

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 16 NOVEMBER 1944

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SETTLEMENT OF RETURNED SOLDIERS.

Mr. L. J. BARNES (Cairns) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

“1. As reports of the treatment of ex-soldiers already coming back are not very encouraging, and as the problem of obtaining good land can be solved by the breaking up of large estates and farms which are not being used to their fullest capacity, will he take action in this direction immediately?”

“2. Will he also make preliminary arrangements for training and drafting suitable men to suitable holdings?”

Hon. A. JONES (Charters Towers) replied—

“1 and 2. The matter of providing suitable land for the purposes of settlement by ex-servicemen is at present having the close attention of the department. The Government's obligations in the matter of land settlement relate to servicemen as a whole, the main body of whom, I would stress, is still actively engaged in the forces. One of the basic principles agreed upon between the Commonwealth and all the State Governments is that settlement of ex-servicemen on the land shall proceed on the basis that the number to be settled should be determined by settlement opportunities rather than the number of applicants. The Government's detailed plans for the placing of suitable members of the forces on suitable holdings will be announced in due course, and at the proper time. The Government will not be stampeded by pressure politics, or by questions or announcements by persons seeking to secure some personal kudos or political gain, into hasty action which might result, or tend to result, in the repetition of the failures which were associated with land settlement of soldiers after the 1914-18 war.”

FINANCES OF SILKWOOD BUTTER FACTORY.

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumba) asked the Treasurer—

“In view of the large amount owing by the Silkwood butter factory to the Agricultural Bank and the difficult position of the factory due to war-time shortage of supplies, will he have inquiries made with a view to providing sufficient additional financial assistance from the bank to enable the factory to carry on until after the war, when new land in its vicinity is expected to be opened for selection?”

Hon. E. M. HANLON (Ithaca) replied—

“The matter of additional finance to this factory has been under consideration for some time by the Agricultural Bank. In fact, a further loan advance was recently made to the association. Recently a report on the dairying potentialities of this district and the financial position of the factory has been received from the Northern Dairy Inspector for the Department of Agriculture and Stock, and this officer has been appointed to the directorate of the company.

THURSDAY, 16 NOVEMBER, 1944.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. S. J. Brassington, Fortitude Valley) took the chair at 11 a.m.

QUESTIONS.

PRICES OF SCHOOL READERS.

Mr. PATERSON (Bowen) asked the Secretary for Public Instruction—

“What price per book does the Government Printer charge the Department of Public Instruction for the various school readers used in the primary schools from Prep I. to Grade VII.?”

Hon. J. LARCOMBE (Rockhampton) replied—

“The matter is under review, and I shall advise the hon. member definitely in due course.”

The position has been the subject of representations by Mr. Stephen Theodore, parliamentary representative for the area in which the factory is situated, and is being closely watched by the Agricultural Bank Board, with the object of insuring that suppliers to the factory will continue to be adequately protected."

AUSTRALIAN DOMICILE IN DIVORCE.

Mr. WANSTALL (Toowong) asked the Premier—

"1. Did the last Premiers' Conference decide to ask the Commonwealth Government to invoke its constitutional powers to create an Australian domicile for Australian wives of American servicemen for the purpose of dissolving such marriages? If so, what is the general scheme of the proposed Commonwealth legislation for that purpose?"

"2. Will he join with the Premier of New South Wales in urging the Commonwealth Government to take the earliest possible action to introduce the necessary legislation for that purpose as I understand the Premier of New South Wales undertook to do in the Legislative Assembly of that State on Thursday, 9th instant?"

Hon. F. A. COOPER (Bremer) replied—

"1. No. The matter, however, was raised on my motion at the January, 1944, Premiers' Conference, with particular reference to the difficulties created by the varying domicile laws in the different States, and the position which was arising through the desertion of Australian women after their marriage to Allied servicemen. My motion was—'That the Commonwealth Government give favourable consideration to enacting a uniform law dealing with divorce and matrimonial causes pursuant to the power granted in that behalf by placitum XXII. of Section 51 of the Commonwealth Constitution.' It was generally agreed that the principle of an Australian domicile was desirable. The Premiers' Conference unanimously adopted the following resolution:—'That the Commonwealth Government be urged to take action in regard to the question of domicile, having regard to the views expressed by members of the conference; and that it also take into consideration the motion by Mr. Cooper.'

"2. I shall make further inquiries of the Commonwealth Government as to whether it has come to any decision in the matter."

LEAVE PAYMENTS FOR JUDGES.

Mr. WANSTALL (Toowong) asked the Attorney-General—

"1. Was any payment made to His Honour the late Chief Justice McCawley, or the executors of his estate, in lieu of recreation leave not taken during his period of office as a Judge of the Supreme Court from 12 October 1917 to 10 April 1925? If not, why not?"

"2. (a) Was any payment made to His Honour the late Chief Justice McCawley during his tenure of the office of Judge of the Supreme Court, or thereafter to the executors of his estate, in lieu of undrawn recreation or long service leave accrued due in respect of his service in the Public Service prior to his appointment to the Supreme Court bench? If not, why not? (b) Are such payments for extended and recreation leave paid to all public servants? (c) If not, what positions qualify for such payments? (d) Are such payments made on a uniform basis? (e) Is there any Act of Parliament or regulation authorising such payments?"

Hon. D. A. GLEDSON (Ipswich) replied—

"1. Payment was made to the Public Curator on behalf of the widow and children of the late Mr. Justice McCawley—see Supplementary Estimates for the Financial Year 1925-26.

"2. The Public Service Acts and Regulations are not administered by the Department of Justice."

T.B. SANATORIUMS.

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

"1. Is the Westwood Sanatorium now being used exclusively for T.B. patients?"

"2. If so, what was the number of patients at 30 June 1944?"

"3. What progress, if any, has been made to establish a sanatorium for T.B. patients in Southern Queensland?"

Hon. T. A. FOLEY (Normanby) replied—

"1. Yes.

"2. 37. The normal bed capacity of the sanatorium is 84.

"3. A scheme is being developed by the Brisbane and South Coast Hospitals Board for submission to the Commonwealth Government under the arrangement made between the Commonwealth and State Governments."

V.D. PATIENTS AND PENICILLIN.

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

"1. What number of V.D. patients were in the Government Lock Hospital at 30 June 1943, 30 June 1944, and 31 October 1944?"

"2. How many patients have been discharged as cured because of the use of penicillin?"

Hon. T. A. FOLEY (Normanby) replied—

"1. 45, 56, and 31, respectively.

"2. 63 up to 31 October 1944. The use of penicillin was commenced in April 1944."

PAPER.

The following paper was laid on the table:—

Proclamation, dated 9 November 1944, relating to the right of parents and guardians to vote at school committee meetings.

SUPREME COURT ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION.

Hon. D. A. GLEDSON (Ipswich—Attorney-General): I move—

“That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the Supreme Court Acts, 1861 to 1941, by making further provision relating to the salaries payable to and the granting of leave of absence to the judges of the Supreme Court of Queensland, and for other purposes.”

Motion agreed to.

CITY OF BRISBANE ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

THIRD READING.

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

UNEMPLOYED WORKERS INSURANCE (ACTS (SUSPENSION) BILL.

THIRD READING.

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

SUPPLY.

SEVENTEENTH ALLOTTED DAY—RECEPTION OF RESOLUTIONS.

The Resolutions reported from the Committee of Supply on Tuesday, 14 November, were presented and, on motion of Mr. Hanlon, received.

ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS.

The Resolutions being taken as read—

Hon. E. M. HANLON (Ithaca—Treasurer) I move—

“That the Resolutions be now agreed to.”

Mr. SPEAKER: I shall now proceed to discover the formal Resolutions.

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumba—Leader of Opposition) (11.14 a.m.): May I rise to a point of order? The Resolutions reported from Committee of Supply are numbered from 1 onwards, with paragraphs (a), (b), (c), and (d) and so on. Does that mean if I call “not formal” to Resolution No. 1 any hon. member may speak on paragraphs (a), (b), (c) and (d) or do you wish hon. members to call “Not formal” to each separate paragraph they wish to discuss?

Mr. SPEAKER: No. The Resolutions are grouped and the groups are numbered. Any hon. member may call “Not formal” to any group that is numbered. That means that any Resolution within that group can be discussed by hon. members.

Mr. NICKLIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And hon. members intimating a desire to discuss certain Resolutions—

Resolution 1—Aide-de-Camp to His Excellency the Governor—agreed to.

Resolution 2—Premier and Chief Secretary’s Department—

Mr. PIE (Windsor) (11.19 p.m.): No doubt, Mr. Speaker, you will remember certain questions have been asked of the Attorney-General and his reply to one today reminds us very clearly that some of the matters we have been asking come under this heading. The question is in relation to payments made to people in the Public Service. I want to make it quite clear I have no criticism whatsoever to level against the Chief Justice of this State—to my mind he is one of the finest men who have ever given service in this State of Queensland—but the matter I want to talk on today is the question of principle. Certain questions I asked in this House, to which the Attorney-General evasively replied—

Mr. Maher: Which he always does.

Mr. COOPER: I rise to a point of order. The hon. member for Windsor has made a remark to the effect the Attorney-General made an evasive reply, which in itself is objectionable, as well as the interjection by the hon. member for West Moreton—“As he always does.” Those statements are not true and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr. SPEAKER: I ask the hon. member for Windsor to withdraw that remark.

Mr. PIE: I withdraw that statement.

Mr. SPEAKER: I ask the hon. member for West Moreton to withdraw his statement also.

Mr. MAHER: I think the Attorney-General frequently does distort his remarks.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MAHER: In deference to your call I observe the rules of the House and I withdraw.

Mr. PIE: I asked the following question:—

“1. On what date did His Honour, the Chief Justice, Sir William Webb, retire from the position of Solicitor-General for the purposes of his elevation to the Supreme Court bench?

“2. On what date was the amount of £655 4s. 8d. covering cash equivalent of extended leave and recreation leave, paid to Mr. Webb upon his retirement as a public servant?

"3. On what calculated basis was this amount arrived at?

"4. Are such payments for extended and recreation leave paid to all public servants?

"5. If not, what positions qualify for such payments?

"6. Are such payments made on a uniform basis?

"7. Is there any Act of Parliament or regulation authorising such payments?

To which the Attorney-General in reply said he referred the hon. member for Windsor to answers given to his questions without notice on 9 November. As you know, Mr. Speaker, the questions would not go on the business sheet if they had been previously asked or answered. I say the Attorney-General's reply to me was not in point of fact correct. I have nothing against payments to anyone if they are in accordance with the law of this country but I do want people treated on an equal basis in respect to such payments. What I want to ask is: on which calculated basis was this amount of £655 arrived at? Surely that is a fair question.

Mr. Cooper: To whom?

Mr. PIE: To Mr. Webb upon his retirement.

Mr. Cooper: The question is a fair question to whom?

Mr. PIE: To the hon. gentleman if he likes, as Premier. I ask now.

Mr. Cooper: You should have asked it.

Mr. PIE: Of the Attorney-General who provided for it in his Supplementary Estimates of 1933-1934. There must be some basis on which the amount was arrived at. Are such payments for extended recreation leave paid to public servants? I make this point: if it is paid to one it should be paid to all people; if it is not, what persons qualify for such payments? Surely we are entitled to know. I make that statement to the Premier: if he is paying these amounts to public servants he should make it clear who qualifies for such payments. I think we as representatives of the people are entitled to know whether such payments are made on a uniform basis. Why should one person be treated on a different basis from another? Why should a public servant not know whether at the end of his service whether he is going to get those payments for extended leave and recreation leave. Is there any Act of Parliament or regulation authorising such payments? I have already made it very clear that I have no objection whatever to payments to anyone if they were legal and in accordance with Acts passed by this Parliament, but it is unconstitutional and wrong for such payments to be made without Parliamentary authority. We as members of this Parliament are justified in having a straightforward reply to a matter such as this, which affects the whole of the Public Service, the judiciary and other people in this State.

Resolution 2—Premier and Chief Secretary's Department—agreed to.

Resolution 3—Treasury—agreed to.

Resolution 4—Department of Justice—

Mr. POWER (Baroona) (11.25 a.m.): I desire to refer to the excellent work performed by the Licensing Commission. There have been very great difficulties at times in obtaining accommodation at hotels because of the influx of service men from other countries into this State. On more than one occasion I have referred to Mr. Byrne and his staff in an endeavour to obtain accommodation in this city. He went to no end of trouble to get the accommodation. He got in touch with various hotel proprietors and on every occasion he was successful. The work of the Licensing Commission has been of very great value to the State of Queensland in many ways.

Over the years, accommodation provided at some hotels, particularly in country centres, was by no means up to standard, but as the result of the work of the Licensing Commission, Mr. Byrne and his staff, and the licensing inspectors throughout the State, many old hotels have been brought up to date and can now be classed as model hotels at which one can obtain the best of accommodation. Hot water was once unobtainable in many hotels in Queensland. As the hon. member for Buranda has reminded me, in a number of them it was impossible to obtain even a bath. There is still some room for improvement but that improvement cannot be made now, not by reason of any fault of the Licensing Commission but because it is impossible to obtain man-power to carry out even very necessary improvements. I congratulate Mr. Byrne and his staff on the work they have done.

I desire also to pay tribute to the work of the officers in control of the Electoral Office, Mr. O'Hagan, Mr. Maguire and the staff generally. There has been criticism in this Chamber by members of the Opposition on the provision made for enabling the electors of Queensland to obtain a vote at the last election. Every facility should be made available for electors to record their votes, and these men worked long periods in an endeavour to ensure that all members of the fighting forces who were on the move as a result of the exigencies of war had the opportunity to vote. Forms were sent to the military units to enable soldiers to make application for postal votes. Moreover, proxy forms were made available, and a number of men availed themselves of the opportunity of recording votes by post and others by proxy. This shows to what extent the department went to ensure that these men obtained a vote. There is evidence that on one occasion ballot papers had to be sent to a certain locality that for security reasons has not been named.

It was found necessary, as the result of movement of troops, to charter a plane at the last moment to deliver these ballot papers and give these soldiers what is their right, the opportunity of having some say in the government of the country for which they

are fighting. I pay a tribute to the various assistant returning officers, Mr. Carroll of Baroona in particular, for the excellent work done during the last election.

I am keenly interested in the work of the Prisons Department. When men are incarcerated in prison for offending against society they should not be merely left there to serve their sentences. They should have the means of rehabilitating themselves after serving their terms. Prior to the administration of Mr. Whitney, we had mob rule and mob control in Queensland prisons. I advise those hon. members who have not yet done so to visit Boggo Road and see what is being done there now. Prisoners are being taught tinsmithing, mat-making, carpentry, plumbing, tailoring and bootmaking. Already there has been a substantial reduction in the cost of maintenance of our prisons and I can visualise the day when they will be self-supporting as the result of this policy of putting prisoners to useful reproductive work. Men who entered those institutions without any trade have come out tradesmen and been enabled to take a part in the work of society and avoid future trouble. In many instances our excellent detectives find employment for prisoners upon their release and it should be the aim of every decent citizen to help rehabilitate those who have fallen.

Our system of prison farms is excellent. I advise those hon. members who have not seen Palen Creek to make a visit of inspection in order that they may see the good being done there. The prisoners are carefully selected by Mr. Whitney, who is a good psychologist; they are placed on their honour and they do good work. One or two have broken their parole but they have been severely dealt with and in general the system has been successful.

Mr. J. F. Barnes: Tedious repetition.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I remind the hon. member for Bundaberg that I am in charge of proceedings here.

Mr. J. F. Barnes: I thought they were.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! If the hon. member will persist in misbehaving I shall name him.

Mr. POWER: The system of prison farms is being extended to other parts of the State. The Attorney-General tells us that it is proposed to establish one in North Queensland. At Palen Creek a good dairy herd has been built up, stud stock has been introduced and the herds of surrounding farmers have been improved by service from the stud stock of our prison farm.

The prison farm does not compete against private enterprise. Some time ago there was a shortage of corn in Brisbane and the Prisons Department was able to supply the market with corn grown on the prison farm, much to the benefit of those who required it. A good deal of reforestation, especially research work, also is being done on the prison farm. I want to congratulate Mr. Whitney on his splendid work in recommending this form of prison treatment and I commend the Minis-

ter for having accepted his recommendation and done such an excellent job. I have met a number of men who have come from the farm and I am assured that they all get an opportunity to rehabilitate themselves. Many of the long-term prisoners are sent to the farm when they are nearing the completion of their terms so that they might as it were make contact again with the outside world from which they have been separated so long. There is no desire on the part of Mr. Whitney to have the gaol full of prisoners. On the contrary, it is his purpose in life to cure them of their criminal tendencies or their disposition to offend so that they may be re-established in society. Therefore, I am pleased to know that it is the intention of the Government to establish more prison farms throughout the State.

Mr. J. F. BARNES (Bundaberg) (11.39 a.m.): I should like to have a few words concerning this dictatorship that exists in Queensland—the Licensing Commission. It is the only lower court that has conferred on it power of attorney. In setting it up the Government created an instrument that deferred to vested interests such as the breweries. That instrument is the Licensing Commission. That commission can say that two and two are ten or that two and two are four, but whatever its decision there is no appeal against it to the Full Court of Queensland, the High Court of Australia, or to the Privy Council. I have had experience of the filth of this court. The commissioner himself, Byrne, proved to be 100 per cent. a pig on that occasion. He issues an order in a particular court to make me attend the court whereby I would be served with a further summons and had I got that summons my application to the court would have ceased as I had no licence to transfer. But they did not have the tenacity of purpose to handle the situation and literally speaking I flogged them for it. However, before doing so I had to depend on the decision of that court and the two supporting magistrates on it upheld my appeal. Byrne still held out because they had to get rid of a nuisance in the liquor trade who would not play ball, the man who would not give free beer, the man who would not allow barmaids to work in filthy closed bars, and point-blank refuse to trade after 8 o'clock with all doors and windows closed. So that when I would not play ball I had to be got rid of by the use of this dictatorship. Not only is this man not competent in that direction but what has been allowed to happen in connection with new hotels in Queensland also proves that he knows nothing about his job. For argument's sake let me say experience shows that for the urinals in hotels the water system must be as stable as possible. You have to use concealed pipes if possible, otherwise they become damaged through being knocked about. Notwithstanding that fact the Licensing Commission in modern hotel buildings has allowed external piping, which have been pulled to pieces, together with the walls to which they were attached.

That is not all. When I was in my hotel in Bundaberg the Licensing Commission

issued an order on me to do a certain job. I point-blank refused to do it for the plain and simple reason that it asked me to put the lavatory and urinal immediately outside the dining-room. Not only did I refuse to do so but I said "Over my dead body you will do it." Furthermore, the Licensing Commission wanted me to erect a ladies' toilet alongside the open lounge. I said "Over my dead body you will do it," and they did not do it, but when I sold out and the new licensee came in it did have the gent's lavatory placed immediately outside the dining-room door. Why did that happen? Because this Licensing Commission had a stupid bug in its head that you must have the toilet as close as possible to the bar irrespective of its proximity to the dining-room, as it was in this case.

These things are happening throughout Queensland. It is high time we had a commission of inquiry to inquire into what has been happening and to stop this dictatorship that has resulted under the Licensing Commission. Its members know nothing about their jobs, and when I say nothing I mean nothing. It is high time that something was done. I should have said they know nothing, with one exception. The only thing they know about their jobs is their desire to agree with the police and agree with the breweries and do what they want them to do. The Liquor Acts Amendment Act, under which the Licensing Commission was appointed, was specially made for the breweries and vested interests.

Four years ago I proved that there was a mistake in placing a limit on the licensing fee. The licensing fee is based on 2½ per cent. of the purchases of alcoholic liquor for the year, but the limit to such fee is £300. That is, if the 2½ per cent. of purchases is greater than £300 only £300 is paid. The result of my exposure was that the Government amended that Act. The figures submitted by the Licensing Commission for the past year prove that approximately £7,000 additional was paid by breweries and £7,000 extra paid by hotels in the past 12 months. In other words, the breweries and hotels are paying £15,000-odd additional in fees this year. That was a gift to them previously. It was a gift from this Labour Government to whom? It was a gift to the big breweries and vested interests that own the hotels. Had it not been for the exposure by me the licensing fee would probably have remained as it was.

I also spoke about other matters in connection with the Commission. Why have the Government not changed them? Because they were not so obvious to the workers. The workers did not come in contact with them. The workers saw the stupidity of allowing breweries and vested interests a gift of £15,000 a year from a Labour Government. The Premier need not look at me as he is doing, Mr. Mann, because it was a big gift to the breweries and vested interests that own the hotels. It was a stupid mistake done by design, just as the appointment of the commission was done by design to give power to vested interests. It is high time, as I said, that a commission of inquiry was appointed to

inquire into the mistakes and stupidities of the Licensing Commission, as well as the dictatorial powers it possesses. Just imagine a lower court having a full power of attorney! It is disgraceful.

Mr. THEODORE (Herbert) (11.47 a.m.): I want to say a few words on this vote about the conduct of elections and the preparation of the electoral rolls, as much has been said that has cast a reflection on certain people, including the Minister and the officers of his department. I will give my experience during the three elections that I have been a member of this Parliament. From my observations every effort was made to keep the rolls clean and see that no names appeared on them of electors who were dead or who should not have been on them as they had left the district, and to see that only those electors entitled to vote appeared on them. Electors had every facility and every opportunity to exercise their right to vote.

During the last election I found out a week or two before the close of the period when names could be struck off the roll—I forget what date that was—that over 1,000 names had been struck off the roll in the Herbert electorate many of whom should not have been struck off. These people had been taken away and they had been released, and it was not until just prior to the election that we found their names were struck off the roll. This occurred owing to a misunderstanding of the position by the local policemen. Instead of marking these people as being temporarily away from the State, they marked them to be struck off the roll, and the names of 500 men and women were struck off that should not have been struck off. They returned to the district before the election and they were entitled to vote, but many of them would not vote because their names had been struck off the roll.

I have closely observed the conduct of the elections in the Herbert electorate and I have found no cause for complaint about the conduct of the election by Government officials. If I knew of an instance in which a voter attempted to duplicate his or her vote or do something improper I should not hesitate to report it. I know that the Government do not stand for the things with which they have been charged by members of the Opposition. It is our duty, if we can bring forward any concrete evidence of something wrong, to do so. Many of these charges are baseless, but the matter should be cleared up so that the people will have no doubt as to the way in which these elections are conducted.

Hon. D. A. GLEDSON (Ipswich—Attorney-General) (11.53 a.m.): There are one or two matters that require a reply. The hon. member for Windsor complained that he did not get answers he wanted in reply to some of his questions. When the hon. member for Windsor has been a few more years in this House he will probably learn that he has the right to ask questions, but he cannot both ask the questions and give the answers himself. Any answers that have been given by the Department of Justice have been given in a correct manner, and according to the

way in which the questions were asked. If the hon. member for Windsor or any other hon. member mixes up the Department of Justice, the Chief Secretary's Department, and the Treasury in a question directed to one of those departments he can get the answer from only one department, and that is what was given to him. When he can frame a question correctly he can get the answer. After all, too, a member can ask a question but there is no obligation on the Minister to answer that question; it is done as a matter of courtesy. One would think that they had a perfect right to frame questions and frame the answers as well.

Every courtesy has been accorded to the hon. member for Windsor as regards his question, which has been answered in accordance with the administration of the department.

The hon. member for Baroona referred to the treatment of prisoners in the Boggo Road prison and on prison farms. As you know, Mr. Speaker, prison reform has been agitating the minds of people in all countries in the world for a number of years. We in Queensland have, for long since got far from the system of chain gangs. Queensland prisoners are treated in such a way that they realise they are still human beings even though they are in prison. I thank the hon. member for Baroona for the way in which he approached this question and his complimentary remarks about the Comptroller-General of prisoners, Mr. Whitney, and his officers. Of course, some prisoners are very difficult, and strict disciplinary measures have to be taken with them, but, as a whole, the prisoners have a better outlook under the Queensland reform system than they used to. As the hon. member stated, the prison-farm system is being extended to different parts of the State.

