract phthisis in the pursuit of their daily bread. It seems a pity that in this society it is not possible to give a greater measure of relief to the men who have to work underground and take the risks of this deadly complaint which comes, as the hon. member states, from lack of ventilation, from the fumes of exploded dynamite, and from the dust in the mines. It should be possible to give the men who have to spend years of toil underground some relief in an occupation where they will have an opportunity to relax a little in the sunshine. It seems hard to force men all their lives to live under those conditions to maintain their wives and families, yet men take these risks in the pursuit of their daily bread. We can pay tribute under a measure of this kind to men who take all these tremendous risks, to the timber-feller, the man who gashes his leg with an axe while ringbarking, the man who runs the risk of foul air of the coalmine or of fallen earth. I am pleased to see that it has been possible for the Government to introduce an amending Bill that makes some extra provision for men who have been injured in industry. It sets out certain improved concessions, which are little enough for the man who loses an arm, a leg, or an eye, or whose lungs have become affected and who is unable to follow his usual calling any further.

Another point to which I wish to refer relates to premiums. It is clear that there has been an average return of premiums in excess of £700,000 per annum since 1939-40.

Last financial year it rose to what is, I suppose, the record figure of £785,000. The compensation paid for the year amounted to £505,000, so that there was a surplus of premiums amounting to £280,000 in the year's figures. Although that surplus is shown, it appears that only £20,000 was transferred to general reserve. I do not follow why such a comparatively small sum has been transferred to general reserve, having regard to the large surplus of premiums over compensation paid last year. We must remember, too, that in the year 1939-40 £100,000 was transferred to general reserve, that in 1940-41 £110,000 was transferred, and in 1941-42 a further £110,000 was transferred, so that for the four years there was a general reserve of £340,000.

The Government should either increase the benefits or reduce the premiums even to a greater extent than they are doing in the Bill. There is a substantial credit in the fund and it should be used in the interests of the injured workers. There is no reason why tremendous reserves should be built up unnecessarily. The Bill is a good one and it will be a great advantage to those unfortunate members of the community who work hard, undergo great risks, and become afflicted with diseases as the result of following their calling.

**Mr. TURNER** (Kelvin Grove) (10.54 p.m.): It is pleasing to make a comparison between the opinions expressed about this legislation by hon. members to-day with those expressed by members of their political party when the Act was first introduced years ago. Mr. Forsyth took strong exception to it and put up a great fight against it on behalf of the private insurance companies. The ex-Treasurer, Mr. Barnes, described it as un-British. That was his opinion of a measure that was introduced to help injured workers who had become afflicted in earning profits for the very many who were opposed to the measure.

I have had a great deal of experience in workers' compensation cases. I have always found that the State Government Insurance Office, from the Commissioner down, administers this Act generously and sympathetically. Every worker is called on to furnish proof of his accident and the benefit of the doubt is invariably given to him. It is only when satisfactory proof of the accident is not tendered that the claim is rejected. The rejections, however, are very few compared with the great number of claims that are made. I wish to express my appreciation of the generous way in which the officers of the department handle the claims.

**Mr. MARRIOTT** (Bulimba) (11.2 p.m.): In rising to support this Bill I do not want to unduly delay the House, but on behalf of phthisis sufferers I desire to express appreciation of the decision to provide full compensation rates to all sufferers from this disease. I had over 20 years' experience in lodging and fighting claims with the State Government Insurance Office before becoming a member of Parliament. I could tell some heart-rending stories of claims that had to be fought, and

were fought, successfully and otherwise. In all my experience up to the present I found the departmental officers a fine set of men, who endeavoured to be just and do their jobs. They endeavoured to act strictly in accordance with the letter of the law. I have had experience, too, of how, if possible, they will lean sympathetically towards a claimant.

I still say that the officers are guided and instructed and trained to administer the Act strictly in accordance with the law. I frequently had to handle phthisis cases; in fact, my first fight was over a phthisis case. The Commissioner decided that the claimant was not entitled to compensation, and as the case was too deep for a layman, I put the matter in the hands of a solicitor. Most of the medical men in Brisbane at that time were on the panel of medical referees of the State Government Insurance Office. The solicitor told me that the referee I had selected was already on the panel and he would select a man who was not. We successfully fought that case, and the man died four years afterwards. He was an engine-driver working on a portable quarry plant in the employ of the Main Roads Commission.

