

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER 1947

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QUESTIONS.

POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT TRUST FUND.

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumba—Leader of the Opposition) asked the Treasurer—

“1. What amount was expended in 1946-47 from the Post-war Reconstruction and Development Trust Fund, and what were the respective amounts for each department?”

“2. What was the balance of the fund at 30 June, 1947?”

Hon. J. LARCOMBE (Rockhampton) replied—

“1. Expenditure, 1946-47, £1,325,449. Department of Health and Home Affairs, £3,860; Department of Public Works, £33,831; The Treasurer, £15,038; Department of Public Lands, £21,623; Department of Public Instruction, £9,866; Department of Mines, £2,264; Department of Railways, £1,238,967; total, £1,325,449.

“2. Balance in fund at 30 June, 1947, £8,037,563.”

IMPROVEMENT OF GARRATT LOCOMOTIVES.

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumba—Leader of the Opposition) asked the Minister for Transport—

“Referring to his answer to my question on 2nd instant relative to the Garratt or Australian-articulated locomotive—(1) how many of these are lying idle in this State and at what places, respectively. (2) Assuming they are still the property of the Commonwealth Government, have they been offered to the State, and, if so, at what price?”

Hon. J. E. DUGGAN (Toowoomba) replied—

“1. Rocklea, 13; Mayne, 3; Ipswich, 1; Rockhampton, 6; total, 23.

“2. Ten were offered at £18,000 each, but it is understood the Commonwealth Government have now prepared to sell the balance at £10,500 each as they stand.”

ALLEGED IRREGULARITIES, GENERAL ELECTION.

Mr. MORRIS (Enoggera) asked the Attorney-General—

“In view of the specific charges of election malpractices made by the Leader of the Opposition and the hon. members for Toowong, Kelvin Grove, Keppel, and Kennedy, and in view of the document tabled on the 3rd instant by the hon. member for Windsor, will he at once order a judicial public inquiry to probe all such charges made, the findings to be submitted to the proper authorities for police or whatever other action may be found necessary?”

Hon. D. A. GLEDSON (Ipswich) replied—

“See answer to question No. 6 in ‘Votes and Proceedings’ No. 7, on 26 August, 1947.”

TUESDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER, 1947.

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

INTERJECTION TO SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK.

MR. SPEAKER'S STATEMENT.

Mr. SPEAKER: Hon. members, on Tuesday, 2 September, whilst the Hon. H. H. Collins, Secretary for Agriculture and Stock, was speaking on the Address in Reply, the hon. member for Mirani rose to a point of order as follows:—

“I rise to a point of order. I never mentioned Mr. Forgan Smith as pulling the industry down. I mentioned Mr. Walsh's name on one occasion. I ask the Minister to accept my denial.”

“**Mr. COLLINS:** I accept the hon. member's assurance, but I heard him say a few minutes ago, by way of interjection to me, that those two men were responsible for pulling the industry down.”

On a further point of order raised by the hon. member for Mirani, Mr. Collins, at my request, accepted his denial.

However, on searching “Hansard” and also the transcript of Mr. Collin's speech, I find that the hon. member for Mirani made the following interjection which, at the time, escaped my notice:—

“**Mr. EVANS:** More to pull it down.”

In the circumstances, I feel it is only fair to Mr. Collins that I should make these facts known.

DUTY ON STREPTOMYCIN.

Mr. MARRIOTT (Bulimba) asked the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs—

"1. Has his attention been drawn to an American drug streptomycin, reputed to have considerable power in suspending the progress of pulmonary tuberculosis in human sufferers?"

"2. As the reputed price for a course of this drug is £60 in America and £120 in Brisbane, will he endeavour to have supplies of the drug made available duty-free in Queensland to enable medical men to treat affected persons at a more reasonable cost?"

Hon. A. JONES (Charters Towers) replied—

"1. As a result of discussion at the National Health and Medical Research Council and with Dr. Feldman, of the Mayo Clinic, United States of America, one of the original workers with streptomycin, the Director-General of Health and Medical Services is of the opinion that the use of streptomycin in pulmonary tuberculosis at the present time is not justified.