The hon. member for Bundaberg, in his usual blustering fashion, attacked the Licensing Commission. His language was such that one would think he was speaking in the back-yard of a hotel and not from the floor of the House. Mr. Byrne, the secretary of the Licensing Commission, is beyond reproach. No one can point the finger of scorn at him. He cannot be bribed by the hon. member for Bundaberg or anybody else. He does his duty according to the laws passed by this Parliament. Notwithstanding this, from the floor of the House Mr. Byrne is referred to as being 100 per cent. pig. I consider that such language is not at all fit for Parliament House. It is more fitted for the back-yard of a hotel. If the hon. member for Bundaberg in his peregrinations around different hotels in places has fallen foul of the Licensing Commission and it has put him in his place and made him carry out the law, there is no reason why he should come into this House and vent his spleen on men whose boots he is not fit to wipe. The commission comprises Mr. Ferry, a member of the Industrial Court, Mr. Cameron, the Chief Stipendiary Magistrate of Queensland, and Mr. Byrne, the secretary. I do not know whether the hon. member for Bundaberg can compare with them in any way at all. The

secretary is only one of three, and the Licensing Commission has to carry out the laws as passed by this Parliament. The commission has certain powers under those laws, and has power to send inspectors to hotels to see that the accommodation provided is fit for the people, and that the licensee is carrying out the work for which he was granted a licence. If in the course of their duties inspectors find that instructions are not being complied with there is no reason why they should be slated for carrying out their duty as they are required by this Parliament to do.

The hon. member raised the matter of a transfer of a licence that was not given to him. Special provision was made by this Parliament that a person who committed breaches of the Licensing Act and the liquor laws could not get out of the result by merely transferring his licence.

Mr. J. F. Barnes: But I did. Don't talk rot.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. GLEDSON: That he could not get out of it by merely transferring the licence from himself to his wife or to his sister.

Mr. J. F. Barnes: It is perfectly legal to do it and I did it.

Mr. GLEDSON: That is the particular case the hon. member brings forward here. When the hon. member brings forward these things he should be sure of his ground.

Mr. J. F. Barnes: I am sure of it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. GLEDSON: It might be that as the Licensing Commission is not here the hon. member thinks he can say anything he likes. I know my department and what goes on in it. I know the breaches committed by the hon. member whilst he held a licence, for which he had to be dealt with by the Commission.

Mr. J. F. BARNES: I rise to a point of order. I committed no breach for which the Licensing Commission had to pull me up. I committed breaches for which the police had to pull me up in connection with trading after hours, while everyone else was allowed to trade but me.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I am sure hon. members will accept the explanation of the hon. member for Bundaberg.

Mr. GLEDSON: If any hon. member gets up in this House and calls the chief executive officer of the Licensing Commission a 100 per cent. pig I am in duty bound to defend him. Those attempts were made to get over the licensing laws passed by this Parliament. Because he was stopped, he must abuse the Licensing Commission.

Mr. J. F. BARNES: I rise to a point of order. I did not make any attempt to get over the law of the land. I made an application to the Licensing Commission. It was perfectly legal and it was granted eventually. I ask that my statement be accepted by the Attorney-General.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The Attorney-General—

Mr. J. F. BARNES: Mr. Speaker, I have requested that the Attorney-General accept my statement.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member raised a point of order and was given the opportunity to state his case. I am sure every hon. member here accepts what he says.

Mr. GLEDSON: I never indulge in personalities in this House. This matter would not have been brought up by me but for the attack made by the hon. member on the Licensing Commission this morning. As the administrative head I am in duty bound to bring out the facts. I could go on for hours and tell a great deal about what happened.

Mr. J. F. Barnes: Go on and tell it.

Mr. GLEDSON: It is all in my head, even the time when the hon. member for Bundaberg came up to Ipswich to find sanctuary.

Mr. J. F. Barnes: What harm is there in finding sanctuary from a mob of heels?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. GLEDSON: I am not going to get down into the gutter.

Mr. J. F. Barnes: You are in the gutter.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. GLEDSON: I propose dealing with these matters in the way in which they should be dealt with. If hon. members wish any information about the department when dealing with these Resolutions I am prepared to give it, just as I am prepared to stand up for my officers when I know they are being attacked unjustly.

The hon. member for Herbert spoke about the conduct of the elections. No charges have been made. Various statements have been made both in and out of the House and they were answered fully. The matter was discussed fully on the Estimates in Committee and I do not propose to go into it further.

Mr. AIKENS: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! For the benefit of hon. members who are new to the House I might say that reply by the Minister in charge of the department closes the debate.

Resolution 4—Department of Justice—agreed to.

Resolution 5—Department of Public Lands—

Mr. MAHER (West Moreton) (12.7 p.m.): I should like to refer briefly to water conservation and irrigation. I notice from the annual report of the Land Administration Board that during 1943-44 investigations of underground water were carried out in different parts of the State, notably in my own electorate of West Moreton. The report says

on page 2, under the heading "Irrigation and Water Conservation Branch",—

"Investigations are being conducted in respect of the availability and extent of underground water suitable for irrigation in the Lockyer and Bremer Valleys; Burnett-Elliott and Burdekin deltas. In the Lockyer Valley some 260 irrigation wells have been sunk by individual farmers and irrigation plants are being operated therefrom. An area of 6,000 acres, requiring 5,360-ac. feet of water, has been irrigated from underground supplies during the past year for the production of lucerne, potatoes and other vegetables."

It goes on to record similar investigations in other parts of the State. I am very pleased indeed that the Minister is continuing the good work of his predecessor, Mr. Walsh, in keeping irrigation and water-conservation matters well to the fore, because the secret of our future progress in Queensland is without doubt wrapped up in the solution of our water problems.

There is just a point or two in connection with the investigations that I should like to refer to. So many wells having been sunk over a period by individual farmers and so many irrigation plants having been constructed to operate them, necessarily a very large quantity of water is withdrawn from the natural underground sources. One of the points the officers engaged in this work are looking into is whether the construction of weirs is likely to stabilise the quantity of water available for irrigation in these natural underground basins. That is an important aspect of the work of the department. It seems obvious enough to me that the constant drawing away of large quantities of water for irrigation purposes over a period, say 10, 20 or 30 years, will diminish and possibly exhaust the source of supply unless it can be replenished. The question is whether the construction of weirs in streams by providing a constant supply of surface water is likely to help in stabilising the underground supply. I am inclined to think it will. I hold the view that the construction of weirs and the conservation of water thereby are going to be a great help in maintaining the supply in these vast underground basins. I can only hope that the Minister will continue these investigations because a great deal of importance attaches to their ultimate results.

On the same point I notice that under the heading "Artesian trust bores" the report says—

"Repeat measurements of trust artesian bores have been effected during the year. These indicate that for the 64 flowing trust bores the average diminution in total flow over a period of five years up to 30 June 1944, has been 2 per cent. per annum, or 11,000 gallons per day, per annum, for each bore."

That seems to indicate that constant drawing on supplies that are not replenished is reducing the availability of water in the great artesian basin. Differences of opinion have been expressed as to the cause. Some people hold that at great depth corrosion of bore

casing might occur, with possible silting that would reduce the flow of water upward but nobody seems to be able to determine the point satisfactorily. Therefore we must lean a little to the belief that our artesian supplies are gradually diminishing.

That raises a matter of considerable importance. It relates to a method that has been adopted in the U.S.A. by which flood waters are diverted by means of a distributor unit into the known underground basins in order to replenish their supplies. There is a company in New York known as the Ranney Water Collector Company. In some of the arid areas of the U.S.A. vast natural underground reservoirs exist. This company has a modern method, the details of which I am unable to explain to the House, of diverting flood waters of any stream through these collector units into the underground basins, where they are stored. Conversely, the same collector unit can recover them. In Arizona there is a plant that enables up to 10,000,000 gallons of water a day to be recovered. It will be seen that under this modern method flood waters that otherwise rush away to sea can be diverted and contained in impervious rocks, gravel, or chalky formations underground.

Mr. Dunstan: Would they not silt up?

Mr. MAHER: Apparently not.

It is not generally known that to meet the water requirements of London the authorities tap a great natural underground reservoir. The impervious rock below the city is basin-like. The basin itself is composed largely of chalk and gravel. For centuries past, Londoners have been drawing upon these supplies for their domestic purposes. There has been a diminution of supplies after centuries of usage. Before the war, plans were adopted to divert water from the upper reaches of the Thames River when they were in flood by means of the distributor process I have made reference to. The war intervened and the scheme has not so far been proceeded with, but no doubt when the war ends the matter will be gone into further. I suggest that it might be worth while to bring this process under the notice of the officers of the Sub-Department of Irrigation and Water Supply so that they can have it in mind when giving consideration to the question of underground supplies. It is a question that necessitates the co-operation of geologists as well as engineers. In Australia, in many of our arid zones, there are already known to be vast underground natural basins that can store water, which of course are being drawn on today. These show continued diminution of supply and the question is whether it is within the bounds of practical possibilities at some future time when more is known about this process, to replenish our great artesian basin and also our sub-artesian basin, and generally be able to utilise the great volume of water that flows away to waste in good seasons when floods occur. That would imprison this water, which would not be subject to evaporation, and keep it fresh and pure. There is room for vast investigation in a matter of this kind. The Minister might

take the matter up. No doubt the system is known to his engineers, but whether it can be applied to Australian conditions is a question for determination. I cannot see why it cannot. It has succeeded in the U.S.A.

It might even be advisable to send a couple of competent men across to the United States to investigate these modern developments of diverting flood waters into natural underground basins, containing them there, and drawing upon them from time to time for irrigation, watering stock, or general town or domestic use. Those are important problems and they should have consideration by the responsible authorities.

I am thankful to the Minister for his initiative in having taken action in terms of the Land and Water Resources Development Act of 1933 through the Bureau of Industry to consider the possibilities of developing the resources of the Lockyer and Bremer catchment areas. I know officers have been engaged on this investigation, and no doubt it will extend to other areas. I have a particular interest in it because these catchment areas are largely within my own electorate. I believe there is no better part of the State for a great irrigation scheme that could be made the basis of experiments and that would serve as a nucleus for irrigation in other suitable areas. I am not using any parish-pump argument when I say that, because I want to look at the matter of water conservation and irrigation from a State-wide angle. I submit to the Minister and members of the legislature that here is an old-established district very closely settled by farmers who understand the art of irrigation and therefore are in a position to make a success of it. One of the great difficulties in establishing any new irrigation enterprise is that the department is obliged to accept all sorts of types of men as irrigationists. These people make application for an irrigation farm, and necessarily the Government wish to get it going, and if there are 3,000 or 5,000 farms available obviously the authorities are not at liberty to pick and choose in order to get the desirable types of irrigationists; and so men who although enthusiastic enough are not experienced, go on the land, and in consequence irrigation settlements have received numerous setbacks in various parts of Australia. The Theodore irrigation scheme was originally planned to settle 5,000 irrigationists. Obviously the arguments I have just advanced would have applied there had that settlement gone ahead. It was put on a reduced basis—with a few hundred—and even then many difficulties arose because many of the men were not expert in irrigation.

In the Lockyer and Bremer area there are old-established farmers, men who handed on their knowledge from father to son, and who have had experience of irrigation over a long period, and are therefore well qualified to make a success of irrigation. An irrigation scheme there could be a model one, and would serve as a guide to schemes that might subsequently be developed in other parts of the State. At the present time two

weirs have been constructed in the Lockyer Creek and another one is in the course of construction near Gatton. When completed, these weirs will back the water up the creek for a distance of approximately 4 miles from each weir site. Obviously a great deal of water will be contained behind those weirs, and what has already been contained has been of the greatest value to the farmers in the past two or three years, because of the need of the Australian Government for increased vegetable production to supply the Allied services and our civilian requirements. Those weirs have helped very materially to increase the production of potatoes, onions and green vegetables of every kind. I hope to see the full plan carried out ultimately.

I hope the Minister at some time convenient to himself will be able to come up to the Lockyer district and have a look over the scene. If he does he will get a local understanding of the value of these weirs and the water that is backed up, and so put at the disposal of the irrigationists of the district. The original plan provided for the construction of 16 weirs in the Lockyer Creek alone. These weirs are not costly as water-works schemes go. They run from £5,000 to £12,000. I know of no better method of conserving water on a practical basis than those weirs. Of course we hear from time to time of very large and spectacular schemes for storing large volumes of water, which run into an estimated cost from £500,000 to £2,000,000. We have also heard of the very bold scheme of Dr. Bradfield, to cost probably £60,000,000 or £70,000,000. These are schemes that might dazzle the imagination and have much value—and in the course of time no doubt they will be realised—but the schemes that appeal to me as a practical man and a realist are the local schemes. These will be of immediate value, do not cost very much, and can be very helpful.

I very much value the work that has been carried out by the Sub-department of Irrigation and Water Supply in the area with which I am familiar. I know the satisfaction and advantages irrigation has given to many farmers. I know, too, how highly it is valued by townsmen in the Lockyer area, and how rapidly it will transform the whole of the Lockyer district into one of expanding wealth and population and make it a more valuable province to the State.

Mr. THEODORE (Herbert) (12.25 p.m.): I realise that the future welfare of the State and the nation depends to a very considerable degree on our land policy. I am very pleased that the Minister is making determined efforts to ensure that Queensland shall be kept more in the forefront in post-war settlement on the land. When the war ends there will be a great demand for land, and we must make available the most suitable areas, so that the men who occupy it will be successful. This will depend on the State Government. I believe that if we depend on the Federal Government, irrespective of their politics, we shall not receive the attention necessary to make a success of the undertaking. That can be done only by the initiative

of the State Government. I am being candid. The State must act courageously and boldly in dealing with some of these great problems that will soon confront us. Utilisation of water for electrification, irrigation and the proper distribution of water in the areas in which it is badly needed, is one of the essential things that must be dealt with. We should not balk at a job no matter how large or costly it may appear, if it has the approval of experts who are competent to advise. In North Queensland, from Mackay to Mossman, there are all the essentials for tremendous agricultural development. In the past development has been confined to sugar. The people there have been sugar-minded, and thought nothing else was worth while, but we must get away from that idea. I know that sugar will continue to be an important industry in the North, but this industry may not be able to do all that will be required to be done in the North. Other forms of agriculture must be undertaken. The land is very fertile.

All that rich coast land from Ingham through the Herbert electorate to as far north as Mossman is capable of producing almost anything. Round Ingham there are great valleys of rich soil and as yet very little use has been made of them. The rich area of Ingham may be seen from the train but in order to appreciate their full extent and value one requires to make a tour in a motor car. From Cardwell up to Tully and Innisfail there are thousands upon thousands of acres of land capable of producing almost everything that will be urgently needed when that increased population we desire for the defence of this country becomes a reality. Means of using the waterways will have to be devised before these lands are opened up. I agree with the hon. member for West Moreton when he speaks of millions of tons of water going to waste each year. It will be criminal if that waste is allowed to continue and if we do not devise means of utilising that water by diverting it to the areas in which millions of pounds are being lost to the nation today through drought. This waste of water is not spasmodic. Extensive floods occur in the North every year. We should devote a considerable amount of money to the investigation of the best possible means of utilising that water not only for irrigation but also for the production of cheap electricity. The Prime Minister and other Federal Cabinet Ministers have referred to the fact that happenings of the last two or three years have driven home to us the urgent need for increasing our population, but that increased population must be settled where it will be most useful, where it can derive the greatest benefit from development and where it can best defend this country against future attack. We must not look only to the next few years. We must look 20 or 30 years ahead.

Mr. Yeates: Longer than that.

Mr. THEODORE: Yes. We must look 100 years ahead because on what we do today will depend the protection of the future generations of the country.

Many people have criticised Dr. Bradfield for his great schemes for the development of the country. They have labelled his ideas wild dreams, things that should not be considered. He should not be criticised in that way. We should turn our thoughts to such schemes as those he proposed.

There is much to be said in support of the contention of the hon. member for West Moreton that it is possible to augment the supplies in the existing basins by the diversion of water in accordance with methods that have been adopted in other countries, such as the U.S.A. I think it will be found, too, that Dr. Bradfield's scheme would not be the tremendously costly undertaking that some people would think, so long of course as a proper system was adopted, the money was wisely spent, and waste was avoided. These great areas are capable of supplying a tremendous volume of water for the carrying out of the scheme Dr. Bradfield has outlined.

At 12.37 p.m.,

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

Mr. THEODORE: The cost, whatever it may be, need not be spread over a few years but may be extended over 20 to 30 years and even a longer period. There is this important fact, too, that it would provide employment for a large body of men for a long time, and we should have the satisfaction of knowing that its deliberate purpose was to provide the people, especially those in the newly settled districts, with cheap electric power and thereby help to make their lives worth living. It is because of the importance of this subject that I rose again today to stress it.

I also desire to congratulate the Minister and his staff on the steps they have taken in the planning of our future forest production. Our forests are going to play a very important part in the future of the country, and we cannot start too soon to develop the industry and so place it on a permanent basis so that it cannot be completely destroyed.

Mr. Brand: Your electorate is a good one for reforestation.

Mr. THEODORE: Yes. There are certain areas in the Herbert electorate that could be used wholly for the establishment of permanent forests.

Mr. Brand: Do you know of any better place in Australia?

Mr. THEODORE: I know of no better place in Australia, and I have travelled over a great part of it. There are areas of good land with somewhat suitable climatic conditions in the north-west of Australia, but they are almost entirely denuded of large timber. North Queensland is admirably suited to the development of the forestry industry, and it would be a crying shame to delay any longer than necessary in establishing it. In the past few years we have really plundered our forests, literally murdered the timber, because of the war situation. No doubt much of this was unavoidable on that account, and so in many places comparatively

young timber has been cut in the closely settled areas, but this practice should stop as soon as possible and we should determine to preserve the forests and to cut only the mature timber. Then we shall have a continuity of supplies of the most valuable timber the world has ever seen. I have referred to the subject with the special object of drawing attention to the important part that forestry will play in the future life of the State. Above all, it is a work that must be undertaken by the State Government. The Federal Government may suggest that they propose to undertake work of this kind, but we must not be dependent upon any other Government. We must undertake the work ourselves, because the duty devolves upon the State Government to see that Queensland's future is not neglected.

Mr. Brand: In other words, you do not think that the Commonwealth Government will do the work quickly enough?

Mr. THEODORE: I do not think they will because influences in the Southern States are so powerful that they endanger the future welfare of this State.

Mr. Yeates: Now you have got it.

Mr. THEODORE: That is what I honestly believe. I realise that the State Government are able to do only what the finance at their disposal enables them to do. We should formulate our views in regard to the known assets of this State and the development that is needed, and demand that the necessary work be carried out. While we remain a State Parliament—and I hope we shall always do so—we can bring forward proposals for the development of the State so that this work can be embarked on within a short period of the termination of hostilities. Naturally we agree that this work cannot be undertaken until the war ends, much as we would like it to be started at once. Certain money has been placed to reserve funds, however, to enable us to make an immediate start when opportunity offers. That money will not be sufficient to do the job. The present financial arrangement between the Commonwealth and States has been made for a period ending one year after the war, but I believe it will continue for all time. We shall have to look to the Commonwealth Government for financial help for our developmental work, and that help will have to be considerable to allow our Government to undertake the great tasks that lie before them. The Minister has shown a lively interest in the problems associated with our land, such as hydro-electricity, reforestation, and irrigation, and we can safely leave them in his hands.

Mr. EDWARDS (Nanango) (12.45 p.m.): While I agree with the statements of the hon. member who has just resumed his seat as to the necessity for irrigation I disagree with him on one point, namely, that the State Government should carry out big national irrigation projects.

Mr. Theodore: I said they have to initiate them, not do them.

Mr. EDWARDS: I agree with that. At the same time we must get Australia as a whole interested in them, and in saying that I include the people generally. The various Governments, including the Commonwealth Government, must be seized of their value and importance. If we are to develop this country we must be prepared to spend a tremendous amount of money, particularly in carrying out the big schemes that have been proposed. I have seen a tremendous area of Australia. My travels have impressed on me the fact that we shall make no headway worth while in this State unless we face up to the problem of irrigation. Nowadays we put people upon the land but do not consider the most vital question—how to keep them there. The State has certainly let down the western areas. It has not provided the water facilities that should have been provided nor the transport facilities needed to get stock to market, and to move them from one district to another in drought time. Our cattle and sheep have been allowed to die in millions on our pastoral country and on our stock routes through lack of water and feed. That is why I say we have let down the western areas, including the north-western area. We have talked for years and years of water and transport facilities but what have we done? The facts show that we have not faced up to these problems. We must realise how serious the position is, especially if we are to encourage the population we need to develop those lands, particularly by means of irrigation, and the capital required for developmental purposes to come here. We cannot get these things until we first tackle these two problems.

I admit that not one water or transport proposal has been carried out in Australia without much criticism by the people. It was a tremendous task in the first place for those who had the brains and authority to propose such a scheme to get it through Parliament, because many parliamentarians opposed it. That was true of the huge reservoir between Perth and Kalgoorlie. Hon. members may have read what took place. The originator of the scheme, Sir John Forrest, had to fight tooth and nail, and the only person who stood by him was the engineer—I think O'Connor was his name. I am old enough to know that numbers of people died between Perth and Kalgoorlie in the gold rush for the want of water. I have been in Kalgoorlie since that scheme was carried out, and I saw the gardens and parks and the beautiful city that has been created there. All that was achieved because one man realised what had to be done if there was to be any development in Western Australia, and was big enough to face up to the problem. It behoves us to face up to the problem here. I can remember when the Chaffey brothers went to Mildura, and I recollect the tremendous fight they put up before they could get any help. They selected land—similar to some of ours—on which to carry out their great irrigation undertaking, land that was estimated to carry one sheep to 30 acres. The Victorian people might very well have given it to them, for

they should thank God that they ever came to look at it. They were subjected to criticism, not only by the community but by a big percentage of the members of Parliament, but that scheme turned out to be one of the saviours of Victoria, and a great help to Australia. Many schemes have been carried out along the Murray since those days, and with the drought conditions now prevailing in Victoria that State would be insolvent but for the irrigated areas of the Murray and other places.

When the settlers first went up and settled on the dry belts in the sandy country in the north-west of Victoria, they discovered that after a dry spell similar to the present one there was no water within 50 to 100 miles—not even sufficient for domestic purposes. It was realised that if those people were not catered for the whole country would be vacated, and it would revert to its wild state. Therefore it was decided to build reservoirs and to send water by open channels up to 400 miles. After a few years there was no less than 3,000-odd miles of channelling, and the water was carried by gravitation over all those areas. All the settlers had to do was to open a drain from the main channel, a mile or a mile and a half long, to where his tank was, and he could fill the tank with water three times a year. That saved that country. As a result millions upon millions of bushels of wheat have been grown and sent to Britain and other countries. That is certainly a monument to the foresight of the people who established the irrigation scheme.