I suggest that when the Commissioner sends the registered letter to the claimant rejecting the claim he also inform him that he has a certain number of days in which to lodge a claim. I had a bitter experience over the ignorance of a claimant away back in 1931. When the matter eventually came before a judge on appeal he expressed the opinion that it was very unfortunate to see the claimant lose the compensation he was entitled to through a technical point of which the layman was ignorant, and he hoped that the Insurance Commissioner would find it in his heart to make an ex-gratia payment. That matter was placed before the then Treasurer, the late Hon. W. H. Barnes, who kept it strung on for some time. Eventually it was made an issue of an election in some quarters and when the Labour Government came to power in 1932 it was still hanging fire. The case was then placed before Mr. Cooper, then Treasurer, and was the cause of considerable ill-feeling, being still rejected. After two years the Government and the Insurance Commissioner did see fit to make an ex-gratia payment of £80.

This evening, while the hon. member for Cairns was speaking, an hon. member interjected, "The trade union organisers advise claimants of their rights," and the Minister interjected that the trade unions fight the appeals on behalf of claimants. Trade union officials are not always aware of claims; while some unions do not provide legal assistance to fight cases, and then it becomes necessary to take the case to court. They will advise the claimant as to a suitable solicitor. A union with which I was connected had a standing order with a solicitor to fight rejected claims, and in the event of the claimant being successful, he paid the costs, which were only nominal; and in the event of the claim failing the union paid them. I support the Bill for the improvements it provides.

**Mr. POWER** (Baroona) (11.14 p.m.): I have a vivid recollection of the days when

the Workers' Compensation Act was first introduced. The Bill was passed in this Assembly but was drastically amended by the members of the defunct Legislative Council, but after legal opinion had been taken it was found that a very important clause had been overlooked.

I have had considerable experience of how private insurance companies have dealt with workers' compensation and I desire to-night to compare what it is proposed to do by this Bill with the conditions that operated many years ago. In the old days an injured worker was required to give 14 days' notice of injury, then a further 14 days' notice of intention to claim compensation. The matter was then taken up by the insurance company and the employer and there was considerable haggling as to the amount that should be paid. Under that system a worker who lost an eye was forced to seek legal aid and received £80 but when legal fees were paid he had only about £30 left.

It is proposed by this legislation to ignore any weekly payments that an injured worker may have received when paying the lump sum, and that is only right because, as a result of an injury warranting payment of such a sum a worker is often prevented from following his usual occupation.

Reference has been made to the number of appeals against decisions of the workers' compensation department, but I do not blame the officials of that office because they must base their decision on the medical evidence submitted to them. The medical referee, on numerous occasions, has decided in favour of the injured worker; but he has also upheld the decision of the department quite often.

I am pleased to know that provision has been made to give full pension to those people who are unfortunate enough to contract miner's phthisis.

The Government had every right to claim a monopoly in the conduct of workers' compensation business. That can be seen from the fact that to-day the injured man does receive justice in the amounts paid for injuries in industry compared with the very small amounts that were paid by the private insurance companies. The branch is doing an excellent job and I look forward to the day when even greater benefits will be paid. It is the aim of the Government to increase the benefits to such an extent that the injured workers will be paid at least the basic wage but I do not advocate that it should be done by increasing the premiums and calling upon the employers to pay it. As the fund increases, so will the benefits be increased, too. I do not agree with the hon. member for Cairns that the branch should be conducted at a loss. It should be conducted on business lines.

I do not agree with the statement of the hon. member for Bulimba that industrial unions will not fight a worker's case for compensation, as I know that quite a large number of cases have been successfully conducted on behalf of the workers for compensation by the Australian Workers' Union and many other unions in Queensland.

**Mr. PLUNKETT** (Albert) (11.25 p.m.): The workers' compensation scheme is a beneficial one warmly approved by the community generally. It is really part of our industrial life. It gives some measure of security to the people working in industry. As the revenue has increased considerably I see no reason why the benefits prescribed by the Act cannot also be further increased.