"2. I would refer the hon. member to Commonwealth 'Hansard,' No. 14, 1947, page 2498, where full information was supplied by the Commonwealth Health Minister in answer to a question on this matter."

FARM TRAINING, EX-SERVICE PERSONNEL.

Mr. HEADING (Wide Bay) asked the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—

"How many ex-Service personnel have been placed on farms for practical training purposes under the provisions of The War Service Land Settlement Agreement Act of 1945?"

Hon. H. H. COLLINS (Cook) replied—

"Nineteen ex-servicemen have been given farm training under the War Service Land Settlement Agreement Act, and fifty under the Re-establishment and Employment Act."

MIGRANTS AT CHERMSIDE MILITARY CAMP.

Mr. PIE (Windsor) asked the Premier—

"1. Have the State Government taken over B Block at the old ChermSIDE military camp for immigration purposes?"

"2. If so, when are the immigrants expected to arrive?"

"3. How many immigrants do the Government expect to accommodate?"

"4. Will they be of British nationality?"

Hon. E. M. HANLON (Ithaca) replied—

"1. No.

"2, 3, and 4—'See answer to No. 1.'"

LAYING OF FOUNDATION STONES OF PROPOSED STATE SCHOOLS.

Mr. PIE (Windsor) asked the Secretary for Public Works—

"In view of the statement that plans for new school buildings at Fortitude Valley would be prepared as soon as the services of an architect could be made available—

"1. Will he state whether it is the policy of his department to have foundation stones of schools laid before plans are prepared, as has happened in regard to the Fortitude Valley State school?"

"2. In how many other instances and where were similar foundation stones or structures laid just prior to the last election?"

"3. Was such a structure erected at Gympie State school just before the last election?"

Hon. H. A. BRUCE (The Tableland—Secretary for Public Instruction), for **Hon. W. POWER** (Baroona), replied—

"1. There is no fixed policy with respect to the laying of foundation stones. In the past it has not been uncommon for foundation stones to be laid before plans had been completed or before construction had commenced. Some years ago plans for new school buildings at Fortitude Valley had been prepared, but the war caused postponement of the project. Due to changed circumstances in the elapsed period, revision of the plans became necessary, and this work has been delayed because of the acute shortage of architects.

"2 and 3—As the laying of foundation stones had no connection with the elections, the questions are unintelligible. The Labour Party depends for its success at the elections on its past record and on the Premier's Policy Speech outlining its programme for the following three years."

OPEN SEASON FOR DUCK AND QUAIL.

Mr. MACDONALD (Stanley) asked the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—

"Will he give favourable consideration to extending the open season for duck and quail until 30 September?"

Hon. H. H. COLLINS (Cook) replied—

"The matter of the duration of the open season was fully considered. Experience has shown that a longer open season would seriously deplete the number of these birds."

CONFERENCE OF DIRECTORS OF EDUCATION.

Mr. MORRIS (Enoggera): I desire to ask the Secretary for Public Instruction whether he has an answer to the following question, which I addressed to him on 4 September—

"Will he make the report of the recent conference of Directors of Education available for perusal by hon. members of the Legislative Assembly?"

Hon. H. A. BRUCE (The Tableland) replied—

“No. The Directors’ Conferences provide opportunities for the interchange of information and opinion regarding educational matters. The report of the recent Conference of Directors of Education contains a summary of discussions that took place at the conference, the resolutions passed by the directors, and a statement of their opinions in regard to problems that affect more than one State. Directors of Education consider problems that concern the relationship between State Education Departments and the Commonwealth Office of Education. Sometimes they discuss matters of educational import that may have political implications, and, in any case, the opinions of Directors of Education are merely their own opinions and are not binding on any Government. By long-established practice the reports of these conferences are submitted by the Directors of Education to the Education Ministers in their own States. The reports have never been available for general perusal.”

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS.

Mr. WANSTALL (Toowong) (11.9 a.m.) (by leave): I wish to make a personal explanation, Mr. Speaker, and I thank you and hon. members for leave to do so. My attention has been drawn to certain charges concerning Kenmore Sanatorium postal votes made against me by the Premier in the House on Thursday last, which were extensively publicised in the Press.