If we are to do these things we must cease merely talking about them and throwing them up at one another. We must face up to the position like men. We must give these people the conditions they deserve. It is now too late to do this in many instances because the people have drifted away. We find, especially those members who represent the great western areas of this State, that the country towns are nothing like what they used to be in times gone by. There is an explanation for it. There must be a clear understanding as to why this is so. After conversing with the people in the West and questioning them, I am satisfied that the cause, generally speaking, is absolute neglect on the part of the Government. In the first place they never gave these people the facilities necessary to enable them to bring their stock to markets when they desired to do so. Frequently the stock routes were of no use to them at all; their sheep died on the way to agistment. Educational facilities were in a similar state. Gradually these people decided that it was to their interest to drift towards the coast. The result is that it will require a much greater effort now to do all these necessary things than it would have been in the past. First of all, confidence has to be restored, the memory of the experiences of the past has to be erased. Why, it was only the other day that somebody spoke to a business man of Brisbane about decentralisation and how necessary it was that people should return to the West if it was to be developed. His retort was, "If you think you are going

to get me to go into the West you are mistaken. I would rather you cut my throat." If that is the general feeling, a tremendous job confronts us. What I am suggesting should be done today should have been done years ago. To be fair to my colleagues, many of them spoke in like terms in this Chamber for many years and I have been doing it for the last 21 years. The Government have not realised the seriousness of it all or have not been big enough to stand up to their job. We have now reached the stage at which we must realise that this condition of things cannot continue and we must do the things that will induce our people to go to the inland and then we must take action in the other States and the other parts of the world to populate this enormous country. If we are to have the country developed we must face up to the problem of supplying the requirements necessary for development. It is not sufficient to do as has been done—for some settler or Government department to prove that some product can be grown in a district and leave it at that. If the experiment proves successful the Minister in charge of the department responsible gets on his feet quick and lively and tells us about it but that is not enough; the important thing is to ensure that production expands. If that is done it will be in the interests of Queensland. In conclusion I express the definite view that this is a national question. The Commonwealth Government and the Governments of all the States should co-operate. This is Australia and we must all be Australians.

At 2.15 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. L. J. BARNES (Cairns): I rise to reply to an answer given by the Secretary for Public Lands to a question asked by me this morning. I asked a question suggesting that immediate action be taken in connection with soldier settlement. In his reply the Minister sought to convey that I was seeking personal kudos or political gain. It hurts me to think that he should make such a suggestion. In the gallery of my memory I have hung a picture of those gallant men who are defending our shores, and I should like to inform the Minister that I was actuated by a good motive, not by self-interest.

Mr. Jones: There was nothing in your question.

Mr. L. J. BARNES: I sought to suggest that preliminary arrangements should be made immediately for training and drafting these men to suitable lands.

Mr. Jones: You cannot draft them until they return.

Mr. L. J. BARNES: A certain number of them have returned already, sufficient for preliminary arrangements, not necessarily to draft. If the Minister proposes to wait until they return in large numbers we shall have something like what we had after the last war. I do not know what the Government intend, but the Minister has suggested settling some near

Bourke. I am worried about that suggestion. These returned men must have good land. The only way in which good land can be made available is to resume certain of the large holdings that are not being used as they should be.

Mr. Devries: Do you not think this Government realise that?

Mr. L. J. BARNES: If the Minister had been kind enough to say that in his answer it would have satisfied me, but instead he says that I am after political kudos. Nothing is further from my mind. I think hon. members all realise that I much prefer being a £3-a-week farmer to being a politician. I am not concerned with the ego of Lou Barnes.

The Minister knows that there is not enough suitable land untenanted to settle all the returned soldiers who may wish to go on the land. He knows that certain resumptions will have to be made. I feel sure that many large landholders will be only too pleased to forfeit some of their lands if they are given reasonable compensation. So far all the suggestions the Minister has made are somewhat similar to the policy adopted after 1918.

Mr. Jones: I have not suggested anywhere yet.

Mr. L. J. BARNES: The Minister said something about Bourke the other day.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I do not desire to burke discussion, but this resolution concerns the administration of the Department of Public Lands. The hon. member is dealing with something that will be the subject of legislation at a later date.

Mr. L. J. BARNES: I was endeavouring to discuss the administration of the Department of Public Lands as it applied to the rehabilitation of soldiers. If the Minister agrees that there are many people who are willing to surrender land for this purpose upon payment of reasonable compensation—

Mr. Walsh: There are any number who are willing to forfeit or give land to the Government at a high valuation.

Mr. Jones: We are inundated with such proposals now.

Mr. L. J. BARNES: The cost of settling these men on the land must not come from the half-filled pockets of the poor, but out of the well-lined wallets of the capitalists. There is not much use in trying to escape responsibility by saying that the land will cost a great deal of money and there is no good in settling men on the land that is no good and that they know is no good. There is not enough land for all the men unless some is resumed for that purpose. There is evidence on all hands that the Crown is in control of 92 per cent. of the land of the State. The only way to get enough land is to break up the large estates. The big holders will agree to that because they are sick and tired of paying the present burden of taxation. Probably they pay on half the property because they cannot use more, or do not, and will not,

use it when the war is over because of the burden of taxation. Mind you, I am only referring now to land that is not being fully utilised. I feel that the returned soldier will be satisfied with nothing but justice, and that is all that I am fighting for on his behalf. The soldiers actually in the battle fields today are not exactly fighting for a just and easy way of life, not a life of motor-cars, betting, horse-racing and picture shows; they are fighting for what is right, and we should see that when they return to our shores there is a welcome for them, a welcome befitting the heroes that they are, and not do as we did after the last war—give them land that required heroes to develop it.

A Government Member: Then the banks won the peace.

Mr. L. J. BARNES: That is another matter, and of course I am not permitted to discuss banks on this resolution. The soldiers in the battlefields are not even being paid the basic wage in doing this their noblest job, but when they return and settle on the land let us see that at least they get the basic wage.

I come now to the subject of irrigation. The Royal Commission on the Wheat Industry in 1936-37 established the fact that with the aid of irrigation wheat could be produced for about 2s. 6d. a bushel. That is the cost of production, but what no Government have considered is the cost of consumption. We can reduce the cost of production, but consumption costs have gone up twofold. About two months ago an investigation was made into the price of milk and it was found that some producers, with the aid of irrigation, could produce milk at 1s. a gallon, and that with others it cost 2s. 6d. So we see that the cost of production can be brought down by irrigation, but the Government must see that the cost of consumption comes down on a pro-rata basis with it. In the eighteenth century in England the people paid $\frac{1}{2}$ d. a lb. for meat, and the lowest wage paid was 1d. a day, the wage usually paid for what were called dung-carters. A reasonable wage for a labourer in those days was 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. a day, but at that time the people could buy more with their money than they can buy with ever so much more today. Since then the cost of consumption has gone up very much but Governments have not given any consideration to that subject. It is time that they did. We have irrigation, otherwise called mechanisation, but with all this mechanisation we are not able to prove that there is any better standard of living throughout the world. There is not, and there is abundant proof of the fact. In the early '80s men received about 6d. for threshing a quarter of an acre of wheat, and at the same time were paying 5d. a bushel for it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. L. J. BARNES: I only make that point to indicate that in connection with irrigation we must see that the banks do not win the peace and that with the use of irrigation the farmers should be placed in a position to pay their way.

Mr. Devries: What about the orderly marketing of products?

Mr. L. J. BARNES: That is in the hands of the Government. We know that some human beings are immoral, and that they are hard to handle, but if the Government were to pass legislation to provide for the imposition of 10 years' gaol for certain offences we should have orderly marketing very quickly.

Mr. Devries: The Government tried to do that in 1937, but they did not have the power.

Mr. L. J. BARNES: This Government have that power now, or at least they have it in peace-time. If they were to have a Prices Commissioner—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. L. J. BARNES: The point I make is that we shall not win the peace if we do not see that the men are so situated on the land that they can pay interest and redemption, and when I speak of interest I have in mind the fact that no scheme should prescribe a higher rate of interest than 1 per cent. I suggest to the Government that they immediately take action to investigate the cost of consumption and then take measures to remedy it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Discussion on the Resolutions is limited to the administration of the various departments. Therefore, discussion of matters that are the subject of legislation is not in order. It is obvious that any scheme of soldier settlement involves legislation and is not an administrative matter. I therefore ask members to confine discussion to administration.

Mr. YEATES (East Toowoomba) (2.28 p.m.): I desire to supplement my remarks on the Estimates of the Department of Public Lands recently, when I suggested that for future settlement, particularly soldier settlement, we should resume brigalow and belah country. I have already mentioned the area. I have in mind particularly the district from Taroom swinging round to Goondiwindi and back to Taroom. The leases of much of this country are falling in in five or six years' time. Doubtless other lessees can be induced to surrender parts of their leases. I would divide the settlement area into blocks of from 3,000 to 6,000 acres, according to carrying capacity. I would then have the green brigalow ring-barked in advance of settlement so that when the returned soldiers were ready to settle down—during the next few years—the timber would have died and be ready for burning off. It takes a few years to kill brigalow and belah. The land would then be ready to be worked profitably.

The late Dr. Bradfield's great irrigation scheme proposed to turn the flood waters back from Hell's Gates across our western country down towards the Diamantina River, in the electorate of the hon. member for Gregory, and on to Lake Eyre. What does it matter if the water goes over our border? Such a scheme is Australian-wide. I want

some definite pronouncement from the Minister. He has shirked such a pronouncement up to date.

Mr. Jones: What do you want me to do?

Mr. YEATES: I want the Minister to say that he will have the scheme investigated, even if it costs £2,000 or £3,000. I expect he will say that no surveyors are available but that is always the excuse. I do not expect him to make the investigation today, tomorrow or at the week-end, but I want it done soon. Where there is a will there is a way. We shall be able to get surveyors soon. The Minister should have a talk to Mr. J. R. Kemp, Co-ordinator-General of Public Works, who will get for him surveyors and men specially equipped to examine irrigation projects. I want this done. The Minister is all the while shirking the issue. I realise that some of the back-benchers have a lack of the foresight and statesmanship necessary to deal with such a problem. They have said in this House that it is a fantastic scheme. I won't have it that it is. The late Dr. Bradfield was able to see ahead and do good jobs. I want the Minister to tell me some time today that he will investigate the matter. What are £2,000 or £3,000 when it is spent on such an investigation?

Soil erosion is a very important matter. If one went across by aeroplane, flying low, from Augathella to Broken Hill, one would see what is happening all over the back country of Queensland and New South Wales. This is a serious problem and the Minister should take heed of it. An old friend of mine, Mr. John H. Meek, a surveyor and reliable man residing at Stanthorpe, in a letter to me recently, said—

“From my observations from Toowoomba, Charleville, Cunnamulla and back to Stanthorpe, soil erosion is an urgent problem. In places there are extensive gully erosions.”

Insidious sheet erosion is taking toll of the fertility of the soil. Hon. members opposite cannot look ahead. They believe in the philosophy of “Eat today and be merry and let tomorrow look after itself.” That is all you can get from hon. members opposite except from a few senior Ministers.

My friend says—

“Many men could be employed usefully on soil conservation measures. I suggested some rent-free areas on my selection if I undertook soil conservation measures, but the Government apparently was not allowed to do this.”

I presume he referred to the Caucus and the Q.C.E. They boss the Government.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. YEATES: I shall be content with that for the moment.

Hon. A. JONES (Charters Towers—Secretary for Public Lands) (2.35 p.m.): Not much has been said that has not already been replied to on the Estimates. The hon. member for West Moreton made a very practical

contribution to the discussion and approached it in altogether a different manner from the hon. member for East Toowoomba, who made some almost irresponsible statements in connection with Dr. Bradfield's scheme and other irrigation matters. With other members I believe that possibly there is something in the Bradfield scheme. I am not an engineer; I am not in a position to say it is sound. In fact, I do not think Dr. Bradfield ever put forward a scheme. He put forward certain suggestions and outlined certain proposals—I heard him speak on this subject—and he always intimated that he believed it was desirable that competent engineers should submit a report on the suggestion that he had made. I believe that is the approach to the question. I said when speaking on the Estimates the other day that I believed in considering any irrigation matter we should first of all make a commencement with stream weirs—something we could do straightaway. If we are to have a scheme to cost £10,000,000, £15,000,000, or £30,000,000 we shall probably be talking about it for the next 10 or 15 years. I believe that that is the proper approach to irrigation; I admit we have only made a start, nevertheless I think it is a good start.

The hon. member for West Moreton referred to the report by the Bureau of Investigation into the possibilities of the Lockyer catchment area. As a matter of fact, I have received that report and it will be tabled in Parliament. In accordance with the Act the Bureau of Investigation tables its report in Parliament; and it will be tabled for hon. members to see what the bureau has to say in connection with that proposal and other proposals that it has already investigated and others that it will examine in the very near future.

I have always been rather sceptical when I have heard of a bureau being set up—sometimes in the past we have had similar organisations that have produced very little of any value from the public point of view—but my experience is that the Bureau of Investigation has done a wonderful job. It got down to work immediately the Act was put through last year by my predecessor, the hon. member for Mirani. We have to appreciate that the five gentlemen on the bureau are outstanding public servants, prominent engineers, men of good knowledge of soil and forestry. I do not think you will find a finer body in any other State. When we were in Victoria recently the Minister there himself intimated to me that he believed this was a unique set-up in Queensland, and if they had started on similar lines in Victoria they would have been in a more satisfactory position in the initial stages. Victoria has spent millions on water conservation and written off £23,500,000 on irrigation. I am not saying that is a dead loss. It is not; it created something that will be responsible for bringing millions of population to that State. With any irrigation scheme or programme it is necessary to move carefully and not be rushed. We read the different books that have been issued recently and they are quite good books, written after a great amount of

research. It is quite possible that something will be done with schemes that may cost anything from £3,000,000 to £5,000,000 in the near future, but we must keep our feet on the ground and do what we think is practicable at the present.

Much loose talk is indulged in on irrigation generally. Only a few days ago hon. members may have noticed an article in the metropolitan Press pointing out that some hundreds of acres of land at Leeton were being spoilt by the non-intelligent application of water. The water was dumped on the land and had the effect of raising the water-table, bringing up the salt and making the land useless for production. Some thousands of acres in Victoria have also been destroyed by the non-intelligent use of water.

The hon. member for West Moreton this morning referred to the need for educating people in the use of water. That is very important, and recently we entered into an arrangement with the Department of Public Instruction whereby we are taking a few hundred acres at the Queensland Agricultural College and High School to set up an irrigation school for farmers and others in which they can be trained in the proper application of water. That is very important, and we think we have made a beginning in the proper way.

The hon. member for West Moreton made reference also to the diversion of subterranean waters to underground basins. That is a very interesting subject. I might say that the Bureau of Investigation is also working on those lines and has some very important data in connection with our artesian supplies. It is very important from the point of view of Queensland that when discussing irrigation full investigation should be made of underground supplies. None of us have much knowledge of underground supplies. To a certain extent we guess. We should be able to know exactly where we are going. As a matter of fact, I was surprised in Victoria some weeks ago during a discussion with an engineer of the Water Board there. He spoke of waste in irrigation, and informed me that in the stock and domestic supply only 7 per cent. of the water in the catchment area reaches the farms. Millions of gallons of water are taken through the State, not for irrigation purposes but for the replenishment of tanks and to meet household and domestic requirements. It is astounding to find that 93 per cent. of that water is wasted in the process of getting it on the farms. I questioned the figures but found they were correct. I also discovered that in the irrigation areas only 30 to 40 per cent. of the water in the catchment area ever reaches the paddocks. It is a matter of evaporation and seepage. One can understand that with open drains in which there has been no water for three or four months if the water is suddenly turned on thousands of gallons are lost by soakage, and so forth. The figures are rather alarming but they show that we can learn much from what has been done in Victoria and in New South Wales. These States have spent a great deal of money on irrigation.

The hon. member for Cairns made reference to soldier settlements. I thought I made myself perfectly clear on this matter in the discussion on the Estimates. As a matter of fact, I quoted from the report of the committee set up by the Commonwealth Government to report on soldier settlements and pointed out that it had warned against pressure politics, against unjust criticism in the Press endeavouring to compel Governments to do things they should not do, and that returned-soldier settlements should be approached from the practical viewpoint. That is what this Government are trying to do. For some years before I went to the department investigations had been taking place throughout this State by land commissioners and whatever surveyors were available for the purpose of locating suitable areas of land for soldier settlement. There are some scores of reports in the department, and at the moment we are in the process of selecting committees to deal with soldier settlements. Only three days ago there was a meeting in my office in connection with this very matter, and I expect to make a statement in the very near future.

It is necessary to do the ground work, and we are doing that. We are classifying and ruling out all unsuitable lands. We know what lands might be the better left under timber. We have particulars of some hundreds of farms already. The hon. member for Cairns suggests that we allocate these farms immediately, but that would not be wise. It has been explained time and again that this time we do not intend to say to the soldier, "Here is a farm, make the best use you can of it." On this occasion a house has to be erected, the farm must be fenced, logged and cleared. All improvements must be effected, and that will take some time.

Mr. L. J. Barnes: I said preliminary arrangements for training and drafting should be made.

Mr. JONES: Some days ago I explained what we were doing in that direction and I took the hon. member's question to be purely one of propaganda, which I want to kill. We must approach this question from a sane point of view. We must not be stampeded into doing something foolish.

The hon. member also suggested breaking up large estates. Possibly that will be necessary. Personally I think it will be necessary to resume a good deal of land. I stated by way of interjection that we have been inundated with offers of farms in various parts of the State. Every morning I receive two or three letters from people desirous of selling their farms for soldier-settlement purposes. Some of these may be good farms for that purpose and every case is being investigated to determine its suitability. We are not going to buy farms just for the sake of buying them. We must make a sound approach to the question.

Resolution 5—Department of Public Lands—agreed to.

Resolution 6—Department of Mines—agreed to.

Resolution 7—Department of Public Instruction—

Mr. LUCKINS (Maree) (2.48 p.m.): I should like to ask the Minister one or two questions in connection with the miscellaneous vote for this department. I am pleased to see an increase of £214,000 in the vote for the Department of Public Instruction because money spent on education is money expended in the best interests of the community. The amount for "miscellaneous" has been increased from £3,950 to £13,700. The amount allocated to the Women's College is, £350, and I suggest that the Minister might consider increasing that sum in view of the vast amount of good work being done by that college in catering for young women who are desirous of qualifying for their university degree.

The sum of £850 has been allocated for creche and kindergartens, which is the same as the amount voted last year. As there has been a good deal of publicity in favour of the department's taking control of this work in the metropolitan area I had expected that the Minister would have made some announcement as to the Government's intention in this direction. Some information on this question would be appreciated now.

Last year £1,000 was allocated for pre-school activities. This year the vote is increased to £5,000. To me pre-school activities are somewhat similar to creche and kindergartens and I should like to know how the department proposes expending the extra £4,000. Is it to be used for the establishment of the basis of an amalgamation of pre-school and creche and kindergarten activities?

Hon. J. LARCOMBE (Rockhampton—Secretary for Public Instruction) (2.51 p.m.): The first point raised by the hon. member for Maree is that relating to the Women's College. I shall discuss the matter with the Director-General as I am not able to give the hon. member a definite reply at present.

In addition to the £850 for creche and kindergarten £500 is allocated from Golden Casket funds for the Creche and Kindergarten Association. In connection with pre-school activities I want to point out that the Government are providing a further sum in the Estimates for the Department of Public Works for the purpose of acquiring sites. We have not the labour or the material to embark upon a State-wide policy in connection with creche and kindergarten at the present time. We are providing the sites and making them available to local committees who are willing to erect buildings in various parts of the State. In that way we have the benefit of local effort, the help of local authorities and the residents themselves in supplementing Government effort. Citizens recognise that this activity for the moment is a community one—that the Government should help the local authority and that the local people should help too. In the various places the people have generously and enthusiastically thanked the Government for obtaining the sites and these citizens are providing the necessary funds for the erection of build-

ings. Money is flowing in in a spirit of local patriotism in a very commendable manner. We are helping too in the way of providing teachers. Some of the increased amount on the Estimates mentioned by the hon. member is required for the payment of additional teachers, for teachers are being trained at the Teachers' Training College and in Victoria and we have a substantial number being trained with the object of taking on this very commendable work. We will help those who are providing buildings in any part of the State with sites for the buildings and with teachers if possible. Later the wider plan will have to be considered. Of 100 applicants for assistance probably 95 would want everything free. They might say, "You must provide the site, the building and the teachers," whereas the other 5 might say, "You have a limited amount of money but if you are prepared to buy the sites and hand them over to us, we will provide the building and help in other ways." Of course, money is provided by the Government in the meantime for those who are willing to help themselves. I can assure the hon. member that the Government have the question well in mind. We are doing good work and continually conferring on the subject—the Director-General, the Superintendent of Primary Education and I.

Resolution 7—Department of Public Instruction—agreed to.

Resolution 8—Department of Railways—

Mr. POWER (Baroona) (2.57 p.m.): I spoke at some length recently on the control of the railways and made suggestions that might tend to eliminate some of the feeling of unrest operating in the department at the present time. I then pointed out that I did not lay any blame at the door of the present Minister or the former Minister. Today the railways are administered under the Railway Acts. I am not concerned with the aspect of railway administration. I find on investigation that the general manager in the South-eastern District has no authority to make any transfer from one department to another or one section to another, or to make any appointments. All the transfers must be submitted to the office of the secretary for the approval of the secretary. It is to that aspect that I wish to address myself.

The general manager's classification is higher than that of the secretary, yet he is compelled to consult a junior officer as to what should be done in the management of the railways, particularly as to the transfer or appointment of clerks. Greater powers should be reposed in the general manager, who must know the requirements of his department and should not be compelled to consult the secretary on staff requirements for the South-eastern Division, or for that matter any division. If an officer works up to the position of general manager he must possess a working knowledge of the department. He must receive requests from various departmental heads under his control and

therefore he should have the necessary authority to decide whether there should be any increase in his staff, transfers, or promotions.

An anomaly exists in regard to promotions and transfers. The present system is not in the best interests of the railways or their future. We have men in the various sections trained in the workings of those sections exclusively. They reach a position as high as they can possibly get and yet when a vacancy arises in another section with a higher classification they are not allowed to transfer to it if a man in that section is thought to be more suitable for the vacancy. If a man applies for such a position he must believe he has the necessary qualifications for it and if he cannot rise any higher in his own section he should have the opportunity of transferring to another section. Such an opportunity would permit him to increase his knowledge and lead to efficient service. The officers should be trained for all sections, and when an appointment is necessary in one of those sections the appointee should be selected after a competitive examination. I know of men from the Commissioner's office who have been appointed over the heads of departments notwithstanding that they have never been outside of Brisbane, nor has the knowledge they possess been acquired outside of the Commissioner's office. They should not be the favoured ones for administrative positions. Officers who have served throughout the length and breadth of Queensland and obtained first-hand knowledge of railway administration should receive first consideration in the making of appointments.

I believe that the system adopted in the Department of Justice in the selection of clerks of petty sessions might well be adopted in the Railway Department. Clerks of petty sessions are appointed from one town to another in progressive stages and eventually are appointed to Brisbane. No valid reason exists why such a system should not operate in the railways. The position at present seems to be that while you remain in Brisbane and come under the official notice of the Commissioner, secretary, general manager, or some other high official, you are in the running for promotion; and that men who have worked under trying conditions in the various divisions of the State, men who have received an excellent training, are debarred from promotion.

I am concerned about the future administration of the department. From my investigations—and I know a little of the workings of this department—I am very much concerned about who is going to take over the administrative positions of the railways in the years to come. It is important to have men who are qualified, not by length of service, but by ability, by knowledge of the workings of the department. Take the late Charlie Evans. He started off as a lad porter and graduated to the position of the Commissioner for Railways. That cannot happen today. We have night officers and station-masters who have travelled the length and breadth of the State and who have a first-hand knowledge of the working conditions of the

various stations who still remain in their respective positions. They have no opportunity of going any further, because they are not brought under the notice of those controlling the railways. I am not making any attack on anyone, but I reserve the right to criticise what is not in the best interests of the department.