Miner's phthisis patients are deserving of full compensation. In fact, sufferers from all industrial diseases are deserving of full compensation. I have always found the Commissioner sympathetic when prosecuting claims but delays are unavoidable as care must be taken to see that claims are not paid illegally. Very few of the many claimants are forced to press their claims through the courts. The State Government Insurance Office is well run and I am pleased that its funds enable greater payments to be made.

**Mr. LUCKINS** (Maree) (11.30 p.m.): The principles of this Bill concern every hon. member, whether he represents a metropolitan constituency or not. The Government should review all workers' compensation payments and increase them on basis of the increased cost of living. The state of the various funds indicates that no reason exists why the proposed increased payments were not made two or three years ago. Sufferers from industrial diseases such as miner's phthisis never regain normal health, and their compensation payments should therefore be increased. Industry should be called on to play a greater part in increased contributions. Persons who amassed riches in the early days of Mount Morgan made no provision in their estates for the miners who suffered mental distress and physical diseases as a result of their work in winning their wealth for them. I suggest that the Government should compensate people who have been discharged from the lazaret. The Government pay compensation to workers injured in industry, and these people have been injured in health through no fault of their own. The Government should pay the premium to cover them as a gesture of good will.

It has been pointed out that there is a surplus of £380,000 in the fund that has been transferred to the general reserve. That amount has been accumulating during the last four years, and it indicates that either the premiums have been too heavy or that the claims paid have been too light. It would be a gesture of good will if the Government gave married men compensation in proportion to the family liability.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! I have allowed considerable latitude in the discussion on this Bill, and the member for Maree has certainly reached my limit. I am not going to allow him to proceed on those lines. The hon. member is indulging in tedious repetition, and that is not in accordance with the spirit of the Standing Orders.

**Mr. LUCKINS:** That is probably due to the fact that I am the last speaker. I am sorry I broke the rules.

**Mr. BRAND** (Isis) (11.38 p.m.): The amendment of the Workers' Compensation Act is a matter of deep interest to all members of Parliament, and, indeed, to all people who study political economics. The original Act was introduced many years ago before Labour came into power.

It has been amended from time to time. I can conceive of nothing better that the Government could have done than to recognise the need for the much appreciated relief that is one of the main principles of the Bill. The increase of the salary or wage that an injured worker may receive before he receives the benefit of this Act to £650 is doing not much more than compensating for the increased cost of living that has occurred since 1916, when the amount was fixed at £400.

There has been considerable controversy in regard to the privileges given by the Act. Employers have held that the premiums to be paid from time to time have not been consistent with the amounts to be paid to employees who come within the ambit of the Act and that the increases in premiums have not been justified by the advantages received by the workers. Now that the advantages to the workers have been increased there cannot be the same objection to the amount of premiums to be paid. Tremendous progress has been made in this social legislation and an injured worker now receives a fairly reasonable benefit. I welcome the Bill, which will make some just contribution to the workers in these days of increased cost of living, and I support the second reading.

**The SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND HOME AFFAIRS** (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, Ithaca) (11.45 p.m.) in reply: The Leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Cairns referred to the transfer of funds to reserve. Those amounts are transferred to the reserve of the workers' compensation branch, and if I did not make that fact known the impression might easily be gathered by those who are not aware of the true situation that this money was transferred to the general reserve fund.

An adequate reserve is essential in this branch. Hon. members pointed out the huge profits for the year but that is due to the fact that there are many more people in employment and higher wages are paid on the lower grades. That, of course, will not last. Over the last preceding years the excess of income over expenditure has been—

	£
1938-39 .. ..	128,595
1939-40 .. ..	110,764
1940-41 .. ..	103,883
1941-42 .. ..	21,000

and it is getting to the danger level when you get down to an excess of only £20,000. It must be remembered that an adequate reserve is essential, for it is always possible that there may be a disaster greater than the Mount Mulligan tragedy.

The question of the rejection of claims on medical evidence is a matter over which neither the Commissioner, the Government,

nor anyone else has any control; unfortunately doctors do disagree. It must be remembered that officers of the branch can only pay claims that the auditor will pass, claims for which there is some legal justification, and in no circumstances can they be held responsible for refusing to pay claims when the medical evidence is against them.

Motion (Mr. Hanlon) agreed to.

COMMITTEE.

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Brassington, Fortitude Valley, in the chair.)

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

Bill reported, without amendment.

THIRD READING.

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

The House adjourned at 11.54 p.m.

---