I answer these charges by proving that they are based upon misleading half-truths. Here are the full facts—

On Friday, 18 April, I visited the Kenmore Repatriation Sanatorium in the course of my election campaign. I had with me one of the Toowong electorate committee’s panel of postal-vote workers. She ascertained that there were no Toowong electors among the patients who required postal votes, but that 12 bed-patients who were domiciled in various electorates throughout the State desired to use postal votes and had no facilities for doing so. At my request, she assisted them to complete the forms, which were witnessed by the matron of the sanatorium, and subsequently she checked each applicant against the roll for the electorate in which he believed he was enrolled so that the forms could be correctly addressed to the respective returning officers. It was thus discovered that five applicants were not enrolled, whilst seven were enrolled as they claimed.

On the evening of 18 April—the same day—I left Brisbane on an election tour embracing Gympie, Rockhampton and surrounding districts, and Mackay, but before leaving I instructed my secretary to obtain the names of the Kenmore patients who were not enrolled and write a letter to them according to a draft that I had prepared. This is the letter dated 21 April, 1947, on which the Premier’s charges are founded. My secretary

was given the wrong list of names and addressed the letter to those who were enrolled. (Government laughter). Hon. members on the Government side will laugh on the other side of their faces when I have finished. I was then in Rockhampton. On the same day she wrote to the matron enclosing a copy of that letter, informing her of the patients to whom it had been written and stating—

“The names of the other patients who completed forms for the usual postal vote have been found on their respective rolls, and their forms have been posted to their returning officer.”

I emphasise that paragraph in order to show that the mistake occurred by the confusing of the two lists of names.

I table a copy of that letter, omitting the names of the patients, which I consider should not be published.

On the following morning, the 22nd, my secretary discovered the error and immediately rang the matron of the sanatorium, told her what had happened, and asked her to inform the addressees of the letter of the 21st that it had been written in error, and to ignore it. She then confirmed this by letter of the same date, of which I table a copy.

Matron Everett took prompt and appropriate action, and acknowledged receipt of the letter of the 22nd as follows—

“I wish to acknowledge receipt of your letter of 22nd April, 1947, and the accompanying forms.

“Your secretary communicated with me by phone telling me of the error, and I have now taken the appropriate action.”

I table the matron’s letter.

On my return to Brisbane on 24 April, I verified the fact that the seven application forms had been posted to the returning officers of the electorates concerned, and considered the matter closed.

I now digress to interpose this information, which I have just received from my hon. colleague and friend, the hon. member for East Toowoomba, who says that the particular elector referred to by the Premier was in fact issued with a postal ballot paper by the returning officer of the East Toowoomba electorate, as appears from a check of the key roll prepared by the returning officer.

At this stage I would remind the House of the charge which the Premier has made against me—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member has made his explanation. He cannot go on to discuss the charges.

Mr. WANSTALL: I am not discussing them.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member has had an opportunity of making a fairly long personal explanation. In making a personal explanation the hon. member cannot discuss the contents of a speech that may have been made previously.

Mr. WANSTALL: But I want to point out that the charges that were made were false. It is not a charge that I simply wrote the letter of 21 April but a charge that I did so as part of a carefully-laid plan of wilful fraud and premeditated dishonesty in pursuit of personal advantage.

In the light of the full facts now disclosed, as distinct from a mere half-truth, I leave those charges with confidence to the judgment of the House and the people.

(Whereupon the hon. member laid on the table the documents referred to.)

Mr. EVANS (Mirani) (11.19 a.m.), by leave: I wish to make a personal explanation. On Thursday last, when the Premier was speaking of Blair Athol proposals, he said, in answer to an interjection by me, "No railway will run to give advantage to any land owned by any of the hon. member's friends."

In answer to that statement I interjected, "They are not my friends; they are your friends." That interjection, however, does not appear in "Hansard." I wish to make it clear, therefore, that I did not acquiesce in the Premier's statement but made it quite clear at the time that it was the Premier's friends who were concerned.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member refers to a point raised here last year concerning the fact that an interjection that was made did not appear in "Hansard." I assure the hon. member that "Hansard" reports are usually full, and interjections are included only when they are replied to.

PAPER.

The following paper was laid on the table:—

Statement of Income and Expenditure and Balance-sheet of the Coal Mine Workers' Pension Fund for the year 1946-47.