I am concerned with one important point that is causing great concern to railwaymen; I refer to the fact that junior men are being placed in relieving positions over the heads of senior men. Some men, because they stand up for their rights, are being held back by certain officials. I make that statement advisedly and I will make it outside if necessary. I contend that that is entirely wrong. If I am working in an office with the hon. member for Kennedy and he is senior to me, why should I be placed in a position of relieving a man senior to either of us before he gets a trial? That is what is taking place today and I say it is wrong. How can it be said that a man is not suited for a job if he has no opportunity for a try-out in that job? He should get a try-out and if he is found wanting he should be relieved of the position. Men with 30 years' service are held back, some are still 5th-class clerks, and some are unclassified, because they have not had the opportunity to go further. Some sections are purely and simply dead-ends. A young lad gets in and he has to wait until somebody dies before he can apply for promotion, and if he does apply other men are brought in. I make no objection to the senior man when he is capable of doing it, but there should be an opportunity for promotion on the basis that operates in the Public Service. I fail to see why one section of Crown employees—and I am glad to know that the Public Service classifications have been increased—should be working under a different set of circumstances. This is what I want cleaning up. There are some men you could not put in those positions; quite a number are not suitable, but they represent a small minority. I have definite evidence—and I could produce the evidence—that junior men are being placed over the heads of senior men and given an opportunity to learn various jobs while they are acting in those jobs, and later on, when the positions are advertised and applications are called, the junior men are appointed. When the matter is taken before the appeal board the board says, "This man has had the experience although he is a junior man," and it dismisses the appeal and allows the man who has got the position wrongly to retain it. That state of affairs must be altered; it cannot go on; it is unfair and does not give any incentive to young men in the Railway Department, or to the old men with 30 or 35 years' service who are still unclassified, who have no hope at all, and who automatically become clock-watchers and time-servers, filling in their time waiting till 5 o'clock—men deprived of initiative because they have had no opportunity of progress.

I know the Minister has been in charge but for a brief period, and I suggest that

serious consideration be given by him to the matters I have raised. I have not raised these matters for the purpose of scoring off the Commissioner or anybody else. I have raised them in the interests of the railwaymen. We have recognised that the railwaymen have done a good job. We all appreciate that but we should not let it rest at that. We should show our appreciation of the good job they have done by giving them their rightful opportunity of promotion and advancement. The system of placing a junior man in a senior position in an acting capacity over the head of a senior man must be discontinued in the interests of the staff of the Railway Department.

In conclusion I express the hope that the Minister will look into the question of the powers of the general manager of the Department. I do not know what happens in other divisions but in Brisbane, as I have stated previously, all recommendations for transfers and appointments must go to the secretary. The secretary is a young man with not one-quarter of the knowledge of the general manager in Brisbane. He is a junior officer and I fail to see why there is not sufficient faith in the general manager of the South-eastern District to attend to these matters, which should be his prerogative and not the prerogative of the secretary to the Commissioner.

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra) (3.10 p.m.): I desire to correct an erroneous impression held by the hon. member for Baroona. I know that he holds that impression honestly but I would point out that though the general manager of the Southern Division is senior perhaps in status and in salary to the secretary of the Commissioner, the secretary is merely the focal point or the central officer who has to decide on appointments for the whole of the State. It would be manifestly unjust, for instance, if the general manager of the Southern Division was allowed to appoint all the officers in his division because he would appoint only officers within his own knowledge. For instance, what would be the position if applications were called for a 3rd-class trains clerk in Brisbane? Naturally the general manager in Brisbane would appoint a man who within his own knowledge was best suited to fill that position. But the railway service extends from the border to Cooktown and even to Normanton. When applications for that vacant position are called applications pour in from all over the State, and the general manager in every division recommends the man who in his opinion is best suited for the position in Brisbane. The secretary to the Commissioner, although he may be junior in status and salary, merely has the job then of selecting which of the various general managers' recommendations is the best. I do not think anything could be fairer than that. If the hon. member for Baroona can suggest something fairer I am sure that the railwaymen and the unions would be very willing to listen to it.

I wish to elaborate on the hon. member's remarks concerning the irregularities—that

is the only word I can use to describe what happens—in the clerical and administrative staff of the service. Fortunately, these things do not arise in the traffic and locomotive sections because there men are promoted on seniority alone, with the provision, of course, that they pass the various examinations from time to time. But in the Northern Division a worse ramp has been adopted than that outlined by the hon. member for Baroona. It concerns the filling of positions in the trains-control room in the Northern Division now. At one time it was thought necessary to have experience in the trains-control room but now the general manager has advanced the preposterous thesis—and this thesis has been upheld by the appeal board—that it is necessary to have experience also in the wagons room, and he will appoint control clerks only from the wagons room. I wish I had known I should have the opportunity of speaking on this vote this afternoon, as I should have brought along a letter on this matter received from the district secretary of the A.R.U. in the Northern Division. If the Minister wishes it, I will make the part of that letter which refers to this case available to him. They are now working a double-headed ramp, as I would call it, inasmuch as the select few or those within the charmed circle are first sent into the wagons room and then those in the wagons room are appointed to the control room. A double-headed penny, you might say, is now being played against the unfortunate men in the Northern Division, men with undoubted ability and seniority who have served the Railway Department well in other branches of administration. They are denied the opportunity to get into the wagons room and in consequence they fail to get into the control room. Some favourite is selected to go to the wagons room and from there proceeds to the trains room and as a result there are men in the trains room who are now 4th-class control clerks who are no more naturally intelligent and who have much less service than men in the roster room who are still in the 6th grade.

I mention these things, not in any way to disagree with what has been said by the hon. member for Baroona, because his remarks are particularly pertinent, but merely to elaborate on them.

Mr. YEATES (East Toowoomba) (3.15 p.m.): When I left this question on Tuesday I was dealing with the standard gauge for Australia. I do not intend to spend much time on that today except to say that I have a letter from the Federal Minister for Transport and a telegram from Mr. Fadden saying that the Press notice we have read was only so much hot air. It will be more opportune to talk about this matter after official notification is received by the Queensland Government from the Federal Government. Yesterday's "Courier-Mail" would convey the impression that I did not believe in the scheme. In my opinion the 4ft. 8½in. is the best gauge for the whole of Australia, but I make it clear that I certainly would not rebuild our 6,400 miles of railways without first giving the matter every possible consideration. However, I do favour the laying

down of a third rail, if it can be worked in with the points, at least from Wallangarra to Toowoomba. Of course, if it was continued on to Brisbane 12 tunnels would have to be widened. That third rail could then be extended from Toowoomba to Miles, Wandoan, Taroom, up to Springsure, Emerald, Clermont, and on to Charters Towers, and thence to the Gulf if necessary.

Some time ago I mentioned another matter that was merely shelved by the officials. I asked for an investigation into some means of shortening the route from Russell Siding to Toowoomba. The department said that no surveyor was available. I approached the late Dr. Bradfield before the war. He asked for data. I was getting it for him when the war broke out, and the matter was postponed. Then, unfortunately, Dr. Bradfield died. I have now placed the matter before the Co-ordinator General of Public Works. My latest information is that he has referred it to the Railway Department. I do not know whether the department will be able to overrule Mr. Kemp, but I wish to make it abundantly clear that I am not finished with that job. I know that the great difficulty is to rise 1,400 feet in a certain distance, but if we do not attempt to overcome these difficulties, which have been placed before us to try us out, we shall never get anywhere.

At one time there was a co-ordinated road service from Helidon to Toowoomba, and I take credit for its introduction. It was advocated by me in 1938, and it was introduced and proved successful. Passengers could embark at Central Station or Roma Street, and take a ticket for Toowoomba or Warwick via the co-ordinated service. That meant a saving of 1 hour in travelling time, but every little helps. However, the arrangement was cancelled by order of the Federal Minister for Transport, and although I have tried hard since then to have it restored I have not been successful. The Federal Minister for Transport, who is advised by the Road Emergency Board in Brisbane, under the chairmanship of Mr. Lamont, still says that it is a waste of petrol.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is now dealing with a matter that is the subject of Federal administration.

Mr. YEATES: They disallowed it. We have asked the Railway Department to use its influence to have it restored. I cannot fathom the reason at all, especially when I know that there are three service cars each way each day from Brisbane to Toowoomba. Why be so inconsistent? I leave the matter now to Mr. Wills, the Commissioner, and hope for a favourable reply in the very near future.

When peace is restored I hope to see the Blue Mountains week-end train running from Brisbane to Toowoomba with fares of 10s. first-class return and 7s. second-class.

The Railway Institute gives excellent service, and I hope to see it in its own building in Toowoomba ere long. I shall do my best to bring it about, and I know that I can rely on the help of the hon. member for Toowoomba.

Now let me come to some smaller things. Where are those water-bags that have been missing from the mixed trains for the past 15 years? Forty years ago there were water-bags on the mail trains and mixed trains, but today there is iced water on the mail and passenger trains. This is a matter that will have to be properly catered for, too. I strongly advocate the provision of dining and buffet cars, especially on passenger trains running more than 200 miles. I know all the excuses for not doing these things—engine capacity and so on—but they do not try half the time.

Years ago I suggested that the coaches should have air-conditioning, and I ask again that a start should be made with a 1st- and 2nd-class coach respectively from Charleville to Brisbane and vice versa.

There should be shower baths on the Monday mail train down, and say the Friday train out. It may be said that that is a fantastic idea, but it is not. I do not look for precedents for the mere sake of finding them. I determine the need of a thing and its importance first, and then I go on to do the job. If hon. members opposite are a bit timid and want any precedents for these improvements I refer them to the railway system between Perth and Kalgoorlie, where the passengers have shower baths and other comforts on the Westland Express.

The refreshment rooms show a net profit of £173,541. In this connection I want to pay a tribute to Mr. McLean, the manager, and his entire staff right from Cairns to Goondiwindi. They have given an excellent service in catering not only for a tremendous number of civilian passengers, but for the armed services day and night. Their work is highly commendable.

On 30 August last I asked the Minister if it was not the duty of conductors and ticket inspectors to make every endeavour to provide for the comfort of travellers, particularly women and children, travelling long distances on the railways. I did so because I have seen women with infants in their arms and children sitting on their luggage. The Minister in his reply said it was the recognised duty of officials to provide for the comfort of travellers, particularly women and children. He also said that if I had any complaints to make against the way officials carried out their duties I should bring them under the notice of the Commissioner for Railways and produce substantial evidence of such neglect. He said that the department had received many expressions of appreciation of the courtesy of its officials. I say that is just some tourists.

Mr. Walsh: I have not had one complaint from you since.

Mr. YEATES: I take exception to that reply. I look upon it as an insult. It is an insult to ask an hon. member bringing a matter before a Minister to substantiate his representations by substantial evidence. I wrote to the Commissioner and I am satisfied that neither Mr. Wills or Mr. Lingard wrote that reply.

Mr. Walsh: That is my reply.

Mr. YEATES: The Minister will have to take my criticism. I certainly resent that reply. I take it, for example, that if the hon. member for Baroona makes representations to the Minister he should not do so unless he has some substantial evidence to back up his complaint.

I want the running of 8S, the Western mail, from Brisbane to Charleville, accelerated by at least one and a-half hours as soon as it is possible to do so. If we do not mention matters now they will be forgotten. The train from Charleville to Quilpie, 138 miles, known as 96 Down, occupies 8 hours 35 minutes on the trip. I want that reduced by 1½ hours, or as an alternative, a rail motor run between the two trains. That rail motor should do the 138 miles in 4½ hours. If we do not attend to these matters air travel will simply sweep the poll with passenger traffic after the war. We must speed up our trains now to conserve our passenger traffic, not wait until after the war.

The hon. member for Mundingburra said that smaller trains could travel faster than larger ones. I hope that principle will be applied to the inter-city expresses from Brisbane to Toowoomba and from Brisbane to Gympie. I should like to see the Western mail named The Great Western Pioneer, and the train between Wallangarra and Brisbane, that is, the 26 Up and 37 Down, named The Southern Tablelands Express.

When I was speaking on the Garratt engines the Minister said, "You are just one of the few who believe in them." I travelled on a Garratt locomotive in Western Australia with the driver and the Commissioner's representative. I did not travel in a carriage behind the engine as a passenger propped up with pillows. That Garratt engine hauled a load of 870 tons quite easily. The department here tells us that a load of 570 tons is about the limit. That is an official reply. There is a certain amount of prejudice here against the Garratt engines. I say that quite respectfully. I should like the Minister to look into the Garratt engines and give them a fair show.

Mr. Walsh: I have a prejudice and a justifiable one against them myself.

Mr. YEATES: The Minister cannot allow his prejudice to enter into this matter. What would happen if the Supreme Court, the only independent tribunal in Queensland, approached a matter before it from that angle?

Another forked line is required at Goondiwindi inside a few hundred yards. At present an engine can be turned only by taking it to the trucking yards, a two-mile run from the town. The Commissioner should make a recommendation that this work be done at once. Surely the Commissioner knows his job! He ought to. Does he not go out and see things for himself sometimes? If that forked line was put in at Goondiwindi it would save running costs. Another loop-

line should be made at Goondiwindi to enable the 118 Up to pass through when the yards are full of traffic.

Just let me take you now, Mr. Speaker, up north to the Bowen district and beyond. Up in the Bowen district we have the Burdekin River; for a long time I have supported the erection of a high-level bridge there; if it costs £500,000 that cannot be helped. We should push such a scheme along and apply for a subsidy from the Commonwealth.

Pilfering on the railways, as on the wharves, has been very extensive, but they will not tell us anything about it. Where are the figures? They are just bluffing. They have been brought up in the school of the Hon. Forgan Smith, evasive one day, bluffing the next, and leaving us alone without any proper answers the next day, and putting a sting at the end of an answer directed away back to some Government in 1930—the Moore Government. I represent 30,000 men, women and children and I have the right to know.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. member to address the Chair instead of other hon. members.

Mr. YEATES: In 1939 the railways used 422,770 tons of coal and in 1943-44 755,057 tons, which shows that there has been ever so much work. We have had locomotives running all the time and the men have not had time to clean them, which is no fault of the department. There was an extra consumption of 332,287 tons compared with 1939. The Government should find sufficient coal to see to it that the Southern express is run twice a day and six times a week at least on the Wallangarra section. It is a real disgrace to all the Governments as well as this one that more coal is not supplied to keep this service going.

I have travelled on the Sunshine Express and I have checked it up. I realise it was established for the tourist traffic, in addition to other traffic. It stays a long time at Ingham and at Bowen. Those stops are quite good for the tourists. When four or five or six Sunshine Expresses a week are restored I want to see one or two of them run more like a businessmen's train, and driven along at a reasonable pace. From Brisbane to Tully is 959 miles, which takes 36 hours by train. In South Africa, a journey from Capetown to Johannesburg, a distance of 953 miles, takes 26 hours, or 10 hours less. Hon. members opposite have said that they have black labour over there, but what has the colour of labour to do with the speed of the train? It might have something to do with the cost of building it, but that is not the question. I should like to see that train run to time at least once or twice a week. Have you ever travelled on 80 Up, from Hughenden to Winton, a distance of 132 miles? The train leaves Hughenden at 6.30 a.m. and arrives at Winton at 3.30 p.m., and averages 14 miles an hour. A rail motor is wanted from Hughenden to Winton and from Longreach to Winton to take the place of 54 Up. The journey on the train from Longreach to Winton is terrible. How is the

Minister going to hold the passenger business after the war? It would be an insult to ask any passenger, swagman or anyone else, to travel on that, when we visualise what will happen as regards air travel from the open plains of the hinterland.

I pay special tribute to all railway workers, particularly those on the foot plates working the trains from Brisbane to Cairns, during the last couple of years at any rate.

Mr. Aikens: Thank you!

Mr. YEATES: Also out to Cloncurry and other places in the West. The hon. member for Mundingburra was one of them and the hon. member for Mackay another. They deserve every tribute. I was wondering whether during the recess they will go on the footplates again and help the other men. (Laughter.) I have frequently wondered how the train crews kept awake, particularly the enginemen. They did a tremendous job and deserve every credit for it. They rightly deserve superannuation, a bonus, war loading, not forgetting overtime, which runs into more than £1,000,000. Under the circumstances they deserve every penny of it.

The hon. member for Gregory can understand this position. The 54 Up, or the mail for Longreach leaving Rockhampton at 6 p.m., takes 19½ hours to do 427 miles. One hour and a half could easily come off that time. I have here a letter dated 10 November from the office of the Queensland Railways that reads—

“Referring to your representation in connection with the late running of the 4.36 p.m. train (20 Up) on 3rd instant, which left Roma Street on time and arrived Toowoomba 46 minutes late, . . .”

This is a passenger train and to me the run from Brisbane to Toowoomba is merely a suburban run. They have had exactly 77 years in which to find out how to run this trip. This is what is said as to the cause of it—

“The cause of the late running was due to time occupied in dealing with roadside and passenger stops.”

Good gracious me! Surely when the timetable is being made that is taken into consideration! I have a great deal of sympathy with the timetable clerk, but I cannot stop to explain why. The letter proceeds—

“attending to hot box on the locomotive.”

They were just a couple of minutes doing that at Spring Bluff. That is quite a common thing. As I have stated previously this session, we shall have to spend £6,000,000, roughly speaking, in renovating the rolling-stock and locomotives, and building more B18½ engines.

I strongly advocate a co-ordinated road service to pick up parcels and goods. For instance, take the train running to Wandoan. From this point a contractor should deliver parcels and goods to the different stations, and on the return journey bring in loading from the outer districts.

This would encourage traffic to the railways. Later there will be tremendous competition for the traffic.

The housing from Brisbane to Angellala, Cunnamulla, and Coongoola was a perfect disgrace and I am sincere about this. The Government passes accommodation laws for pastoralists and other people—and properly so—but what are they doing themselves? Lengthsmen’s families are living in small galvanised iron and wooden cottages with low roofs, and as I said previously the largest families are to be found in lengthsmen’s cottages on such lines.

Mr. Walsh: Are they railway cottages?

Mr. YEATES: They are a section of the people who are doing their duty in this respect. Coongoola is on a large open plain and the water supply to the lengthsmen is not at all satisfactory. There is not even a belt of trees to hold back the dust storms that rush into these little humpies—that is all I can call them—and the sooner some of this money is put into houses for these men the better. Probably today they are working in a temperature of 108 in the shade or 130 in the sun.

Another letter I received from the Commissioner’s office said that the policy is now to reduce services because of coal shortage, &c. I am not blaming the Commissioner, but it is shocking to have to admit that we are so weak-kneed as to have to reduce services at a time when people are queuing up at booking offices. A policeman told me the other night that a man came to the door of the booking office for the northern train at 9.45 p.m. and stayed there all night. When I got there 50 people were waiting, and all because the Government do nothing. The public are long suffering, those in the back-blocks in particular. They say that perhaps the Government cannot help it, but I know better. Why should these people be required to queue up? In one or two years’ time we shall be running round advertising for passengers. Before that happens all passengers should be made comfortable. They should be able to read their Sydney “Bulletin” or “Worker” in comfort on fast trains. There should be iced water on these trains. There should be attendants serving sweets, tobacco, and other things. If this is done our customers will remember the comfort they enjoyed and stick to the railways when motor traffic comes back to the road.

As soon as the European war is over—this should not be any longer than 6 or 8 months—I should like to see the Commissioner make a world tour extending over 9 months to study every phase of railway working in other countries. He must see these things for himself in order to know what improvements can be made. Again, when a deputation comes from Hughenden or any other outback place to meet the Commissioner or general manager in connection with a goods shed, for example, that railway official should have the whole layout in his mind’s eye. At least once every 18 months general managers should travel in KB wagons next to the bullocks down from Quilpie and see

how drovers are catered for, how they are expected to travel in small cabins in extremely high temperatures. The Commissioner should tour the whole of the system at least once a year.

Mr. DECKER (Sandgate) (3.50 p.m.): Early in the year I had the opportunity of touring North Queensland. During that tour I learned to appreciate the wonderful service rendered by the Railway Department in the emergency created by war. I was greatly impressed by the way in which the department had constructed loops and thereby converted a single track into what was virtually a double railway. The loops are a great idea because they facilitate the movement of traffic.

On speaking to the men at the various stations I was struck by the tiredness of them all. They were not exactly discontented because they understood that the trainloads of troops and munitions constantly streaming through their stations were part of a splendid effort to win the war, and they threw themselves manfully into this work on that account without any thought of causing a strike or industrial dispute. The men worked long hours and of course were paid overtime, but in view of the heavy burden of taxation the overtime was no benefit to them. They would have been better off working their regular hours but they understood that there was a shortage of labour and that the department was up against it in coping with all the heavy military traffic. I regret to say that the Government have not shown any tangible appreciation of the work they did. Overtime is no compensation for their long hours; it only undermines their health, and I look forward to the time when their conditions might be improved to the extent of allowing them extra leave in order that they might recuperate and again enjoy a full measure of health. Many of the men were on the verge of a nervous breakdown, and indeed some of them had already broken down. They have given wonderful service and the State as a model employer should give them comfortable conditions in return. Some of the men are not able to have even one day a week that they can call their own. That is so in the metropolitan area too. The men are booked on shift every day in the week, and there surely must be something wrong with our rostering system, even with the present shortage of staff, if arrangements cannot be made whereby the men can be assured that at least one day out of seven is really their own.

I know that we can all make suggestions for improvements in the service, but the time for that is not just now. The public complain that the trains are overcrowded, but they understand that in prevailing circumstances the Railway Department can do very little about it.

I am keenly disappointed that throughout the session no proposal has been submitted by the Government relating to post-war railway work. Surely the department has some such schemes that are well forward and might be submitted for consideration by hon.

members. If I might be permitted to work the parish pump just a little, I would point out that on mixing with the passengers on the suburban trains running to my electorate I hear the question asked on all hands, "What is to be the future of this line? Is it to form part of another suburban railway system?" That is a splendid post-war scheme, a modern one, one that is demanded by the public and one that will provide quick and clean transport, but no mention has been made of it by the Government. The only mention of it is perhaps in a casual way by hon. members on this side of the House, and so I should like to urge upon the Government the wisdom of considering the adoption of a scheme for the electrification of the suburban railways.

Not only are the trains overcrowded, but even at the present time, with the heavy traffic occasioned by war, we still maintain what is perhaps a phase of luxury service in having both first-class and second-class carriages on the suburban runs. This matter has been mentioned in the House on numerous occasions, and I think it is a crying shame that there should be this class distinction in railway travel, especially in these days of heavy traffic. It does not exist in the trams nor in the busses.

We can see our people herded in second-class carriages and standing from the Central Station to the terminal point, yet we have in the front of the train a carriage or two hardly occupied and carrying only a first-class passenger or two. Under these conditions of packed trains and standing room only, surely we can get away from that class distinction! Why not open the first-class carriages to all, cut out the first- and second-class fares, and make one class only? I made a suggestion just 12 months ago and I still think it a good one. It is this: label the first-class carriages, "Ladies only" and allow ladies with infants only to use them. This would take them out of the overcrowded second-class carriages and show that some consideration is given to their comfort. It would cost the department nothing. The last returns submitted to this House revealed that only £7,000 was collected from the whole of the suburban railway service in first-class passenger fares. That is infinitesimal when compared with the total passenger earnings. It is not too late to adopt my suggestion.

If the Government have any post-war plans of any magnitude they should bring them forward in sections and let the people see that they are well founded. Let us see those plans and let them include the electrification of suburban railways and the abolition of first-class coaches on the suburban railways. That would be greatly appreciated. It would afford some evidence that the Government have post-war plans and let the people see that they are planning something bigger and better for the future.

At 4 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. Mann, Brisbane) relieved Mr. Speaker in the chair.

Mr. MAHER (West Moreton): I am glad that the Premier, as well as the Minister for Transport, is in the Chamber. I should like to ascertain as far as possible the opinion of the Government on the recent decision of the Commonwealth Government to convert the railways of Australia to the world's standard gauge. I read the remarks of the Premier, in which he suggested that if this proposal was proceeded with that the Queensland gauge of 3 feet 6 inches should be accepted as the standard gauge. I hardly think that the Premier made that suggestion seriously.

Mr. Cooper: That is not as I put it. I said that for defence purposes a 3 feet 6 inch gauge would possibly serve the purpose.

Mr. MAHER: The Premier perpetuated the ancient spirit that caused the State of Queensland, or those responsible, to construct a 3 feet 6 inch gauge in this State rather than adopt the gauge in our neighbouring State.

Mr. Walsh: A man with a wide Army experience supported the narrow gauge.

Mr. MAHER: The Premier is allowing the commercial interests to colour his judgment in the matter. It has been stated that State jealousy was responsible for Queensland's adopting a smaller gauge than the neighbouring State of New South Wales. At the back of that State jealousy one must take into account the fear of the commercial traders at the time. It was then feared by trade rivals that Queensland trade might be captured more easily by New South Wales merchants if a uniform gauge ran from New South Wales into this State. It was thought at the time that the trade of this State could be isolated, and it was in the interest of the merchants in Brisbane and Queensland at the time that the narrow gauge should be adopted. I am very sorry to think that that spirit, which caused this State to embark on a wrong course when our railways were begun, should rise again at this stage of our national development. What I really want to get at is: are members of the Government agreed that military strategy and the need for protecting our vulnerable North call for the construction of a continuous railway line of one gauge—preferably the world's standard gauge of 4 feet 8½ inches—from Melbourne to the Gulf and on to Darwin, with branches of the same gauge to the intervening Queensland ports?

I put the question to the House: are members sufficiently alive to our military needs and considerations as to agree that apart from any question of the general conversion of our railways in Australia to the standard gauge, the Commonwealth should construct a railroad from Melbourne through New South Wales and Queensland to the North in order to give the utmost facility in time of war for the movement of troops and heavy artillery, of munitions, of bulldozers, tanks and all heavy equipment attached to the Army, without the necessity of a break in the transport anywhere on the Queensland border? That is the point I submit for the

consideration of this House. After all, self-preservation is the first law of nature, and it applies to nations as it does to individuals. When this war ends—and we all hope it will in 1945—when it ends victoriously, the enemies we have defeated, proud nations, will be filled with a spirit of revenge, and they are going to prepare for the inevitable day when they will return to the attack. Let us keep carefully in our minds—let me repeat what I said the other night—that Hitler assumed power in Germany as the head of the German Reich in 1932, and exactly seven years later—1939—he struck in war. In that seven years he built up the great German war machine, and the combined power of Russia with a population of 180,000,000 people, Britain with 45,000,000 people, and the United States of America with 130,000,000 people—the combined power of those three great democracies has not yet broken down the power of the German Reich, which was assembled in seven years.

Mr. Aikens: Bunkum! He was doing it for years before that with the knowledge of the British and French Governments.

Mr. MAHER: He did not assume authority in Germany till 1932. He founded the Nazi Party prior to that. His power began in 1932. But it does not matter whether it took seven years, 10 years or 17 years, the fact remains that in a remarkably short period after Germany had been defeated, after her currency had been destroyed, when she was completely bankrupted, she arose from the ashes of her defeat and clothed herself for this tremendous struggle; and her power is not yet broken. So, I say, let us be warned thereby. Remember this: after the power of Japan is broken the Japanese, who are a proud race, will retain in their hearts the spirit of revenge and they will look forward to the day when they can take action again. Peace will come—the easy slotful days of peace—and we have our own Australian ways of thinking more of the football field, the cricket field, and the racecourse than we do of serious preparation for war. Therefore I ask this House: is it willing, as representing the people of Queensland, to give to the Commonwealth the right to construct a railroad on the one standard gauge continuously from Melbourne, through New South Wales, and through the whole of Queensland? That is altogether distinct from any attempt to convert the whole of the Queensland railways to the world's standard gauge. It is a different proposition. I am not asking for the conversion of the whole of the 3 ft. 6 in. gauge to the 4 ft. 8½ in. gauge, but I draw attention to the fact that a great part of Queensland that would provide those facilities conveniently and excellently and with every advantage of military strategy to the Department of Defence today has no railway running north and south. Therefore I submit for the serious consideration of every Australian that we should not wait for the Commonwealth to embark on such a project but we should encourage the Commonwealth. I support the Premier and the Minister for Transport in their resentment at the fact that Commonwealth authorities came to

certain conclusions—if we are to believe the Press reports—to convert the Australian railways to a standard gauge without consulting or showing any co-operative spirit with the Queensland Government. I join with the Premier and his Government in objecting to such a high-handed action. Nevertheless, that is of only minor importance. The big thing is: are we getting ready for the future defence of this country?

Mr. Cooper: That is the point.

Mr. MAHER: If we are agreed on that, let us encourage the Commonwealth to come to Queensland first and to build a railway of a 4 ft. 8½ in. gauge through this State. I know the State of Queensland very well, and the best location for such a railroad would be through the middle-western areas of the State. There is a vast area of rich country from Boggabilla, through Goondiwindi and on to Miles, a matter of 200 odd miles, with no railroad at all. Another beautiful stretch of country runs north from Miles to Springsure, I suppose another 350 miles, and then there is another belt of country running right through to Charters Towers. We should not be small and parochial in a matter of this kind. We must be big and I would inform the Premier, who appears to be rather facetious, of a conversation I had with a high-ranking officer, an engineer in the American Army in this city about 12 months ago. He said, "You don't know how close you were to getting an American railroad right through the middle of your State. We were going to build one from New South Wales through the middle of your State. I had all the plans prepared for it, but when I was about to go ahead I got orders to move further north and not to proceed with it." That was his information to me, and it shows that in the estimation of the American Army engineers the very route in the main essentials I have suggested was the plan for their railways to serve the Gulf and the Northern Territory areas, which at that time they believed would be subject to Japanese invasion. For military strategy that was the route that impressed the American engineers. I cannot lay claim to any knowledge of military strategy, but I do possess some common sense, and I feel that if the Government were to encourage the Commonwealth to undertake such a project, of linking up their line from Boggabilla to Goondiwindi, to Miles and on to Charters Towers by the middle-western route they would serve two splendid purposes. They would give to the Department of Defence a continuous railway line right through without any break of gauge to North Queensland, and they would open up and serve some of the best land in Queensland with unlimited resources and capable of settling a very large number of people as the larger areas through which the line ran gradually became opened up for closer settlement. What is wrong with a proposal like that? There are those who would build a line—and this was proposed in the days of Sir Thomas McIlwraith—from Bourke, through Thargomindah and Camooweal to Darwin. Such a line would

cost a tremendous sum of money and would run through an area of country very sparsely populated and with a very limited rainfall. Of course, it would serve military purposes, but it would have very little developmental value. What I can see sticking out plainly ahead is that the commercial interests of Queensland are not very keen on a continuous single-gauge line penetrating this State, and I hope the Premier and his Government will not be influenced by such a consideration. Military requirements are paramount, therefore commercial interests must remain secondary in a matter of this kind where the future safety of our country is concerned.

Mr. Cooper: Hear, hear!

Mr. MAHER: I ask the Premier to give very careful consideration to this important matter and not to be too sensitive about the fact that he has not been consulted but rather to encourage the Commonwealth to go ahead with this scheme whilst there is yet time. It takes a long time to construct a railway hundreds of miles long. I regard this as one of the most urgent works that can be put in hand in the post-war period because it involves the security and safety of the Australian nation.

Everyone must realise that with the Japanese Empire, which has a population of 90,000,000, expanding at the rate of 1,000,000 every year, we are in a very vulnerable position, and should take all necessary precautionary steps while there is yet time. We should not allow this or that petty interest to interfere with what is the right course of action. I ask the Government to give serious consideration to this matter, and regard it as one of the foremost works to be undertaken in the immediate post-war period.

At 4.16 p.m.,

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Hon. F. A. COOPER (Bremer—Premier): I am glad the hon. member for West Moreton raised this question because unwittingly he has endorsed everything I said on this matter. I said that if the Commonwealth said that the building of the railway gauge that they had decided upon was for defence purposes, then it was paramount, and Queensland had no say in the matter whatever, because defence is a matter entirely for the Commonwealth. The people of Australia gave the matter of the defence of Australia to the Commonwealth, and it is a very good thing that they did so, otherwise the Queensland navy would have received a terrible bashing in the Coral Sea battle, because possibly the Victorian navy and the South Australian navy would not have been able to get round in time. In any case, they would have been wanted in their own harbour for the defence of their own colonies. Federation was a great thing in that it gave us a combined defence policy for the whole of Australia.

The proposal for a uniform gauge is mainly for defence purposes. The hon. member for West Moreton has pictured the possibility of an early revival of Japan. He visualises the

possibility that because of her big population and the splendid way in which that population increases it may be only a matter of a few years before Japan is prepared to attack Australia again. Where will the attack come? Only in the North. What I said was that if the Commonwealth was anxious to get a defence policy in the matter of transport ready, the thing was to construct a 3ft. 6in. gauge from Victoria through the centre of Victoria, linking up Melbourne, Ballarat and all the big manufacturing centres, through the centre of New South Wales, touching Goulburn, Bathurst and Armidale, with branches to Sydney and Newcastle, and up to the Queensland border in order that defence goods may be despatched without further ado.

Take the plan advocated by the military expert from West Moreton. Just think of it! We are to have a 4ft. 8½in. gauge running up through the centre of Queensland, but if we want munitions at Brisbane, what have we to do? We must unload and reload at Goondiwindi. If we want munitions at Rockhampton, what must we do? We must unload and reload at Longreach. If we want munitions for Townsville we must unload and reload at another point. Why, the very thing he advocates means the continual hampering of the defence effort by reason of the fact that we have no continuous railway system for supplying the various points of defence. The hon. member for West Moreton says in effect that the Japanese are so dull, so foolish, that they would attack Queensland only at the points where Queensland was well defended. We shall need to have defence points all over the North of Australia, at Darwin, at Broome, in the Gulf country, up to Cairns and beyond. Are we going to build a 3ft. 6in. gauge all the way through to these points, or are we to be hampered by the continual unloading and reloading that has been the cause of the greatest possible hampering of the war effort in Australia?

It has been advocated by a very eminent American—and there is some force in it—that possibly the best thing to do with Germany after the war would be to carve it into six or seven different States and give each a different railway gauge so that its assembly of man-power and munitions would be hampered. That is what has happened to us in our defence of Australia. It has been put forward by a very high American officer as a necessary thing for Australia that a 3ft. 6in. gauge would meet the position. It has been advocated by many other people. The thought did not originate with me. It is because I heard people who were railway experts say that they believed that a 3ft. 6in. gauge would serve the defence of Australia better than anything else that I said what I did. Then some of the wiseacres who write for newspapers said, "What does the Premier care about the comfort of his passengers? Why can we not have a 4ft. 8½in. gauge so that we can ride in comfort and sleep soundly?"

We do not want it for that purpose alone. We want it for the defence of Australia. The hon. member for West Moreton has explained that the next descent on Australia might be soon and it might be sudden and

for that reason are we to sit idly by waiting for the 4 feet 8½ inch gauge from Victoria right through Queensland and then experience the hampering of the broken gauge in Queensland for the defence of Australia? I am surprised at the insufficiency of thought that the hon. member for West Moreton has given to the subject. If he had stopped at the point that we should have a 4 feet 8½ inch gauge for the whole of Australia he would have been on safe ground but he became an expert and he showed just how little he had studied the situation.

It was not a matter of Australia's safety with the hon. member. He saw another opportunity of giving this Government a good bash in the face but unfortunately he overstepped the mark. I am as keen on this matter as anybody else. I know the story about the different railway gauges between Victoria and New South Wales. It was early in the history of railways in Australia that a committee or conference met composed of representatives from New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia and it was decided that a uniform gauge was necessary because some day such a system would be needed, and so it was decided that the gauge should be 5 feet 3 inches. Victoria went ahead, ordered her rolling stock and started on her permanent way. South Australia ordered her rolling stock and started on her permanent way. When the rolling stock for Victoria and South Australia was virtually completed New South Wales ordered rolling stock for a 4 feet 8½ inch gauge so that she might not have her rich Riverina district taken from her and diverted to the other States. The very thing that the hon. member accused the originators of the 3 feet 6 inch gauge of doing was the very kernel of the difference in the gauges between Victoria and New South Wales.

The real reason why we built the 3 feet 6 inches in Queensland, I believe, was that this was an infinitely bigger colony than the others, that we had a decentralisation policy that was a credit to this State. It was not the policy of this Government only but of all Governments who have preceded them and they have at all times fought for a policy of decentralisation. That is the reason why we have so many harbours along the entire coastline of the State while there are only one or two harbours along the coastline of New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia. We said that without a policy of decentralisation it would have been impossible to serve the far distant places in Queensland from Brisbane back 500 miles, from Rockhampton back 500 miles, and from Townsville back 500 miles. If we had begun with a 4 feet 8½ inch gauge it would have cost us probably nearly twice as much as the 3 feet 6 inches gauge.

Mr. Decker: It would be necessary to lengthen the axles too.

Mr. COOPER: We have heard all this talk about the broken gauge and the third rail over the past 30 years, but to allow this to be done an engine with a buffer here and another with a buffer higher up would have to be so twisted and

curled in a state of emergency as to enable the one train to run on the different gauges. If the real remedy is the one gauge of 4 feet 8½ inches it will not be such a heavy penalty on Queensland rolling stock as some people think because the hang-over of our carriages and our trucks is very great. Our carriages are not much narrower than those on the 4 feet 8½ inch gauge of New South Wales. We have a big hang-over and what we should have to alter would be not the whole of the carriage or the trucks, not the tops of them but only the underframe so that the vehicles could run on the 4 feet 8½ inch gauge. If that is necessary for defence purposes then believe me that every penny of the cost must be borne by the Commonwealth of Australia because we are entitled to be defended because we are part of Australia.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. COOPER: If it is a mixture of defence and commerce then I believe Queensland should bear its fair share, and if Queensland has to bear its fair share then New South Wales, in which nothing will have to be altered will have to bear its fair share of the cost too, because it is done for the protection of Australia and as New South Wales is part of Australia it must come into the question of cost.

It is not an easy matter to settle this question of a uniform gauge and it cannot be done by the airy statement that 4 feet 8½ inch should be the standard gauge. I believe that in 40 years, 50 years or 60 years the money spent upon a uniform gauge will be money well spent. I had a very urgent call from a northern place the other day for immediate inquiry for a boiler for an electric-light undertaking.

Did I think of chartering a plane and taking a boiler up? We cannot do that. I cannot see an aerial system carting from the west of Queensland the wool that the west of Queensland produces. I cannot see the long-distance haulage of sugar being done in the air—what we now do by rail. I cannot see it being done by road. I can still see heavy work for the railways for the next 40 years.

Mr. J. F. Barnes interjected.

Mr. COOPER: I have not the time to make a study of the Protocols and although I do sometimes read what the stars foretell I have not seen them foretell that. I know Old Mother Shipton said something that came true after 200 or 300 years, but I am not content to wait that long to see safety in these parts of the world.

Mr. J. F. Barnes: Of course you are not.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. COOPER: What we need first is to be safe. We need to be protected from fear of invasion, fear of people who want to take this country from us. Whether we shall in the days to come, immediately after this war, appoint a world policeman with a baton in his hands and a revolver on his hip to keep the world in order, is another matter. It is

our duty to do everything we can for the protection of Australia now. If it is an urgent matter, as the hon. member for West Moreton said, and the matter of extreme urgency common sense says it is, let us see to it that the whole of the railways of Queensland, which will be the very nerve centre of Australia, are in a state to meet the emergency. They will not be in a state to meet an emergency if we are to load and unload and unload and load, and load and unload not at three, but at twenty and three different points right throughout the length and breadth of this continent on and up to Darwin. We are nearly through to Darwin. We are right at Mount Isa. If we are to defend this country, we must have quick transport, we must have transport to do heavy work.

What I said was not said thoughtlessly or in a niggardly spirit. What I said was, I believe, that the 3 feet 6 inch gauge was something that should not be lost sight of in the matter of the defence of Australia. I believe you can do better and bigger work with the wider gauge. You can do bigger and wider work with the heavier engine. I also know, however, that in South Africa they have a 3 feet 6 inch gauge and that one of its expresses runs a distance of 900 miles at an average speed of 37½ miles an hour. I also know that that train is capable of doing up to 60 miles an hour on stretches of the road. If the hon. member for Bundaberg takes sufficient interest in the railways when travelling on them he should know that on stretches of the road between Brisbane and Townsville our trains have done 45 and 47 miles per hour.

Mr. J. F. Barnes: Twice too slow.

Mr. COOPER: Of course twice too slow. The hon. member for Bundaberg would like to see trains running at 90 miles an hour, and ungenerous as I am, I should not like to see the hon. member for Bundaberg in that train.

Mr. Aikens: You have not mentioned that the Commonwealth Government did not carry out their contract to build a line from Birdum to Camooweal if the State extended the line from Mt. Isa to Camooweal. That would have taken a great deal of worry off our minds.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. COOPER: That is ancient history; I do not want to go into that. We made a recommendation that we believed was right but other counsels were accepted. The Queensland Government acted in what they believed to be in the best interests of Queensland and in doing that acted in the best interests of Australia.

I do not want to go into the matter of defence. We urged certain things that might be done but they were not done. That was in the past. We must look now to the future. The Queensland Government will act with the Commonwealth Government to the utmost in all matters affecting the defence of Australia. They will also do their utmost for

the development of Queensland. One of the urgent things in the development of Australia is the development of Queensland. I can assure the hon. member for West Moreton that no care for the specific interests of the commercial community will weigh with the Government (who at all times have the interest of the State at heart) if the commercial interests are opposed to the interests of the whole of Queensland. It is possible that a gauge of 4 feet 8½ inches will become supreme throughout Australia. All I hope is that we have the time and that we have the money to do the job. I was tickled to death, if one might use the phrase on such a serious question, to note that the Commonwealth Government were making immediate application for the release of 150 sleepers to do this job. (Laughter.) I made a rapid calculation and I think these 150 men that they hope to get to cut sleepers for this job are assured of a lifetime job, even if they live to the age of 85 years.

Mr. Maher: It was a childish statement.

Mr. COOPER: It was an absurd statement to make and showed that they have no conception of the amount of time and labour required to cut sufficient sleepers to run a railway right through from Victoria to Queensland.

The hon. member made a statement attributed to a high-ranking American officer that they were just on the verge of building a line right through Queensland. Well, I am sorry they got off. The American Army did some very fine jobs in Queensland—some splendid jobs. They have acknowledged too the very good jobs done by Queensland. I want to say, now that the danger is passed, that a special line was surveyed. We had people ready to fly to the job. We should have had to cut down the traffic of Queensland by 50 or 60 per cent. in order that we might have use of the necessary rolling stock. We had to supply the necessary material to do this very urgent military job. Fortunately our prayers were answered and the danger passed and there was no need to do that special job. But although there would have had to be sacrifices in order that that big job could be carried out the Government said, "If this is your decision, that it is in the best interests of the defence of Australia, then the Government will bend every energy to see it is done." We were saved. It might have been a valuable advantage to the Australian railways, it might not have been, but I know that whatever we were asked to do we have done. If it turns out to be to the benefit of Australia, particularly for its defence, that we must have a 4 feet 8½ inch gauge and it is not something from which we have to unload and load and unload and load perpetually, everlastingly, then I say give it to us because it will be a great benefit and the people of Queensland will accept their fair share of the burden, as they have from the very inception of Federation borne their fair share. Some people have doubt whether the Commonwealth will be in a position to do this because of the fact that the referendum

proposals were turned down. I believe it has the power. All it has to say is, "This is a defence measure" and it can do it. If it does it for defence purposes it is obliged to bear the whole of the cost. We can leave it at that.

Mr. L. J. BARNES (Cairns) (4.36 p.m.): There is one matter that I should like to bring before the notice of the Minister in reference to pilfering, which is a flash term for stealing. I do not rise to defend thieves, but I suggest that the railway regulations should be amended. One case I brought under the notice of the Minister is now being dealt with. This concerned a man in the railway with over 30 years' service who stole a few vegetables. He was fined £20 by the stipendiary magistrate, and under the regulations he had to be sacked—I agree with that—but he lost all benefits.

Mr. Walsh: That is in the Act.

Mr. L. J. BARNES: I know it is, and the Act should be amended. This man stole a few cabbages, and could have lost £800 or £900. The Commissioner can hide behind the regulations.

Mr. Walsh: It is an Act passed by this Parliament.

Mr. L. J. BARNES: I am quite aware of that. That does not matter; it should be amended. In this case this old man had nothing against his character, and there were numerous similar cases. This man was transferred from Townsville to Cairns, and he had to live in one room in Cairns, and he could not get a house for his wife, and he did everything to try to get a transfer. He went to the man-power authorities to see if he could get out. He said, "If I cannot get out that way I will get out this way." I do know that man stole for no other reason than to get the sack, little thinking of the benefits he would lose. There are a number of cases in which men have been fined £5 or £10 and they may lose £600 or £700. The man who has worked for years and has accumulated long-service leave loses that benefit. I do not wish to protect a thief, but I believe a punishment of the loss of £500 or £600 for stealing a few vegetables—in this case a few potatoes; this man had a few children and no potatoes were available on the market—is outrageous. These things should be brought under the notice of the Government. No doubt the Minister is sympathetic.

Mr. Walsh: I am not; you might as well know that.

Mr. L. J. BARNES: The stipendiary magistrate fines a man £20 and he loses £600 or £700 in the nature of long-service leave from the department. That does not obtain in Government administration in other spheres—they do not fine a man £600 or £700 in addition to the fine inflicted on him by the magistrate.

Mr. Walsh: Would you continue to employ a thief in your industry?

Mr. L. J. BARNES: I am not asking the hon. gentleman to employ him. I told him I did not want him re-employed. I cannot see the logic in fining a man £700 or £800 for stealing a cabbage after a police magistrate has fined him £20. I am not asking the Minister to re-employ him. I ask for the reconsideration of the matter of forfeiting his benefits. It is time the Act was amended.

Men have been tried by judge and jury and found not guilty who have not been re-employed by the Railway Department. I am not arguing against that. My point at the moment is that the penalty is too great.

Mr. Walsh: At times juries come to some peculiar decisions.

Mr. L. J. BARNES: The Government will not accept the decision of a judge and jury. That is ridiculous talk, coming from a Minister. I would remind the Minister that a great many of the goods carried by the department are not conveyed at Commissioner's risk. As a matter of fact, I remember a case in which a couple of railwaymen stole some melons from a person altogether outside of the Railway Department. They were sacked by the department and lost all benefits. The point I am making is that the man I referred to, who had been a loyal servant of the department for 30 years and was of good character, could lose £600 or £700—and it could be up to £800 or £900—just because of a theft of an article worth 10s. That is not consistent with other phases of Government administration.

Mr. JESSON (Kennedy) (4.40 p.m.): I agree entirely with certain parts of the speech of the hon. member for West Moreton, particularly in reference to the defence of Australia. My contention is that the northern part of Australia could be so greatly developed that there would be no need to transport from the South all the requirements to defend the country. As I have been saying in this Chamber for 10 years, there is not an industry conducted in the South that could not operate in North Queensland, where there is an abundance of water, if properly harnessed, to supply the water and electric power necessary for secondary industries. No estimate has been stated as to the cost of the proposed railway, but I suppose making a layman's rough guess, that it would be in the vicinity of £300,000,000 by the time the work was completed. Without setting myself up as an authority as to whether we should not do something to defend the northern part of Australia, I contend it would be worth the while of both Commonwealth and State Governments considering expending that £300,000,000 in setting up industries in the North to attract people to this area. They would be the first line of defence. I would ask: if the Japanese can have 90,000,000 of population why can we not have that population here? The country is large enough.