FEES PAID BY CROWN TO BARRISTERS AND SOLICITORS.

RETURN TO ORDER.

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

Return to an Order relative to fees paid to barristers and solicitors, 1946-47, made by the House on the motion of Mr. Brand on 7 August.

POWERS OF MR. SPEAKER.

DISALLOWANCE AND EDITING OF QUESTIONS.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I wish to claim the attention of hon. members for a few brief moments in order to make the following com-

ment in reference to a notice of motion given by the Leader of the Opposition on Thursday last to disagree with my ruling.

Mr. Speaker is endowed with certain unquestioned rights and powers. He exercises those rights and carries out those duties by virtue of his office alone. In him is vested also certain judicial authority whereby he is called upon to give decisions or rulings upon definite points raised on the interpretation of Standing Orders and modes of procedure. If notice of a question is given he is not called upon to rule whether the question conforms to usage. The duty is placed upon him to have questions that in his opinion are irregular in a greater or less degree, regularised. This editing of questions is made necessary because hon. members do not appreciate fully the main purpose for which the privilege of questioning exists, namely, that of obtaining information on any Bill, motion or other public matter connected with the business of the House.

In the exercise of this right of editing questions the Chair, in the first instance, always strives to preserve for all members this privilege of interrogation.

The Leader of the Opposition on Thursday last gave notice that he would move to disagree with my ruling on the disallowance of part of a question given notice of by the hon. member for Dalby. I directed that this motion should not appear on today's business-paper for the reason, firstly, that I did not give any ruling, and secondly, as the refusal of a question at the table cannot be made the subject of debate it would naturally follow that if the Leader of the Opposition's motion had been allowed to appear on the business-paper an irregular debate would have ensued.

In illustration of this, when a member of the House of Commons sought to discuss the refusal of a question the Speaker said—

"The hon. member cannot discuss whether questions were, or were not, properly refused at the table."

True, the whole question in this case was not refused, but the practice governing the whole is justly applicable to the part. If, therefore, this discussion is not allowable on the refusal of a question I cannot see how any endeavour so to discuss it by means of a motion of dissent could be accepted as regular.

I am fortified in my action in the present instance by a ruling that was given by Mr. Speaker Pollock in 1933 in somewhat similar circumstances. On that occasion he said that—

"As the refusal of a question at the table could not be made the subject of debate, therefore the acceptance of a motion to disagree with the Speaker's ruling would permit of an irregular discussion taking place on the disallowed question."

Mr. Speaker Pollock was recognised as one of the soundest and ablest Speakers to occupy the Chair and I intend to follow the sound principles he has laid down in regard to this question.

I remind hon. members also that, although strong exception was taken by the hon. member for Dalby to the fact that part of his question had been omitted, and although such omission was made the ground for the rather serious move of a disagreement with what was termed my "ruling," yet the hon. member still exercised his right to have the so-called mutilated question answered. He thereby tacitly admitted that an answer to the part of the question allowed to appear on the business-paper was of material value to him, and he really discountenanced his professed serious objection to the Speaker's action.

Hon. members can rest assured at all times that I will endeavour to see that they receive that courtesy and justice to which they are entitled if they should desire to address questions to Ministers.

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumba—Leader of the Opposition) (11.23 a.m.): Mr. Speaker, am I to understand that the comment you have made this morning is a ruling or is it just a statement? At the present time there exists in my mind and in the minds of quite a number of other hon. members a doubt on this question when a ruling is a ruling.

Mr. SPEAKER: May I interpose here to say that there is no motion before the Chair?

Mr. NICKLIN: I rise to a point of order. I cannot for the life of me see how you as Mr. Speaker of this House can take a certain line of action without first ruling something, otherwise you say in effect that you act without thinking or making a decision.

Standing Order No. 117 states that a motion of dissent from a Speaker's ruling shall be "set down to be considered within three sitting days of that on which the ruling was given, shall take precedence of all other business on the day appointed . . ."