There is also another aspect of the matter. The conduct of modern warfare is such that railways are almost obsolete and they are becoming more obsolete each day. One reads

reports of large passenger and cargo aeroplanes capable of conveying almost as much material as an ordinary goods train could carry. I should prefer leaving the matter in the hands of the experts than putting it in those of the hon. member for West Moreton, who this afternoon sent his blood pressure up and became highly excited over something that he roundly condemned a few short months ago. As a matter of fact, I believe that the hon. member for West Moreton was amongst the Fadden team who when opposing the referendum proposals said that there was no need for unification of the railways. They come into this House now, as the Premier has aptly said, and endeavour to score off the Commonwealth and State Governments. They know very well that the unification of the railways unless it is consented to by the State, will be the cause of much trouble, propaganda, political and commercial moves in the South. With the present set-up, I cannot see Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria, or even New South Wales agreeing to the expenditure of approximately £300,000,000 in Queensland. Would there not be a noise in the Tasmanian House if the Tasmanians had to pay so much for the unification of railways in Queensland?

I have not yet met any of these ultra-patriots among the so-called privileged capitalistic classes who do not care much about defence so long as they make profits. Profits will be their main concern when the war is over. The Tasmanian people certainly will object to contributing huge sums towards a uniform railway gauge into Queensland. We should know that when we remember the opposition there was to trading between the States only a few years ago.

Again, it is not just a question of constructing a line from Mungindi to Goondiwindi, across to Miles and through Central Queensland. Investigation must be conducted first, and above all there must be unity among the States. Each State Parliament must pass the necessary legislation because men like the hon. member for West Moreton and others stumped the countryside a short time ago, roundly condemning the Federal Government's proposal for a uniform railway gauge in Australia. They opposed a united Australia in a united post-war effort or a united Australia in the defence of Australia. Now, with their tongues in their cheeks, they say that the time is ripe for doing these things.

I heard the hon. member for Sandgate shed his usual crocodile tears today in asking what the Government have done for the railwaymen, why they do not give them leave, why they work them such long hours. All I can say is that if the hon. member is such a great patriot and big man he might be able to send word to Japan asking them to call the war off for a month so that we may close down the railways for that time. During the election and referendum campaigns we heard these men saying that price restrictions and rationing should be lifted. I had the displeasure of travelling with the hon. member for East Toowoomba on the

railway from Miles to Roma during the referendum campaign. At every little way-side stop he left the train and handed railway workers little blank cheques. He would have a little giggle and a laugh and ask a fettle, "What do you think of that?" he would say, "Don't give the Commonwealth the blank cheque." During the whole of this journey I spoke to him privately in the carriage and said to him exactly what I am saying to this House now, and he agreed with every word of it. I spoke about the great job the Railway Department has done, how the men had worked at night and how tired they are. He agreed with it all. As one who lives in the North and travels to and from the North regularly, I know that during these war years the only inconvenience that the travelling public have suffered has been that the food perhaps has not been as good as it was in pre-war days, trains have been a little late, and perhaps not as clean as they were in normal times. The railwaymen have done a mighty job and when the time arrives they will be well and faithfully repaid for it by the Government on behalf of the people of Queensland and Australia. The railwaymen have no need to fear that their services will not be suitably acknowledged by the Government. We should not object so much if the hon. member for Sandgate had been sincere but I have never yet heard him get up in this Chamber and advocate anything sincerely on behalf of the workers. He always speaks with his tongue in his cheek. If ever he does suggest that an improvement be made for the workers, there is always a sting in the tail and there are more buts in it than there are in Paddy McGinty's billy goat. We must take everything he says with a grain of salt. The people of Queensland and Australia owe a big debt of gratitude to the railwaymen and this Government will reward them suitably for it. Even in the last 12 months Orders in Council have been issued by the Government conferring considerable benefits on the railwaymen.

Mr. Decker: They are not very satisfied.

Mr. JESSON: I am not saying they are really satisfied but the Government have no control over the conditions that prevail. There is a shortage of man-power and the rolling stock must be kept moving. The spirit of complacency emanating from hon. members opposite is not worthy of good Australians either. They are doing everything they can to foster a spirit of complacency outside while the Prime Minister, the Acting Prime Minister and prominent people in the community, including General McArthur and General Blamey, are impressing upon the people that they must not be so complacent because the war was not over by a long way. As the battle front recedes further from our shores the goods from Australia will have to be conveyed longer distances and be longer on the water. That will call for a greater volume of man-power and greater work on the railways than ever.

I have no desire to delay the passing of the Resolution, but I am only sorry that hon.

members opposite have stonewalled on it. I wished to discuss the Resolutions relating to the Department of Home and Health Affairs and the Department of Agriculture and Stock, because they relate to matters of importance to my electors. I represent a big farming constituency and I should have been much better employed discussing, say, the problems of the sugar industry, but I was deprived of that opportunity by the stonewall set up by the Opposition on the Resolution relating to the railways. The display given today in that connection by the hon. member for East Toowoomba was simply shocking.

In conclusion I want to congratulate the railwaymen, especially those in the North and on their branch lines, for their splendid service in the carriage of goods and in bringing goods in to be manufactured. Look at the splendid work that has been done by the railway refreshment rooms staff during the past two years in particular. No-one on the other side of the Chamber has paid them a compliment for that. When you go to Rockhampton and Mackay and similar places and see the trains that arrive late at night conveying hundreds of troops and civilians you marvel how the girls at the refreshment rooms were able to cater for their requirements with so little delay.

Mr. J. F. Barnes: How do you know?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask hon. members to take this debate seriously.

Mr. JESSON: When I was so rudely interrupted by the hon. member for Bundaberg—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. member to get on with his speech.

Mr. JESSON: Those girls have done a great job. They have worked under heavy conditions. Sometimes they were grossly insulted by some of the travelling public who did not think they were served as quickly as they might have been. I often said to those travellers, "Give them a chance; they are doing a good job under the circumstances." I hope that the Government will suitably reward them for their loyal services when the time comes.

There is one other matter I desire to touch on regarding the crocodile tears that have been shed by members of the Opposition in this debate. During the time the Moore Government were in office they took the Crown employees away from the Industrial Court. (Opposition interruption.) You cannot tell a good thing too many times. As I am reminded by the Secretary for Mines, the workers were tired going around looking for jobs to keep their wives and families, and many of them could only get two or three days a week.

Mr. Yeates: When was that?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. Yeates: You were in the shade then cooling your heels.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member for East Toowoomba has interjected persistently and if he continues to defy the Chair I shall have to name him.

Mr. JESSON: It is remarkable when you hit the Opposition on a sore spot that they cannot sit silent and take it.

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED UNDER STANDING ORDER 307 AND SESSIONAL ORDERS.

At 5 p.m., under Standing Order No. 307 and Sessional Order, Mr. Speaker put the Resolution under discussion and Resolutions not already agreed to.

Resolution 8—Department of Railways—agreed to.

Resolutions 9 to 19, both inclusive, agreed to.

WAYS AND MEANS.

OPENING OF COMMITTEE.

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Mann, Brisbane, in the chair.)

Hon. E. M. HANLON (Ithaca—Treasurer) (5.1 p.m.): I move—

“(a) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, for the service of the year 1944-1945, a further sum not exceeding £11,040,459 be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

“(b) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, for the service of the year 1944-1945, a further sum not exceeding £6,293,148 be granted from the Trust and Special Funds.

“(c) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, for the service of the year 1944-1945, a further sum not exceeding £2,064,250 be granted from the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

“(d) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, for the service of the year 1943-1944, a supplementary sum not exceeding £1,417,877 3s. 6d. be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

“(e) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, for the service of the year 1943-1944, a supplementary sum not exceeding £2,246,359 15s. 7d. be granted from the Trust and Special Funds.

“(f) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, for the service of the year 1943-1944, a supplementary sum not exceeding £485,755 7s. 5d. be granted from the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

“(g) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1945-1946, a

sum not exceeding £3,500,000 be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

“(h) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1945-1946, a sum not exceeding £4,000,000 be granted from the Trust and Special Funds.

“(i) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1945-1946, a sum not exceeding £800,000 be granted from the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.”

This is the final appropriation Bill and it covers the Estimates-in-Chief for the current year, the Supplementary Estimates for last financial year which have already been passed in Committee; and, following the usual practice, a Vote on Account for the next financial year which also has been passed in Committee. This appropriation will provide supply for the remainder of the year and for a short period of the next financial year, and is made up as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
On Account of Estimates,			
1944-45—			
Consolidated Revenue ..	19,540,459	0	0
Trust and Special Funds ..	16,293,148	0	0
Loan Fund	2,964,250	0	0
Supplementary Estimates,			
1943-44—			
Consolidated Revenue ..	1,417,877	3	6
Trust and Special Funds	2,246,359	15	7
Loan Fund	485,755	7	5
Appropriation Vote on			
Account for			
Financial Year			
1945-46—			
Consolidated Revenue	3,500,000		
Trust and Special			
Funds	4,000,000		
Loan Fund	800,000		
	£8,300,000	0	0

The comparable amounts provided in the Appropriation Act No. 2 of last financial year on account of 1944-45 were:—

	£.
Consolidated Revenue Fund	3,500,000
Trust and Special Funds ..	5,000,000
Loan Fund	500,000
	£9,000,000

The provision is for an approximate period of eight weeks, and whereas it is anticipated that the Revenue Fund requirements will not change very greatly, it is thought that the needs of Trust and Special Funds will not be so great, owing to the falling off of expenditure for defence and allied works. An increase is asked for in Loan Fund as it is hoped that activities for home building will make greater demands on Loan Fund in 1945-1946 than has been the case in the first few months of this year.

Motion agreed to.

Resolutions reported, received and agreed to.

APPROPRIATION BILL No. 2.

FIRST READING.

A Bill, founded on the resolutions reported from the Committee of Ways and Means, was introduced and read a first time.

SECOND READING.

Hon. E. M. HANLON (Ithaca—Treasurer) (5.9 p.m.): I move—

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

Mr. BRAND (Isis) (5.10 p.m.): The moneys we are appropriating are those that will carry on the services of the State for the period mentioned by the Treasurer. For 17 days we have been discussing Estimates-in-Chief affecting some of the very important departments of State but time did not permit of our debating some, and I feel that at this stage something can be said about some of the things said this afternoon, but in another way. I recognise that in the debate on the Department of Railways a certain attitude had to be adopted.

The announcement made as recently as the 11th of this month that the Federal Government had decided that the Australian railway gauges should be standardised on a basis of 4 ft. 8½ in. came as a bolt from the blue so far as we were concerned. This shows up the want of a proper sense of responsibility in the present Federal Government. We can see that same lack in connection with industrial arbitration, in which there is a surrender to political pressure groups and encouragement of those who flout industrial laws. The Press this afternoon indicates the serious position, or to use the words of the Acting Prime Minister, the calamitous position through which this nation is passing.

The standardising of the gauges of the Australian railways is a tremendous problem, and it is certainly a project as to which there should not be any hurried decision. Obviously the State Governments should be consulted. Obviously they were not, because we gather from the Premier's statement in the Press that he was completely taken by surprise. Only this afternoon we heard the Premier say that was so. The Premier of Queensland said he favoured a 3 ft. 6 in. gauge and indicated that in other directions he was at variance with the Commonwealth Government. He also stated the matter did not come up for decision at the Premiers' Conference, nor had it been considered by the Queensland Cabinet. That is an extraordinary state of affairs. Even admitting that the Commonwealth Government may decide on the conversion of railway gauges as a defence matter it is very doubtful whether Commonwealth power will extend to all railways. That is a point that I think we can agree on—that it is very doubtful whether the Commonwealth Government can assume the whole responsibility. If standardisation does come about, we do not know whether it will affect the main arterial railways of the State. For instance, we do not know whether it will affect the North Coast Railway, which is

vulnerable to enemy attack. It may not be classed as a defence line. But even if the building of a line on a uniform gauge can be legally upheld under the Commonwealth's defence power, the Commonwealth Government should have consulted the State Governments. This is a matter that should be considered by all the States of Australia. Only a few months ago a referendum was held in which the unification of railway gauges was an issue for the decision of the people of Australia.

Australia as a whole turned down a proposal to hand to the Commonwealth Government complete control in the matter of a uniform railway gauge. Queensland's decision on the referendum was one that favoured co-operation between Federal and State Governments. If the conversion does not come within the defence power it cannot be undertaken without the approval of the State Governments.

In his statement in the Press two days after Mr. Forde made his announcement the Premier said that the standardisation of railway gauges was purely a matter for the experts. It is an important matter that should be submitted to the experts. Before any task such as this is placed before the Australian people it should be thoroughly examined by the greatest experts we can obtain. They should have the opportunity to investigate and report to the responsible authorities.

About 20 years ago the cost of conversion of all railways to the 4 feet 8½ inch gauge was estimated at £35,000,000. Recently it was stated that the cost would be approximately £70,000,000. It will be appreciated, therefore, that the decision whether this work should be proceeded with in post-war years is indeed a grave one to have to make. In his Press statement of 13 November of this year, the Premier said that it would take 20 or 30 years to complete this work and that it would be a Commonwealth matter but probably all States would share the cost. I submit that the standardisation of railway gauges relates purely to defence and we should very carefully study all records at our disposal in order to arrive at a decision as to whether we are justified in undertaking this work in the immediate post-war years.

In Queensland we had experts who are as competent as any to be found in Australia, and our own Commissioner for Railways shows in his annual report that the mileage of non-standard gauge is 18,183. He also states that the cost of construction per mile is £6,187 for the 3 feet 6 inch gauge and £24,840 for the 4 feet 8½ inch gauge of New South Wales. The difference in cost is tremendous. It is quite easy to see that we might be committed to a tremendous expenditure that would not be warranted. During the 17 days' discussion of the Estimates, hon. members have given special attention to the works that might be undertaken by the various departments for post-war development. Most hon. members have suggested undertakings for the post-war years. Many of them would be of tremendous value to

the State if put into effect, but I doubt very much whether the standardisation of railway gauges will bring us more revenue or create greater wealth than our present system. We and every other State Parliament should have a definite say on this matter before the proposal is forced upon us.

I want to quote on this matter an outstanding authority on construction work in Australia. I refer to no other than the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works in this State, Mr. J. R. Kemp, who in his annual report to Parliament says on page 12—

“Complete conversion to standard gauge in Queensland would cost an immense sum of money, and it is questionable whether such a scheme would be warranted.

“The completion of connections between the Northern, Central and South-Western systems, the introduction of improved curvature to lines generally, and the introduction of a higher standard of maintenance would probably be a much better proposition so far as this State is concerned. An additional outlet for Southern traffic through Wallangarra to the North on a line approximating that of the strategic defence road in the Northern section could be obtained most easily.

“The Railway Department is developing plans for rehabilitation of lines, property and rolling-stock, and, as pointed out above, this work will be the first for attention when the time arrives.”

There is an indication that there is going to be a great deal of work—when the time arrives. Mr. Kemp gives it as his opinion that it is questionable whether such a scheme is warranted.

Mr. Frost, Federal Minister for Repatriation and Minister in charge of War Service Homes, a man in charge of great public-works programmes, said in a Press statement of 13th of this month—

“Applications for finance for war service homes were being received at the rate of about 200 a month, but they were being discouraged from building while costs were high.”

There is the statement by a Federal Minister that they were discouraging applications for the building of homes because costs were high. Costs are high because of the shortages of man-power and materials, and they will remain short for many years to come. Can this nation afford the luxury of rail conversion while people remain short of housing?

I come now to another authority on the subject, one who has had much to say concerning programmes relating to the post-war world. I refer to Mr. Colin Clark, who in “Economic News” for July last said—

“Immense commitments are being proposed for the post-war Commonwealth Budget. Defence, the primary duty of the Commonwealth Government, will be secured, we are told, by the holding of an out-screen of islands. This will, however, call for numbers of men and large expendi-

ture on equipment. If we call for help from Britain and America we will be morally bound to spend on defence at least as large a proportion of our national income as they do, which will probably be some 3 to 4 per cent., as against the 1 per cent. which we spent in 1938-39. Interest, exchange and sinking fund, apart from State debts, will probably amount to £85 millions per annum by the time the war is over, as against £17 millions in 1938-39. A permanent expansion of the Commonwealth Public Service is proposed, at high salaries. An increase in the salaries of teachers (undoubtedly desirable) will, it is believed by many, be provided by Commonwealth subsidies. There is to be a social security service to provide for unemployment, sickness, and other contingencies, on an entirely non-contributory basis. A housing programme is being discussed which may soon involve the Commonwealth in £10 millions per annum in subsidies. The rapid unification of railway gauges, at whatever expense, is being actively discussed. Every kind of Commonwealth assistance is being sought for State finances, and many projects of purely local importance are now claiming that they should be financed from Commonwealth funds. All sorts of persons and associations, wanting money for any purpose, are now beginning to think that they are entitled to get it from the seemingly illimitable milch-cow of the Commonwealth Treasury.

“Many will continue to live in this dream world for another year or two, and then wake up with a start to the fact that the possibilities of public expenditure, though considerable, are very definitely limited.”

That is the position we have to face. The most important aspect of this matter is that conversion of railway gauges should not be classed in the high-priority group of Government works. For many years after the war there will be an acute shortage of man-power and materials required for such things as housing, schools, semi-completed public works, conversion of war industries to civil production, restoration of primary and secondary industries, railway and tramway deferred maintenance, electricity extensions, water supply projects, and even, perhaps, the Bradfield scheme. During the progress of the debate on the Estimates in the last 17 days all these matters have been covered by hon. members. These are either essential or are projects that will increase wealth production. The conversion of railway gauges would not add to wealth production. The British White Paper on Unemployment stresses that such things should be undertaken some years ahead.

These are matters that require close study and expert consideration. I agree with the remarks by the Premier in reply to a statement made by the Commonwealth Government. He knows from a study of the march of events between the Commonwealth Government and State Governments that the States have been partly cast aside. The Premier's

remarks were merited, particularly when he gave expression to the sentiments of the people of this State. If anything is to be done in this matter let it be done when industry has been restored from its present position. I do not hold with the view that when the war is over the nations are going to be in a position to wage another war. If we are to be governed by the three great leaders of the world today our enemies will not be in a position to launch a war as they have done over the past years.

I now wish to deal with the question of Treasury bills and the sinking fund to meet State deficits. We know that for the financial years 1929-30 to 1934-35 inclusive the State deficits were financed by advances from the Commonwealth Bank under the security of Commonwealth Treasury bills. We know also that the Queensland Government were refused Treasury bill accommodation for the deficits for the financial years 1929-30, 1930-31, and 1931-32.

Mr. Hanlon: That is not altogether correct.

Mr. BRAND: It is nearly right. These deficits amounted to £3,640,409.

Mr. Hanlon: It is money you should have spent to give unemployed men work.

Mr. BRAND: Anyhow, we were refused Treasury bill accommodation.

Mr. Hanlon: The money was lying idle in the Treasury here and you sent it down South instead of giving your own men work.

Mr. BRAND: We know perfectly well that the Commonwealth Act validating the Financial Agreement provided for an annual sinking fund, the contribution to which by the State on ordinary loans was 5s. per cent. and the Commonwealth 5s. per cent. We know too that on loans to meet revenue deficits the States had to find £4 per cent. and the Commonwealth nothing. I understand the States have not paid the sinking-fund contribution of £4 per cent.

Mr. Hanlon: We are faced with having to pay the sinking-fund contribution of £4 per cent. for the redemption of the Moore Government deficits because they did not use Treasury bills.

Mr. BRAND: The States have not paid the sinking-fund contributions. I understand that the Commonwealth Government propose in the near future to validate these non-payments and substitute an arrangement whereby Treasury bills will be liquidated over a number of years.

Of course, that is a matter on which we have not been told anything. I presume that at this stage the Treasurer might be able to tell us something about that matter, particularly if we are going to transfer short-dated Treasury bills to some other form of security.

Mr. Cooper: The Treasurer will tell you about it on the Bill of which he gave notice today.

Mr. BRAND: I am pleased to hear from the Premier that the Treasurer has given notice of a Bill on which he proposes to give us all the information in respect of it.

Mr. Hanlon: Did you not hear notice of it this morning?

Mr. BRAND: I heard the hon. gentleman give notice that you would move tomorrow that a Bill be introduced to deal with something and I could only assume what it was. I think that in reply on the Bill now before us it would be fitting for the Treasurer to say something, because we have not heard anything yet. We can only suppose the Commonwealth Government are going to introduce certain legislation and the States will do likewise. If that is so, we are quite happy.

There is another matter to which I wish to refer. I believe the Treasurer is jinking one of the agricultural funds for a lot of money.

Mr. Hanlon: Now, now, now!

Mr. BRAND: Instead of £7,078 the Government are contributing only £5,664, a difference of £1,414.

Mr. Hanlon: The law does not provide for the payment of £7,000.

Mr. BRAND: I say the law does.

Mr. Hanlon: Read it.

Mr. BRAND: The law is very specific and definite. Section 9 of the Sugar Experiment Stations Acts says—

“In every year there shall be paid by the Treasurer into the fund from the consolidated revenue, which is hereby appropriated for the purpose, a sum equal to the amount of assessments levied in such year under Section 7 of this Act, but only under that Section: provided that the total amount to be paid by the Treasurer by way of endowment or assessments levied in such year shall not exceed £7,000.”

Mr. Hanlon: Ask any of your colleagues what that means.

Mr. BRAND: That means that in the year 1944-45 you have to meet a sum equal to the contributions of the sugar industry but not exceeding £7,000. I will give you what the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock has given by notice of assessment—

“In pursuance of the authority in me vested by the abovementioned Acts, I hereby make and levy an assessment at the rate of one half-penny on every ton of sugar-cane received at a sugar works during the season 1944-45. Such assessment is payable by the owner of the sugar works in the first instance but such assessment shall be paid and borne by the owner of the sugar works and the grower of the cane, respectively, in equal proportions.”

Mr. Hanlon: Is that not a reduced assessment?

Mr. BRAND: No, it was not a reduced assessment.

Mr. Hanlon: Yes, it was.

Mr. BRAND: That refers to the season 1944-45, the season of the cane we are harvesting today. And the Act says the Government's contribution or endowment shall be "in such year."

Mr. Hanlon: What does it say?

Mr. BRAND: I have read it to the hon. gentleman—"levied in such year."

Mr. Hanlon: Not exceeding £7,000.

Mr. BRAND: Not exceeding £7,000. In the Estimates for 1944-45 there is provision for only £5,664. Let us hear what the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock has to say about it—

"The assessment collected totalled £7,078 16s. 9d. which, under the Sugar Experiment Stations Acts, would entitle the fund to the maximum endowment of £7,000.

"However, the Financial Emergency Act of 1931 provides for a reduction of 20 per cent. in such payments; consequently the amount of £7,078, being reduced by 20 per cent., gives the amount of £5,664."

That is a difference of £1,414. The Financial Agreement Act of 1931 is—

"An Act to make necessary provision for carrying out a plan agreed on by the Commonwealth and the States for meeting the grave financial emergency existing in Australia, re-establishing financial stability and restoring industrial and general prosperity."

Queensland is the only State operating this Act and it is significant that under the operations of this Act the reduction of 20 per cent. on all controllable Governmental expenditure should be applied only to the Department of Agriculture and Stock, to the Diseases in Stock Fund, The Banana Protection Fund and the Sugar Fund. The only contribution made by the Queensland Government to the sugar industry is £7,000. They make no other contributions to the sugar industry and it has been limited to that amount, they say, because prior to 1933-34 they paid equally with the sugar industry less 20 per cent. with a limit of £7,000. The sugar industry did not complain about it but it does complain when, as I have said, it appears that the Government are getting out of paying £1,414.

Mr. Hanlon: The sugar industry reduced the payment itself.