Now any action which you, Sir, as Speaker can take will be final in this House. No hon. member has a right to dissent in order that the House can decide. You will admit that it has that effect, otherwise you will have a position existing in this Parliament analagous to that in the Duma under the Czar. Therefore, the point of order that I wish you to decide this morning is whether the comment you have made is a ruling or just a comment or statement.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have pointed out clearly that in accordance with the procedure of the House of Commons and rulings by previous Speakers, in one case at least by the Hon. Mr. Pollock, I cannot give a ruling on a point that could not come within the ambit of a debate of the House itself.

As I pointed out, certain powers are conferred on me in regard to questions. I should regard as a ruling, a ruling on any point that would arise in this Assembly during a debate or on any Standing Order, or question arising in the debate.

As to the point raised by the Leader of the Opposition, he will note that on this occasion I have taken no exception to the moving of the motion on the business sheet to disagree with my action.

I repeat that I am guided by the rulings of the House of Commons and the ruling laid down by Mr. Speaker Pollock in this Assembly in 1933.

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumba—Leader of the Opposition) (11.28 a.m.): On a further point of order, Mr. Speaker, am I to understand from the statement you have made that no hon. member can question any action of yours in regard to any question that may be asked and disallowed or edited by yourself?

Mr. SPEAKER: I will repeat the ruling given by the Hon. George Pollock. Here is the crux of the points I want to make this morning: when a member of the House of Commons sought to discuss the refusal of a question, the Speaker said that the hon. member could not discuss the point whether the question was or was not properly refused at the table. That is the point on which the whole position hinges. That is a definite ruling of the House of Commons.

Mr. Speaker Pollock in 1933 said—

"That as the refusal of a question at the table could not be made the subject of debate, therefore the acceptance of a motion to disagree with the Speaker's ruling would permit of an irregular discussion taking place on the disallowed question."

The point as I see it is that I must follow the custom. I must be guided by the standing decision of the House of Commons, and the ruling of a Speaker of this Assembly. This morning I am merely putting into effect a standing rule or practice, and that standing rule or practice must stand.

Mr. NICKLIN: Then hon. members' rights go west.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition—and I say it with all due respect to him—can take it from me (and I say it sincerely) that as the custodian of the rights of hon. members of this Assembly I will see that justice is done on all occasions. I want to say to the hon. member, before I resume my seat, that I have been too long engaged in the struggle for justice and a better deal in this country to do anything inimical to the principles and beliefs to which I have held so faithfully.

Government Members: Hear, hear!

LIQUOR ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION.

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

"That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend The Liquor Acts, 1912 to 1945, in a certain particular."

Motion agreed to.

CORONERS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION.

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

“That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend The Coroners Acts, 1930 to 1943, in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

SUGAR EXPERIMENT STATIONS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION.

Hon. H. H. COLLINS (Cook—Secretary for Agriculture and Stock): I move—

“That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend The Sugar Experiment Stations Acts, 1900 to 1946, in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

TRADE COUPONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

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

Hon. D. A. GLEDSON (Ipswich—Attorney-General) (11.33 a.m.): I move—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend The Trade Coupons Act of 1933 in certain particulars.”

This amendment has been found necessary in order to bring into line our Trade Coupons Act so far as it applies to operations between persons in Queensland and firms in other States who have been trading under what is known as the stamps or free-gift system. In 1933 this Parliament passed the Trade Coupons Act for the protection of traders in Queensland, and to prevent the issue of coupons and the giving of gifts for trading purposes. The Act was thought to be quite sufficient to meet the purpose in view, but it was found that it could be defeated by operating on an interstate basis. For labels or dockets gathered by purchasers of goods, firms in Sydney would issue coupons entitling those purchasers to gifts; this, of course, being for the purpose of developing their business. This went on for some time, and we were advised that there was no means of dealing with it because we could not interfere with interstate trade.

We find that in 1935 the South Australian Government passed an Act similar to the Queensland Act, setting out to give protection to their traders against the people running these coupon businesses. Last year, in the High Court, the South Australian Act was

contested and the court's decision was that it was valid and that the South Australian Government could protect their people in this way.

Traders in Queensland have asked that the Queensland Government bring down an amending Act on the same lines as that of South Australia to give them similar protection. The purpose of this Bill is to bring the Queensland law into line with the South Australian law and give Queensland business people protection against those who run these coupon businesses.