Mr. BRAND: It did not reduce the payment. I quoted the assessment notice. The Government on 8 June this year estimated a tonnage of cane at 4,290,000, on which the assessment was based. The tonnage of cane will be greater than that estimate. In fact, it has already passed it by 8,000 tons. On that figure the assessment notice of the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock at a halfpenny means that the industry will pay £8,937 and

taking the 20 per cent. off that amount, the Government's contribution, the result is £7,150. Consequently the £7,000 provided by law should be paid to this fund. There has not been any reduction in the levies, but what has occurred is this: the levy brought in £7,078 for the year 1943-44 last year, and according to the Auditor-General the Government still paid in £7,000. Why not do so this year when according to the law they are supposed to make the contribution?

Mr. Hanlon: We did.

Mr. BRAND: They did not. I can tell the hon. gentleman that on the amount of tonnage that will be crushed this year and the levy that the industry will contribute, even allowing the Government the right to strike off 20 per cent. under the Financial Emergency Act, the Government will still pay £7,000.

Mr. Hanlon: It is obvious that if the cane produced is greater than the estimate we will supply the money for it.

Mr. BRAND: In the correspondence we have received from the respective departments and from the answers to questions I have asked in this House it is obvious that the department has estimated the amount on the assessments of last year. The law does not provide for their doing that. That is my view. It is permissible but not obligatory. The Treasurer should give first consideration to the abolition of the Financial Agreement Act. Why is it that this Government are the last to get away from the depression?

For 57 months after this Government were returned to office in 1932 the basic wage operating in this State was only £3 14s., the depression rate. The operations of the Financial Emergency Act have been removed from all departments of State except that of Agriculture and Stock. On behalf of the producers of Queensland, those in the stock, banana, and sugar industries in particular, I appeal to the Government to repeal this legislation and to give relief to those people, to whom they refer continually as the backbone of the country. Our producers deserve all the help they received from the Government and should not be subject to the operations of the Financial Emergency Act. There is no doubt that the Government of the day brought down that legislation under duress and the time for its continuance has long since passed. The State has ample funds to meet all the obligations of government, and there is no reason why this Act should continue to apply, especially when today it applies only to the Department of Agriculture and Stock, the Cinderella department of the State.

Mr. PIE (Windsor) (5.48 p.m.): When discussing this Bill I feel that it is wrong to go over all the ground that has been covered already during the discussion on the Estimates. One department that was not dealt with, and I think is of the greatest importance, is the Department of Health and Home Affairs. Without being critical I wish

to refer to conditions that exist in hospitals throughout the State, although I realise that the Government may not be entirely responsible for them. I wish to refer to the Brisbane General Hospital in particular. I have always been interested in hospitals because I realise that the health of the community is of paramount importance. Every representative of the people in this Parliament and every Government, irrespective of party, must take an active interest in the health of the community.

Mr. McCracken, the Public Service Commissioner, stated in the "Courier-Mail," when referring to the junior doctors, that the facilities and equipment at the Brisbane General Hospital were second to none in Australia. That may be true of the equipment, but an inspection of the institution reveals the inadequacy of facilities available for the efficient handling of patients there. There is no doubt that the bricks and mortar in the four big blocks—and they are good blocks—camouflage the real position of the other old antiquated buildings there. We actually have a huge block of buildings which the medical profession say—and I am guided by them—are neither convenient to work in nor accessible to the people.

Anyone who is interested has only to visit at the peak visiting hours at night to realise what congestion there is. I pass it every second night going home. The Hospitals Act Amendment Bill now on the business sheet may alter the position of a centralised hospital. I hope it does, and if it does hon. members can rest assured it will have my support.

It is considered throughout the world today that decentralisation in hospitals is essential. It has been revealed through complete investigation that hospitals containing 300 to 400 beds are the easiest to administer, and the easiest in which to give efficient service. The latest U.S. report is that as a general principle hospitals containing 400 to 600 beds are the ideal size for administration. The new Melbourne Hospital which has recently been erected at the Haymarket in Victoria is ideal. The medical profession say—I am guided by the medical profession and not by the opinions of the former Secretary for Health and Home Affairs—that 540 beds are sufficient for a hospital. I am not worrying about the former Secretary for Health and Home Affairs. I know—because of the Bill now on the business sheet—that the present Secretary for Health and Home Affairs realises that decentralisation of hospitals is essential.

The four main blocks at the Brisbane General Hospital are comparatively modern. They contain four lifts, only two of which are invariably available for passengers. Doctors, nurses, the staff and the ambulance cases use them. It is a regular occurrence to have visitors to the hospital, ambulance cases and patients from the theatre travelling in the one lift. This is true and I can prove it. The other buildings, apart from the four main blocks, are antiquated and anyone who goes there must realise that the bathroom

accommodation is insufficient and the congestion would remind the people of the Middle Ages.

Mr. Foley: Where is the congestion?

Mr. PIE: Go and have a look; I have been there. Another matter that needs investigation is that all cases are dumped at the Brisbane General Hospital, the acutely ill and the chronic cases. Some of the latter, it is stated, remain for years at the hospital instead of being accommodated in homes built for chronic diseases. It is obvious that they take up the time of a very busy nursing staff to the detriment of the curable and more acutely ill. An investigation should be made of this position.

While commenting on this subject, I should perhaps refer to Dunwich. On my way home I go past the Marchant Home and it is a pleasure to see people going out there on Sundays to visit relatives and friends. We know how inconvenient it is to visit people at Dunwich. I know that it is quite good down there, but I do recommend to the Government and to the people that some extension of this service should be made in the near suburbs so that the people are able to keep in close touch with their near relatives and friends. I now come to the question of the Out-patients' Department. Mr. Brassington, I have visited that department of a morning—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I remind the hon. member for Windsor that he must address the occupant of the chair as "Mr. Speaker."

Mr. PIE: I apologise, Mr. Speaker. It was from no desire to show you any disrespect and I can assure you it will not happen again.

I visited the Out-patients' Department just the other day. The position there has reached the point of absurdity. Some of the doctors say that they cannot do justice to their patients. You only need to have one look at it to realise that it was badly planned and is out of date. There is no privacy for the doctors or patients. People ill and people practically dying sit side by side in a big mass waiting to be attended to. In consulting cases conversations are overhead. Doctors find it very difficult to get to the true root of troubles of the patient they are supposed to be diagnosing. How would you, Mr. Speaker, like to have your conversations overheard when you were consulting a doctor?

Mr. Hanlon: If what you say is correct then the doctors should be sacked.

Mr. PIE: The visiting doctor in the morning gives his time from 9 o'clock till half past 12 and the doctor contends that he cannot do justice to the number of patients he is expected to handle. (Government interjections.) I want to try to put before this House from a constructive point of view some of the things as I see them, because I can bring evidence to substantiate my statements. (Government interjections.)

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. PIE: I now come to the question of the dispensary. There is a huge dispensary in the Out-patients' Department for the whole of the four hospitals, the General, the Children's, the Women's and Wattlebrae. I suggest that each hospital should have a separate dispensary at the earliest opportunity.

Then we come to the question of the laboratory there. There is one laboratory that suffices for the whole of the General Hospital. There should be a separate branch laboratory in each hospital. Surely that is not an extravagant claim?

Then we come to the Children's Hospital. We should look after our children but I say this Government have fallen down on the job by the dilapidated state of the buildings of the Children's Hospital. All members of Parliament should have a look at these hospital buildings. The buildings should be condemned. The site itself is quite unsuitable. Half the time of the nurses is spent climbing from the lower levels to the top floors of the hospital. The Out-patients' Department is on the street level. The matron's office is on the top of the hill. The laboratory for the four hospitals previously mentioned is underneath part of the Children's Hospital.

Let me now come to the Women's Hospital. This hospital overlooks Breakfast Creek and adjoins the Wattlebrae Infectious Diseases Hospital. This could create a serious condition. It is known, and the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs admitted in this House, that seven babies died last year from paratyphoid.

At 7.15 p.m.,

Mr. Speaker, before proceeding further I should like to reply to an interjection made by the Treasurer to the effect that any doctor who examined a patient in front of others should be sacked. The interjection misinterpreted my remarks entirely. I did not state that doctors examined patients in front of other patients. What I did say was—and I quote from my original notes—"In consulting cases conversations are overheard by other patients, and the visiting doctor finds it very difficult to get to the true root of the trouble of the patient he is supposed to be diagnosing. More privacy should be provided for both patient and doctor." I enlarge on that by saying that I know of a case in the Out-patients' Department for women's diseases in which a woman was being examined and the doctor found it very embarrassing because with the little cubicles they have there the other people could overhear the conversation. That is the point I want to make. I do not want what I said distorted in any way whatsoever.

I come back to the question of the Women's Hospital. This building overlooks Breakfast Creek, and as I said before, adjoins the Wattlebrae Infectious Diseases Hospital. I make the point that there could be a serious position with an infectious disease in that general hospital. It is known, as I said before, that seven babies died last

year because of that dreaded disease, paratyphoid. I know in some cases it did happen in the Women's Hospital. Newly-born babies—can you imagine that? After nine months to come to the stage where you might lose your baby because of that dread disease.

There is considerable criticism of the facilities available at the Women's Hospital. One doctor described it to me as at times as absolute bedlam. He said that the hospital had only eight labour wards and sixteen women have been known to be in labour at one time in that hospital. There is only staff enough there to cope with the eight labour wards, but no staff to cope with the women in the waiting rooms attached to these labour wards. There is not sufficient elasticity in the nursing staff to allow for the sudden increase which only nature can control; and, as I previously stated, with all the labour wards occupied the result is that in many cases labour takes place in the waiting rooms, which were never intended for that purpose.

Mr. Maher: These are serious charges.

Mr. PIE: They are serious charges. Also, it must be borne in mind that the Women's Hospital is very inconvenient for men with families living in outlying suburbs. The cost to the working man who may live at Corinda of visiting the Women's Hospital every night to see his wife would be considerable. Another factor is that not all people can afford taxis—nor in these times can they get taxis—to convey women to the hospital. I know there are special taxi arrangements for emergency cases, but this Women's Hospital should definitely be decentralised to the suburbs.

Now we come to the question of Wattlebrae. From inquiries I have made perhaps the least said about this place the better. First of all I say it should certainly be moved out into an area beyond contact with other hospitals and nurses. Should there be an epidemic of infectious disease of anything like the magnitude of the scarlet-fever epidemic last year, gross overcrowding would result in that hospital. It is known that during the scarlet-fever epidemic cross-infection was common and it is inevitable when it is realised that a patient with one infectious disease was in bed next to one with an entirely different infectious complaint. Another matter that should be made public is that the nurses were going at that time from patient to patient.

The staff were going from one patient with one disease to another patient with another disease without taking the elementary precaution of changing their gowns or in some cases washing their hands. This may have been altered since that time. I know these are strong statements but they were embodied in a report and I have read that report. The Government should know about it. It is known that one gown was donned at the beginning of duty and kept on until the end of that duty period. That position may have been rectified, but it is obvious that one gown should be used for each type of disease and

changed before going to another type. Actually the gown should belong to the disease and not to the nurse or person wearing it.

It is also agreed that the present Wattlebrae building is inadequate to provide enough beds for the treatment of all epidemic diseases that occur in Brisbane. I have some knowledge of Wattlebrae because we had a housekeeper in that hospital. It is known that during the last scarlet-fever epidemic the health authorities were instructing doctors that this infectious disease would have to be treated in the home of the patients. That is against all health laws. Surely that is a terrible state of affairs in a city like Brisbane! Inspection would reveal that neither the site nor the type of building at Wattlebrae is suitable for infectious diseases. Surely it is wrong to have an infectious diseases hospital attached to a general hospital, next to a women's hospital, and next to a children's hospital, especially when the staff are mingling one with the other in their off-work periods! It has been suggested by a friend of mine, and I have had it confirmed by others in the profession, that it is highly undesirable for the nursing staff of an infectious diseases hospital to mix with those engaged in septic surgery. It has been frequently shown, and the medical profession contend, that the staff nursing cases of infectious diseases are much more frequently throat carriers of the same type of organism as those that cause wound suppuration, that is, through the ordinary staff of the surgical wards.

When are this Government going to realise that an infectious diseases hospital should be set out in pavilions, which would enable different diseases to be adequately treated in pavilions that would be separate and confined to one particular disease? The medical profession advise that such a hospital should be one bed per 1,000 inhabitants in the area it is expected to serve. There should also be provision to enable convalescent patients to get about and yet not mix with other convalescents who are recovering from a different disease. These obviously are matters that need the immediate attention of any Government in power. It is the health of the community we are dealing with, and something must be done about it quickly.

There should also be better arrangements to permit parents to see their convalescent children from a safe distance. Telephone the Infectious Diseases Hospital or even the General Hospital and what information can be got about any patient? It is very difficult to get any. I know that in these times, with sickness as it is and the hospital obviously overcrowded, it is difficult, but I say something must be done about it even if it is only of a temporary nature.

It may have since been rectified, but there is the complaint that there was a good deal of irresponsible certification in connection with infectious diseases and I suggest that those making out those certificates do not consider them with the seriousness they deserve.

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Mr. Foley: It is administration.

Mr. PIE: I know it is administration, but it is my job to point these things out in this Parliament in order that they can be rectified. I am bringing them forward now for that purpose. I also understand that private hospitals are compelled to have a fully trained nurse for a certain number of patients. I know the condition at Bowen Bridge is due to staff problems, but we must face up to these things.

In the Brisbane General Hospital the food supplied for the nurses and medical officers is extremely bad from a health viewpoint. This is important.

It would be interesting to know if any nurses have developed T.B. in the hospital and whether this can be attributed to overwork and inadequate food. I know that the food in most cases is cold. After the nurse has had a hard day, it is very unappetising. I know that in some cases, rather than eat in the hospital nurses either go home or eat in cafes. At times no fish is provided on Fridays, and you know, Mr. Speaker, that to some people fish is a necessity.

Another interesting development is that certain of the medical profession on their days off have because of urgency of the cases worked right through. Later they have been charged with the cost of the meals eaten by them in the hospital on their days off. That is only a trivial matter, but it shows the smallness of the people administering this institution. I do not blame the superintendent, whose name is Pye—a good name. I know that you have inspected the hospital, Mr. Speaker, and I suggest that the Minister in charge of this department, or any other hon. member, might go unannounced and make an inspection of the Out-patients' Department, as I did, the other day. It just sickened me. If hon. members visited this institution they would then see that what I have said is true. I interviewed the doctors to see how many patients they are expected to interview in a day. I suggest that anyone visiting the hospital inspect the wards unannounced, that he take a reporter with him to report fully to the public what is really happening in this much-advertised Brisbane General Hospital of ours.

The X-ray plant is definitely inadequate for the institution. I know that this equipment cannot be obtained now, but we must bring these things before the House. It is not only not adequate; it is housed in a building that should be condemned. It would be condemned for anything other than X-ray plant. It is at the base of the old block of Ward No. 1, one of the first wards ever built at the Brisbane General Hospital. It is so old that the medical profession are not quite clear as to whether the convicts built it. Three new blocks have been built for patients, but nothing has been built for the X-ray department, one of the most important factors in the institution. It is a makeshift, old, dilapidated building, and under such deplorable conditions the medical profession cannot give of their best with the

equipment they have to use. I wish to make it clear that the building to which I am referring houses the diagnostic plant, and has no relation to the Radium Institute which is for treatment only and has met with high commendation from the medical profession.

I come now to the staff. The hospital is inadequately staffed. The staff cannot give patients the best possible service. The war may be cited as an excuse—and it is a good one—but the hospital has never been staffed adequately. This statement, too, can be verified. When the hospital could cater for 500 patients there were seven resident doctors, an average of one to every 66 patients. Today, with approximately 1,200 patients and sometimes more, there are 24 resident doctors or an average of one to 50 patients.

Mr. Foley: Your figures are deliberately wrong.

Mr. PIE: They are not deliberately wrong. The information I have can be substantiated at an open inquiry if this Government are prepared to have it.

We come now to the breaking of regulations. The State Government strictly enforces regulations in private hospitals but not in their own public institutions.

Mr. Hanlon: That is not true.

Mr. PIE: The wards are full of stretchers, and the Treasurer knows it. They are placed between the beds and there has been no increase in the nursing staff. One doctor told me quite seriously that an active bug could start in one bed in his ward and go right through the ward without touching the floor. Surely, this matter needs investigation also! Anyone who visits the institution can confirm my statement that there are stretchers between the beds.

I suggest that hon. members should join the queue at the Brisbane Hospital at 6 or 6.30 p.m. The gates open at 6.30 p.m. There is a wild rush to use the lifts to visit the patients.

Mr. Devries: Do you not think that we go there too?

Mr. PIE: I should like the hon. member to go there. I will go with him next time. Another complaint that I have to make—and a very serious one—is that there is no outside doctor on the board of the Brisbane and South Coast Hospitals.

Mr. Hanlon: That is not true.

Mr. PIE: No outside doctors, I said. Therefore, the Government are dependent on assistance from the medical superintendent, who is their servant, and the chairman of the board, who is also their servant. I understand that the B.M.A. has approached the Government many times to obtain representation on the board but has been turned down. This recommendation of appointment was made in a Royal Commission on Hospitals in 1928-29 and has never been implemented. I understand that the despised Moore Government adopted it when Mr. T. L. Jones was

chairman and Dr. W. N. Robertson was appointed to the board, but immediately the Labour Government or the present Government again got into power Dr. Robertson received a note, not thanking him for his services but saying that he would no longer be required.

Mr. Hanlon: That is not true.

Mr. PIE: It is true. It is also suggested that the appointment of chairman of the Brisbane and South Coast Hospitals Board be given to an outstanding man like Mr. T. L. Jones, not to a servant of the Health and Home Affairs Department. The visiting medical staff of the General Hospital have no direct approach to the Brisbane and South Coast Hospitals Board. They may want a reorganised staff, they may want to make certain recommendations. These representations cannot be made direct. I understand six years ago a recommendation was made by an advisory committee appointed to report on professional matters in relation to the Hospitals Board. This committee sat at the time when the change-over from honorary to part-time service was being discussed, and a joint committee of board and staff considered desirable steps should be taken in the reorganisation of the hospital generally. It strongly recommended at that time that a body of professional men should be formed to give advice to the Brisbane and South Coast Hospitals Board on professional matters pertaining to the work of the hospital. This recommendation was never carried out, despite the fact that the then chairman of the board was in favour of the liaison between the board and the profession. It was turned down by the board, with the result that to the present day the board receives no direct advice from the medical profession. The only advice it receives is from the superintendent—against whom I have no personal criticism whatsoever—who is their paid servant.

I have spoken on these matters because I honestly believe that the things I say are right. I have investigated this position in conjunction with the medical profession. They have no axe to grind but they want to see the health of the community built up and made better for everyone. It does not matter what criticism I get in this House; I have the knowledge that I should surely be failing in my duty if I did not bring these matters before hon. members. Irrespective of party politics I shall always bring matters before this House that I honestly believe are in the best interests of this community of Brisbane, of which I form an integral part, and of the community of the State of Queensland, which to me is the best State in Australia and the greatest State to live in in the whole of this world.

Hon. T. A. FOLEY (Normanby—Secretary for Health and Home Affairs) (7.38 p.m.): I have been a member of this Parliament for quite a number of years—about 25 years—but I do not think that in the whole of that period I have heard such a dirty misrepresentation of a public institution as I have heard tonight.

Mr. PIE: Mr. Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The remarks of the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs that mine was a dirty speech is grossly—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Has the hon. member for Windsor a point of order to state?

Mr. PIE: Yes, Mr. Speaker. The words spoken by the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs were offensive and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr. SPEAKER: I ask the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs to withdraw the word.

Mr. FOLEY: In deference to your ruling, Mr. Speaker, I withdraw the remark but I must say, in view of the feeling that the hon. member for Windsor worked up, he cannot expect other hon. members, particularly myself as Secretary for Health and Home Affairs, to sit quiet and have no feelings in the matter. I say, Sir, that this is a definitely planned attack upon the General Hospital, malicious right from the beginning for no other purpose than create panic in the community.

Mr. PIE: Mr. Speaker on a point of order—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

A Government Member: You cannot take it.

Mr. PIE: I can take it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. PIE: Mr. Speaker, the word "malicious" is offensive to me and I ask for its withdrawal.

Mr. SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The Secretary for Health and Home Affairs is merely expressing his opinion.

Mr. FOLEY: I am, Sir, and I express myself with very great feeling. I say from all appearances in the way every point has been stressed here tonight that this attack has been deliberately worked up with the specific intention of creating panic in this community and prejudice against the hospital administration of the metropolitan area. I make that deliberate charge. The points raised by the hon. member for Windsor and stressed right throughout his speech have been overdone. It is true and the whole of the citizens of the metropolitan area know that there is congestion at the General Hospital and that there is congestion at the Women's Hospital. Everyone knows that. We have gone through five years of war and the hon. member should know that and should make allowances for the fact. During that period 40 private hospitals have closed down in the metropolitan area alone for want of staff. We have had to make in the Women's Hospital alone provision for 110 maternity beds that were lost to the community as a result of the closing down of those private hospitals. As a result the accommodation at

our public hospitals have been taxed. Our nursing staff have been worked to the limit. I pay a tribute to that staff for coming through the whole of those five years, when on many occasions there have been great shortages of staff, with very little comment or complaint. They were loyal to their pledge to give faithful service to the needy and sick in the community. Having done that, all credit is due to them.

Government Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. FOLEY: At the present time the Brisbane General Hospital is accommodating 200 more patients than its bed capacity because 40 private hospitals in the metropolitan area have closed down and because the whole of the building plan envisaged many years ago by my predecessors, together with the Brisbane and South Coast District Hospitals Board, has been retarded by the outbreak of war and the impossibility of getting either materials or man-power to carry it out. Notwithstanding that we have endeavoured to arrange for temporary accommodation. We have arranged and the National Works Council has already approved this year of the necessary expenditure to construct three additional floors at the Women's Hospital.

Let me give hon. members some idea of the difficulties. When that work was rushed through, the Department of Public Works speeded up its staff to provide plans and specifications. Then it was found that the type of brick—an important factor—of which the main hospital building is constructed could not be procured either in Brisbane or elsewhere in the State today. That has retarded the provision of additional accommodation. The Under Secretary for Public Works went out of his way to induce some of the brickworks here to set up special kilns to prepare and provide that particular type of brick so that the three new floors will be built to conform with the rest of the building. I mention that fact just to give some idea of how work on those three additional floors, so urgently required at the present time, has been arrested by one fact alone.

Might I emphasise and bring to the notice of the hon. member for Windsor, as well as to other hon. members, what would have been the position today had it not been for the foresight of my predecessor and the Brisbane and South Coast Hospitals Board in starting a building programme many years ago? Let us visualise the position. Under that programme, initiated 12 or 14 years ago, a very fine block of buildings has been erected. Had those plans not been proceeded with prior to the outbreak of war we should have been in a chaotic state in the treatment of our sick in the Brisbane area alone.

As to the congestion the hon. member talks about in the vicinity of the hospital, it is true that there are certain periods, when the hon. member is driving from here to his residence at Windsor, when he passes the hospital and finds congestion at the gate. That is brought about by a deliberate action

of the hospitals board. It closes the gates to allow the patients to have their tea at that period without the interference of any outsider. When that period is over and everything is cleaned up the gates are opened. The public know that. If they come a little early that is their own concern. The fact remains that immediately the gates are opened that congestion is relieved within 20 minutes.

It is true that there is also congestion at the lifts immediately after the gates are opened. You cannot have 200 people walk in through the gates and rush for the lifts at the same time without having some congestion, but gradually over the space of 20 minutes the whole of that congestion is relieved. Generally throughout the day, unless there is some grave mechanical trouble with the lifts there is not the congestion the hon. member refers to.