That is the whole purpose of the Bill. It is only a small measure. It will bring our Act into line with that of South Australia and give our traders similar protection against enterprises conducted in Sydney. This sort of business was carried on for a considerable time before the war but in the war years the practice was discontinued. We were then short of many goods and there was no trouble but once trade begins to return to normal this practice will probably begin again and we are desirous of having a provision against the practice that would be detrimental to business firms in Queensland.

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumba—Leader of the Opposition) (11.38 a.m.): The Attorney-General referred to the history of the trade-coupons legislation in this State but it is interesting to note that the hon. gentleman went back only as far as 1933. There was legislation in Queensland in 1912 but in 1933 the Attorney-General introduced a Bill that repealed the law of 1912 and re-enacted it in exactly the same form—almost word for word. We find much of that type of legislation. Apparently the Attorney-General wished to get for himself and his Government a bit of credit by introducing what was apparently new legislation, but instead it is exactly the same legislation as has existed on the statute book of Queensland since 1912. Experience has shown, not only in this legislation but in connection with other legislation the Attorney-General and his Government have introduced in this House, that they provide for steam hammers to crack nuts—and not very large nuts at that, in fact very small ones.

Apparently this amending Bill is to remove some weakness that was found in the prior legislation but I think that probably if the law action in South Australia was carried further the decision would be reversed by the Privy Council and that it would be held that a State could not pass legislation that was contrary to Section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution, which provides that trade should be free and untrammelled as between the States.

I do not know whether we should waste our time on legislation such as the Attorney-General is introducing this morning. He mentioned that persons in this State were carrying on this so-called illegal practice of giving gifts in return for coupons, but so far as I can ascertain, none of that is going on in this State at present.

Mr. Aikens: Yes, it is.

Mr. NICKLIN: The only firms carrying on this coupon-trading business at present are Queensland firms.

I do not see a great deal of harm in the trade-coupon business when it is used as it is at present, as a form of advertisement. The old form of coupon trading that made it necessary to introduce the Acts of 1912 and 1933, the practice under which coupon-issuing firms had the power to dictate to various retailers and other firms, was detrimental, and it was desirable that it be stopped. The present mild form of recreation, if I might term it so, by which the housewife saves up coupons from a particular line of products and sends them away in return for a tea towel or a piece of glassware, does not seem to me to be detrimental to any trader within the State.

It is interesting to note that many of the articles carrying the coupons are sold by the producers at a fixed price throughout Australia. That being so, it means that if persons in Queensland are prevented from saving coupons or wrappers they are at a disadvantage compared with the housewives of other States who can save the coupons and get a little harmless enjoyment out of receiving gifts in return for them.

The Attorney-General has not given us any evidence of any representations from Queensland firms asking that this amended legislation be brought down. I repeat that at the moment there are no Southern firms trading in this way in Queensland; the only firms doing any such trading here are Queensland firms. Personally, I treat this practice as a form of advertisement. We know that some firms spend hundreds of pounds a week on special radio programmes or newspaper articles advertising their products, and if other firms desire to advertise by means of this coupon-collection system I suggest they are entitled to do so.

Personally, I think the Attorney-General is wasting the time of this Parliament in bringing forward the proposed measure.

Mr. PIE (Windsor) (11.43 a.m.): The issues raised by the Leader of the Opposition in connection with trade coupons are very real in some cases. I have had a fair amount of experience with these trade coupons, and I should like to see them abolished throughout the whole of the Commonwealth, but at the same time I do not wish any Queensland manufacturer to be at a disadvantage in competing with other States. Queensland already has enough disadvantages in manufacturing, without being subjected to further handicaps.

In New South Wales I have seen warehouses set aside to cater for the collection of coupons and issuing of gifts. I have seen firms that pack self-raising flour establish big warehouses containing all sorts of goods to cover the coupons, and in this way develop into dealers in fancy goods.

I think it is a pernicious system because after all the cost of it has to be added to the price of the goods. You cannot avoid that. If you give away with every packet of flour

a coupon worth a penny the price of flour must go up a penny. The same applies to cornflakes, sandsoap and other things. I should like to see the whole thing stopped throughout Australia, but we cannot have manufacturers in Queensland placed at a disadvantage. If the use of coupons is forbidden in Queensland, in practice the interstate trader will charge the people of Queensland a higher price than he should, whereas the price to Queensland people should be reduced, because after all the cost of the goods given in return for coupons throughout Australia is included in the cost of the goods charged to Queensland.

That is the issue I take up with the Attorney-General. Will he make certain that traders operating with coupons throughout Australia but not allowed to operate in coupons in Queensland charge a lower price to the people of Queensland for the goods they send up here?

Previously, traders in Queensland were forced to disregard the Act in Queensland to keep their businesses together. I know that R. M. Gow & Co., Simpson Bros., the self-raising flour people, and Campbells, the soap people, were forced to break the law in this State in order to hold their trade against Southern competition. If they did not break the law they would have been forced out of business. They had to break the law and I think the Attorney-General knows that and was tolerant in his administration of the Act. I am really worried about the position because there is nothing in the world to stop a firm in Queensland from saying, "All right, you send down to New South Wales and we will open an office down there. Send 100 of our labels—not coupons—down to the office we establish in New South Wales." The Attorney-General cannot do anything about that. That is what might be happening. Southern people might say, if they cannot trade in coupons in Queensland, "Send the labels down to New South Wales and we will send you the goods." That is where I see a weakness in the Act, because the Government will have no control over that. You cannot control what is done in New South Wales. If a housewife knows she has to save 100 outside packets to get certain glassware, she will save them. The advertisements will come up in New South Wales magazines. I admit that New South Wales firms will not be allowed to advertise in Queensland papers.

I was interested in the position in South Australia and I wired Mr. Playford, the Premier of that State, as soon as I knew this Bill was coming before the Committee. I asked him to send me a copy of his Act, together with a statement as to any faults that might have been revealed in the application of the Act, and I am hopeful that the required information will be here before the second reading of the Bill. I have always acted on the principle that we might as well learn from the mistakes of other people and I hope we may have concrete facts to put before the Attorney-General to convince him that an alteration to his amendment of the Act is necessary.

We must protect the manufacturer in this State and I do not want any Southern firm to gain an advantage by the fact that Queensland people can send down to New South Wales for their gifts. There will be a disadvantage, of course, because the woman who saves the coupons will not be able to go to a warehouse in Queensland and pick what she wants, but the firms in the South could let her know in pamphlet form what is available.

The Leader of the Opposition said that there was nothing coming up here at the present time, but I can tell hon. members that as soon as free competition returns—and that is not so far away—the plans that are now being formulated in New South Wales and Victoria for the reintroduction of coupon trading will be launched. In many instances in the southern States, people are not buying goods because of their quality. For instance, there may be two packets of goods produced by a manufacturer, one having a certain nutritive value and the other having a very much lower nutritive value. The one having no nutritive value, or the lower nutritive value, will carry a better coupon rating than the other package, which may carry no coupon rating at all.

Mr. Aikens: That is the danger of the whole thing.

Mr. PIE: That is the danger, and it is not fair trading in my opinion. If a trader has two packets of goods for sale, one having a really good nutritive quality and a second-rate coupon value and the other having a low nutritive quality with a high coupon rating, the temptation for the housewife will be to buy the article with the low nutritive quality even though the price is the same as the packet containing the high nutritive quality, because of the high coupon rating attached to the article of lower nutritive quality.

That is the weakness that I see in the whole coupon system—high-quality goods could be disregarded because of the high coupon rating attaching to second-class goods. We want only the best for our people. If a high coupon rating applies to goods of second-rate quality the people will buy them, solely because of the high coupon value, as against the higher-class product with no coupon value, although both may be sold at the same price. I hope that the Bill contains provisions to cover the points I have raised.

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra) (11.52 a.m.): If the Bill strikes a blow at the coupon system then I intend to support it, but I have been long enough in this Chamber to know that you cannot take very much notice of the remarks of a Minister in introducing a Bill. Nevertheless, I am prepared to accept the assurance of the Attorney-General that the Bill is designed to curb, if not completely eliminate, the coupon system. I am in favour of the abolition of the coupon system and I only hope that it can be abolished throughout Australia. I oppose it on broad economic grounds.