I now come to the dispensary. There he recommends that we should make provision for a greater service—a better service for each of the sections—the Children's, Women's and the General Hospital. I might point out that the daily average of medicines dispensed at the Brisbane Hospital for Brisbane and Wattlebrae is 972, Children's Hospital 117, and clinics at Cribb Island, Sandgate and Wynnum 93. If you could get any better service today than that number it would be remarkable. I invite the hon. member to see on some occasion how smoothly it works. There has been standardisation in prescriptions and in drugs. Every doctor is given a number and it is passed in with the patient's card and in most cases within a few minutes that prescription is handed back to the patient, and thus the whole thing works throughout the whole day, day in and day out and week in and week out throughout the year.

It is also true we have a certain amount of overcrowding at the Out-patients' Department. Again that is as a result of the retarding of the building plan. I am not trying to misrepresent the position to anyone. The whole population in Brisbane today knows that there is a shortage of doctors and a shortage of nurses and there is a lack of accommodation not only here but in other parts of the State.

Hon. Members interjecting—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The Secretary for Health and Home Affairs has only a few minutes in which to make his speech, and I think in fairness to him hon. members should refrain from interjecting.

Mr. FOLEY: I was trying to emphasise that the main reason for this congestion which does exist is not any lack of foresight on the part of the Brisbane and South Coast Hospitals Board or the Government, but is clearly the fact that the carrying into effect of the plans that have been ready for a number of years, which provide for greater and better accommodation, has been retarded as a result of the outbreak of war. As the hon. member knows himself, man-power and material are not available.

In the few minutes at my disposal I wish to refer to the Women's Hospital. The hon. member said it overlooked Breakfast Creek. Breakfast Creek is some distance away. The hon. member referred to the risk of infection from Wattlebrae, a suggestion that according to the medical advisers of the Brisbane General Hospital is ridiculous. There is no possible connection between the two buildings and no possible connection between nurses and consequently no risk of infection. I have had the pleasure of going through the King George Memorial Hospital in Sydney, which is looked upon as the model hospital in Australia and which cost just on £800 per bed. After arriving back here and comparing the facilities in that hospital with the facilities in the General Hospital I found ours compared with it very favourably. To make sure I arranged for a visit by Dr. Pye and Professor Shedden Adams to the Sydney hospital and on their return all they could recommend as an addition to the Women's Hospital was a sterility clinic, which we did not have.

That was the only difference. That hospital has a more elaborate building, but so far as facilities go the Brisbane hospital can compare favourably with it.

Reference was made to the deaths from paratyphoid of children born in the Women's Hospital. There was an outbreak of this disease in 1942-43, and our figures for that complaint were inflated during that year to 81. The average is about 60 cases a year, but here let me point out that again the position was misrepresented. The infection was not in the Brisbane Women's Hospital but in the Children's Hospital, which is far removed from it. Eight deaths occurred in the 81 cases. The disease was quickly brought under control, and this year the incidence has returned to normal. Every hospital at different times, from some cause unknown to the medical profession, experiences some form of infection within its walls, and I can assure the House that immediately it occurs it is a problem for the doctors. In our case, with the best brains in the community co-operating, the disease is brought under control in a very short space of time. Dr. Pye reports—

“Infant mortality for six years, Brisbane Women's Hospital, deaths from various causes, particularly young babies, was less than 60 per 1,000.”

That compares more than favourably with the average of 75 per 1,000 for Australia. It will be seen that our position, compared with the South, is 15 per 1,000 to the good.

Our plans for the future with regard to decentralisation provide not only for greater accommodation at the Brisbane Women's Hospital, but we have this year on our estimates a sum of money for a maternity hospital at Southport, which will relieve the position to a great extent. I wish to emphasise the fact that notwithstanding the case put forward this evening, not one case has been turned away from the Brisbane Hospital. Every case has been dealt with, and with a lesser death rate than anywhere else.

Reference was made to the X-ray equipment at that hospital. Some of the plant may be old, but it is serviceable, and I ask hon. members to listen carefully to the remarks of Dr. Ralston Paterson from overseas when he addressed a representative gathering in Brisbane during his visit.

"You have two departments actually doing radio-therapy work in this district, and it is the best treatment of that kind I have seen in the Commonwealth.

"I do not think there is any other such department I have seen in the South that is as complete as the Department here."

Naturally, the Government will endeavour, as soon as we know that better plant is available, to place the amount necessary on the estimates to meet the position.

The hon. member also endeavoured to create prejudice by his remarks on food. I can assure the House that the menu I hold in my hand is an improvement on the menu in the hon. member's own home. This is the menu for Monday—

Breakfast—Oatmeal, crumbed cutlets, mince on toast.

Could one desire anything better?

For dinner the menu provides for soup, steamed fish—and the hon. member said the fish never appeared on the menu—corned leg of mutton, cream of rice, and fruit. And so it goes on with variations day after day. They are even better menus than I get in my own home, or even those the hon. member gets. Time will not permit of my going through the whole of the menus I have here, but here is one for Friday—breakfast: porridge, poached eggs, and fried fish; dinner: cream of schnapper, fish, curried steak, rice, cream of maccaroni, fruit.

The hon. member has exaggerated the whole position with regard to Wattlebrae. We have satisfactory accommodation there. Today there are resident 50 cases with accommodation for 150. A new temporary ward has just been erected that makes provision for about 20 cases. That is sufficient to meet any possible emergency that could be expected, with the health conditions of the State as they are at the present time.

Some reference has been made to Dunwich. Dunwich has been in much the same position as other places. It is situated a long way from the city but despite the fact that there has been deterioration over the past five years as a result of lack of man-power to carry out repairs, painting and other requirements, not one applicant has been turned away from either Dunwich or the Eventide Home. We have made provision to take in extra numbers, and although there has been congestion no old man or old woman has been turned away to live on the streets or in the parks. Twice a week the "Otter" leaves Brisbane for Dunwich. On almost every other day in the week anyone who desires to do so may obtain a permit to travel on the launch from Cleveland.

In conclusion I strenuously object to the dastardly and foul attack made by the hon.

member for Windsor upon the medical profession at the Brisbane Hospital, charging them with falsifying certificates of death at the Children's Hospital.

Mr. PIE: I rise to a point of order. I did not make the statement that anyone falsified certificates of death and I ask for its withdrawal.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I heard the hon. member use the word "certificates."

Mr. FOLEY: I can take no other inference from the hon. member's remarks.

Mr. PIE: I rise to a point of order. My notes are available, and if anyone can prove that I used the words, "certificates of death" there is something radically wrong with my notes and what I said. I did not use them, and I ask the Minister to withdraw.

Mr. COOPER: I rise to a point of order. I understood you to say, Mr. Speaker, that you heard the hon. member for Windsor say the words "certificates of death."

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I did not say that. I said that I heard the hon. member for Windsor use the word "certificates."

Mr. FOLEY: I understood and I think every other hon. member did that the hon. member for Windsor said that certain certificates are given by the medical men with regard to children at the Children's Hospital.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Under the provisions of Sessional Orders I now ask the Treasurer to make his reply, after which I will put the question to the House.

Hon. E. M. HANLON (Ithaca—Treasurer) (8 p.m.), in reply: This has been one of the most extraordinary debates upon an Appropriation Bill to which I have ever listened. Frequently I have heard the hon. member for Windsor and the members of the party with which he is associated refer to the importance of Parliament's thoroughly discussing the finances of the State. A short time ago I introduced into this House a measure asking the House to pass £32,000,000 of expenditure by the Government of the State. The best contribution the hon. member for Windsor could make to the debate on the expenditure of £32,000,000, more than half of which has never been discussed in Committee of Supply, was to make use of his time blowing a case prepared by a disgruntled former officer of the Brisbane Hospital.

Mr. PIE: I rise to a point of order. The statement made by the Treasurer is without foundation. It is offensive to me and I ask for its withdrawal.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HANLON: I might reply to that statement made by the hon. member for Windsor by saying that the statements made by him are without foundation. I believe them to be without foundation, and I could

almost stake my seat in this Parliament on the name of the person who prepared the document from which he was reading. Let him put the paper from which he was reading on the table.

Mr. Pie: I am prepared to do that at any time.

Mr. HANLON: Mr. Speaker, you heard the same case made out by another anti-Labour hon. member of this Parliament. This is the case that is made by every Labour-hater in Queensland who is suffering from an inferiority complex. They all resent the fact that the sick mothers, babies, and poor of this State are looked after here by a Labour Government better than they are in any other part of this Commonwealth or of the world. The outstanding fact of Labour's administration in this State is that they have spared no pains or expense in providing the best service and attention they can for the poor and suffering of the community. That rankles. How often have we heard hon. members opposite complaining and howling about the expenditure on these services? Did not hon. members opposite plan a campaign to destroy a child-welfare service, the baby clinics? Did they not launch a campaign saying that the Labour Party by their clinics are going to set a lot of single girls, a lot of virgins, to teach the mothers how to look after their babies? Did they not carry the campaign through this State trying to frighten the mothers away from the baby clinics?

Go to the baby clinics today and you will find the wives and mothers of the supporters of the party opposite crowding the working people out of them! Did we not hear the campaign against the building of the Women's Hospital in Brisbane, Hanlon's white elephant—built only for political purposes? Was that not the campaign that hon. members opposite carried on against it? You cannot get in there now for the wives of doctors, professional men, and business men in the city. As soon as any social service is made available hon. members opposite decry it and yet they are the very people who rush in and secure it for themselves. Every branch of social service that the Labour Party has made available primarily for the poor, the working people, the underpaid and overworked people, is grabbed up by hon. members opposite and their supporters as soon as it is available.

The callousness of the speech by the hon. member for Windsor is just about on a level with the callousness of the campaign that they carried out at election time in connection with T.B. The speech tonight was designed to create a fear complex in the sick; to destroy the confidence of the sick people in the medical attention that they are receiving at the hospital. If the hon. member asked the man who wrote the diatribe that he read tonight even he would admit that a doctor had no chance with a patient who had lost confidence in the capacity of the doctor to serve him. Not courageous enough to say many of the things that he wanted to go abroad tonight he insinuated

them. He introduced the subject of bugs. He said that an active bug could jump from end to end of the wards, from bed to bed, without touching the floor. What was the idea of that? If I were to say that the hon. member for Windsor had said that the Brisbane Hospital was bug-infested he would rise to a point of order, and say that he said no such thing. Why did he mention bugs? Was it not a callous and cowardly way of trying to give the impression to the mothers and the relatives of the patients in the hospital that the hospital was bug-infested. I will back the Brisbane Hospital for cleanliness against the premises conducted by the hon. member.

That campaign that he carried out at election time frightened thousands of mothers against giving their children milk. When he went through the State threatening that if the mothers gave milk to their children they would suffer from T.B. he knew that what he was saying was false. He and his party knew that this State had the lowest T.B. rate of any country in the world and that bovine T.B. was almost unknown in this State. Yet they endeavoured to frighten the mothers in this State against giving a drop of milk to their infants. What for? Not for the love for the sick, not for the love of the poor, but for the purpose of destroying the sick, of injuring the sick, of sacrificing the children, and destroying the confidence of the people in their medical advisers, so that they could gain votes. I have said before and I say again that if they are capable of doing the things for money that they are doing for the purpose of political advantage they will finish up millionaires. I have been interested in politics for nearly 40 years but I have never known any aspirants for political honours to descend to such a level as the hon. member for Windsor and his colleagues did. Nothing is too mean, nothing too cowardly and nothing too dirty for them to say about public men, public servants, doctors and nurses. Did you, Mr. Speaker, listen to the slander of the doctors tonight? He said that a doctor had told him that he could not give proper attention to his cases—time was not available. Is there a doctor who takes his full money from the Brisbane Hospital and does not properly attend to his cases? If a doctor on the part-time staff at the Brisbane Hospital takes his full salary and does not give the best attention of which he is capable to his patient, hanging is too good for him.

Mr. Wanstall interjected.

Mr. HANLON: Utter rubbish! The hon. member is like the hon. member for Windsor. He thinks of what he can get out of anything and not what he can put into it. The hon. member for Windsor in his thorough, complete and utter ignorance of his subject merely read a case made up for him by a disgruntled ex-employee of the hospital. He said that for safety no nurse should be allowed to deal with more than the one disease. The hon. member can shake his

head. He pointed out the danger of cross-infection by having a nurse attending to patients suffering from two different infectious diseases.

Is the hon. member going to suggest that his friend who gave him that story, when he is with a scarlet-fever patient, puts himself into isolation for three weeks? If it is dangerous for a nurse to attend a scarlet-fever patient and then attend to a patient suffering from another infectious disease, then it is dangerous for his medical friend to go from one infectious case to another in the same way. Do not forget that the hon. member's pal is just as likely to carry the infection to the hospital as the nurse is to carry it from one patient to another. In fact, he is more likely. The nurses are trained against cross-infection and they cannot go about their duties without following instructions strictly without incurring rebuke. There is no-one to check the doctor who is in private practice.

Again, the hon. member for Windsor, showing his ignorance, pointed out the difficulty expectant mothers had of getting to the hospital. We know that transport is difficult today but the hon. member should know—and if he does not it is his duty to do so—that there is stationed at the Roma Street police station an officer who is on duty at any hour of the day or night to attend to any woman who requires transport to hospital, and immediately she communicates with him a cab is at once sent to her. We have a fleet of cabs at the Roma Street police station. On the receipt of a message from an expectant mother the officer on duty, day or night, promptly dispatches a cab to take her to hospital. If he has to take the last cab from the streets of the city, he will see that a vehicle is obtained to transport an expectant mother away to the hospital. That fact has been reported to Parliament and discussed here, yet the hon. member for Windsor gets up here and states that no provision is made to take expectant mothers to hospital.

Mr. Pie: You read my speech and you will see what I said.

Mr. HANLON: I have a very good pair of ears and I heard what the hon. member said.

The hon. member also went on to talk about the need for bringing the institution at Dunwich away from the island. The hon. member is paid to give attention to his duty. He should know that last session an amendment was made of the Hospitals Act placing the obligation for the care of the aged and infirm on the hospitals board in the locality in which they reside. The hon. member evidently does not know that. If he devoted a little more time to studying the work of this Parliament and administration of the Government and a little less to selling southern goods round this city to the detriment of Queensland manufactures, he would be better able to make a case here. (Interjections.)

Mr. MAHER: Mr. Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The Treasurer is descending

to personalities. As we know, that often causes serious scenes in the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! This is a responsible Parliament debating an important matter and I should think that there is hardly any room for personalities.

Mr. HANLON: It ill becomes the hon. member for West Moreton to suggest that any hon. member was descending to personalities after the tirade he spewed out here on a public servant the other week. (Opposition interjections.)

The hon. member for Windsor tonight poses as a defender of the sick. At an earlier stage of the debate he posed as an advocate of secondary industries in Queensland. He gave the impression that he was a man who was going to do everything he could for secondary industries in Queensland and yet he is making thousands of pounds a year from selling southern manufactured goods to the detriment of Queensland manufactures. Tonight he gets up and tries to slander doctors and nurses at our public hospital who without doubt have devoted themselves to their public duty during recent years. If he is interested in the hospital let him go to the hospital, not go round to the club and discuss it with a disgruntled employee. The medical superintendent, Dr. Pye, is here tonight and would be glad to see him and let him look through it any hour of the day or night. The medical staff will also be very delighted to see him. I am going to say this also: the Department of Health and Home Affairs administers the Hospitals Act. The Secretary for Health and Home Affairs, the Under Secretary, the Assistant Under Secretary—he is chairman of the hospitals board—and every hon. member knows that those officers always welcome members of Parliament to their department with any complaint or any suggestion they may have. The hon. member for Windsor has never been near the department to suggest one thing was wrong with the administration of the Brisbane hospital. I questioned the Under Secretary tonight and he informed me that the hon. member for Windsor had not gone to that department and suggested that anything was wrong with the Brisbane General Hospital.

Mr. Jesson: He is a scandalmonger.

Mr. HANLON: He is purely a scandalmonger. If there is one thing that Queensland people have to be proud of it is the magnificent hospital service they are getting, and getting under the tremendously hard conditions of today because of the loyalty and devotion of the doctors, nurses and domestics at the Brisbane General Hospital.

It is shocking to find a responsible member of Parliament getting up and hurling a tirade of abusive slander on these people who have been in recent years sweating their souls out looking after the sick. When did the hon. member become interested in the sick? When was he interested in the ambulance or crippled children or other social work? What interest did he take in any social service?

There is room for citizens, particularly rich citizens and particularly a man who owes this State as much as the hon. member for Windsor does, to help in social services by work and self-sacrifice. No matter how well the State looks after things there is room for good work. Take for instance the home for crippled children and the various church homes for children and the Salvation Army hostels and various other institutions conducted by charitable and private people. What help has the hon. member for Windsor given to these? Yet he gets up here as a champion of better social services. I like to hear hon. members who take that attitude. It is something shocking to hear people get up and make these scandalous attacks for the purpose of gaining a little political advantage. They do not care how many sick people they injure as long as they can make a little profit out of it.

Let us have a word or two about another speech, the one made by the hon. member for Isis. The hon. member for Isis dealt with the Sugar Fund. He read out a section of the Act dealing with Sugar Experiment Stations and he said that the Government were depriving the Sugar Fund of money illegally. He said it was illegal. What is the position in regard to the Sugar Experiment Stations Act? The position is this: a subsidy, originally of £ for £, was granted by the Government of Queensland for the conduct of sugar experiment stations. That went on at the rate of £ for £ for some years, and then our old friend, the Moore Government—this hoary thing we still have to dig up occasionally—came into power and reduced the subsidy to 16s. in the £. That is what happened—the Moore Government reduced the subsidy to 16s. in the £. A maximum of £7,000 was fixed in the Act. No matter how much is contributed by the sugar-grower and sugarmiller the maximum the State can pay is £7,000. But the Moore Government reduced the subsidy from £ to £ to 16s. in the £. That fund has gone on from year to year, growing in 1940 to £21,000, in 1941 to £24,000, in 1942-43 and £7,078 for the year 1943-44, and there is an estimated further reduction this year. The amount shown in the Estimates is just an estimate of the officers of the Treasury, and whatever the amount is will be fixed by the amount of sugar. A levy of ½d. a ton must be paid on all sugar produced and for every £ paid by the sugar-growers and millers 16s. must be provided by the Treasury. The estimate this year is down to £5,640 because that is the amount they think will be sufficient. That is all right; there is nothing illegal in that. The contribution by the growers in 1941-42 was £14,980 and in 1943-44 £7,078. It is down too. The subsidy falls as the contribu-

tion by the growers and millers fall. That is all that has happened. The estimate of the officers of the Treasury is that that sum will be sufficient; if it is not, more will be paid and the additional amount will be provided in the Supplementary Estimates. Hon. members should know that. They have been long enough in Parliament to know it.

Another matter raised by the hon. member for Isis, speaking on behalf of the Leader of the Opposition, was the standard railway gauge. There is no doubt that the defence services of this country think that a uniform railway gauge of some kind must be provided urgently for the defence of Australia. I should regard it as necessary myself. I cannot say that I am sure another war will not take place in another 20, 30, or 40 years—there is no guarantee that we shall have permanent peace here. But one bright spot in the war position is that the Doodle Bug and the V2 may do something towards preserving permanent peace because the time is rapidly approaching when nobody, not even the most hungry and avaricious war profiteer, will be safe from the vengeance of the enemy. The Doodle Bug and the V2 may make some contribution to permanent peace, but we cannot be sure of it. We must be prepared for possibilities and therefore prepare for being attacked. I am satisfied myself that a uniform gauge is an urgent need. It cannot be left until one sees war coming. It is a job that will take many years to carry out, and consequently should be begun at the first available moment.

The Prime Minister of the Commonwealth and the Premiers of the State accepted 4 ft. 8½ in. as the standard gauge in 1920. As a consequence the railway line from Kyogle to South Brisbane was built with that gauge, and other small railways have been built in other parts of the Commonwealth. But, what was agreed to at one conference need not bind another conference. Certainly it must be a matter for conference between the Commonwealth and the State because the Commonwealth under its Constitution has not the power to build and conduct railways in a State.

Mr. Pie: Except for defence purposes.

Mr. HANLON: Then it must do the whole job itself. This State would certainly not allow the Commonwealth to build a railway in a locality in which it would be of no value to Queensland at the expense of this State, neither would the State provide the large sums of money to maintain and keep it in service. Queensland is the State in which the great bulk of the defence line would have to be constructed, but it would not be justified in carrying, say, 50 per cent. of the defence railway burden of the Commonwealth. Certainly Queensland has never shirked playing its part in the defence of the Commonwealth. We have never in any way attempted to avoid our responsibilities for the defence of Australia, but we do not think we should have to take on our shoulders the major part of the burden of strategic railways for the Commonwealth. If the State is to have any part in the construction and

maintenance of railways in Queensland it will have a say in the location of the railway, apart altogether from the gauge. If railways are going to be built where they are of no value to us but are purely defence projects they are the responsibility of the people of Australia as a whole. That has to be borne in mind.

Obviously it is a matter that cannot be settled by any Federal official. If the Commonwealth Government have made a decision that in their opinion a 4 ft. 8½ in. gauge is the right one, well and good—that is their decision—but it is not necessarily the decision of a conference of State Premiers. It may be that the States will again agree to a 4 ft. 8½ in. gauge as being the most suitable for the Commonwealth. We are foolish, and for that matter the Commonwealth Government also are foolish, in making any announcement of their likes or dislikes in the matter until that conference decides. If it is the idea that we go to a conference of the Premiers of the State and the Commonwealth Government firmly determined on our own decision and determined to listen to no reasons advanced by others the result will be that we shall get nowhere. Nobody should go to a conference with his ears shut to all reasons and arguments and unprepared to listen to the case of anybody else. There would be no point in having a conference under those circumstances. And consequently it was very foolish for the Commonwealth Government to announce that they had come to a decision without consultation on the matter. There is a greater chance of getting complete agreement and having all Governments concerned loyally abiding by the agreement if those attending the conference are willing to listen to reason—each putting forward his case and resting on its merits but also listening to arguments put forward by others. There is not much use in having a conference if every person attending it has his mind made up before he goes.

That is the position in regard to that. If the Commonwealth Government will call a conference of State Premiers probably we shall get somewhere.

The hon. member for Isis also dealt with the matter of Treasury bills. I gave notice this morning of the introduction of a Bill to deal with the Financial Agreement. That Financial Agreement has served a very important purpose in the finances of the Commonwealth. In Queensland we are now able to say that all our deficits are funded with the exception of the deficit we inherited—if hon. members again will pardon me for saying so—from the Moore Government. That deficit is carried in our cash balances. Had the money in the Loan Fund at that period been used for giving employment to the unemployed people in the State the deficits would have been smaller and they would have been provided from Treasury bills also. Then we should have had the whole of our deficits funded under very favourable conditions indeed. As the result of lack of foresight and the lack of capacity to govern that was displayed by the Moore Government

we are left with some £3,600,000 in our cash balances, and this money sooner or later will have to be funded, and it will carry not only the full rate of interest but also 4 per cent. redemption, which will be a heavy burden on the revenue of the State. The earliest possible opportunity will be taken to fund these deficits, to get them out of the way, and to get our cash balances cleared.

The whole position of the Treasury bills is being cleaned up throughout the Commonwealth. They were a hang-over from the depression. Before they were cleared up the war overtook us, and all these arrangements were brought to a standstill for the time being. The time has now arrived when these matters can be cleared up, and I have no hesitation in saying that within a very short period indeed the deficits which have been a hang-over from the depression period in all States will be safely funded and the cash balances of all Governments will be adjusted accordingly.

There is nothing more I have to say.

Motion (Mr. Hanlon) agreed to.

COMMITTEE.

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Mann, Brisbane, in the Chair.)

Clauses 1 to 8, both inclusive, Schedule, and Preamble, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment.

THIRD READING.

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

The House adjourned at 8.35 p.m.