Unfortunately, the people generally do not read enough about economics. The position simply is this: if a man makes or grows an article and sells it direct to the public there is only one person who makes a profit and that is the manufacturer or grower. However, our business structure today is such that the manufacturer sells to the wholesaler, the wholesaler sells to the retailer, and the retailer sells to the consumer, and consequently three or four people rake off a profit from the increase in price that occurs between the manufacturer and the consumer. In every society there must be a certain number of people who act as distributors and transporters. When we find that the distributors and transporters have become overloaded, we have what you might call a rocky economic system. Today we find that an article produced at a cost of, say, 1s. reaches a figure as high as 4s. 6d. and 5s. 3d. by the time it passes through half a dozen middlemen to the consumer, and so the coupon people are merely other parasites fastening themselves onto the back of industry. We already have the wholesaler, the agent, and the retailer, some of whom are necessary so why should we agree to the imposition of another unnecessary parasite on industry?

The hon. member for Windsor pointed out that the article itself must carry the cost of the coupon system, and here is one occasion on which I agree with him. These coupon people do not run their businesses for nothing. They drag a very lucrative profit out of their businesses, and this lucrative profit in the long run must come out of the pockets of the consumer and is merely another of the various profits that the article itself must carry.

The Leader of the Opposition pointed out that the coupon system was merely a medium for advertising. It is about time that we tackled also the problem of excessive and useless advertisements of certain articles. To-day you can go down the streets of any town in Queensland and in every shop window you can see great big empty cartons for certain brands of tobacco and cigarettes, extensively and expensively advertised, and yet if you want to buy a packet of cigarettes—fortunately I do not smoke—you have to buy them on the black market or from under the counter. An article should stand upon its own feet, and upon its value and price. If anything is done to add to the price of that article, whether by expensive advertising or by the coupon system, or by the imposition of some other form of parasitical growth, this Government should do their duty by the people and so far as it is possible eradicate that parasitical growth.

I hope this Bill will be a means of completely eliminating the coupon system, which I must admit has got a grip on our womenfolk throughout the land. It is quite true that if two articles are on sale, one inferior and the other of good quality, many unthinking people will buy the inferior article simply because they can by saving 36 of its wrappers and posting them in a parcel to New South Wales or somewhere else, paying 4½d. or 6d. postage

or it, get a 3d. nail file in return. That is going on today. I know that members of my family have fallen for the racket, until they learned by bitter experience that they were paying a higher price for the inferior article.

Sometimes they have walked past the nearest shop to a shop further away in order to acquire the article that carried the coupon, and then by sedulously saving up all the coupons, sorting them out, and sending them away, go in return a moth-eaten tea-towel that was not worth the cost of postage to send the coupons away.

As a matter of general trade policy, no hon. member should encourage parasitical growths to fasten themselves on industry in a way which increases the cost of an article on its way from the producer to the consumer. The coupon system is almost as pernicious and undesirable as the cash-order system. The Government have taken action to restrict the cash-order system; I am sorry they did not take action to wipe it out altogether. I welcome the suggestion of the Attorney-General in the proposed Bill that it will strike a blow at the coupon system.

Mr. PATERSON (Bowen) (11.58 a.m.): Personally, I feel that although this Bill is dealing with an evil it is dealing only with a symptom and not touching the basic cause. Why is the coupon system so effective? Why has it grown to its present dimensions? Obviously because most people of this State, in common with most people of other States, are out after every extra gift they can get, because their incomes are insufficient to enable them to maintain in comfort themselves, their wives, and families. It is all very well for a man with a big income not to worry about coupons that carry extra goods because from his extra income he can pay for these things. What we have to remember, however, is the bad economic plight of many of our people, particularly the low wages and incomes of many of our working men and other useful people; they are not receiving sufficient to meet the increased cost of living. The housewife today cannot be blamed for wanting to get an extra towel for nothing, or an extra packet or half-dozen extra packets of foodstuffs for nothing in return for sending a certain number of coupons to the trader.

I agree with the efforts of the Government to stamp out this pernicious trade, but I want to go further and stamp it out effectively at its roots by ensuring that the workers receive sufficient income to enable their wives to buy all the towels and other things they need without having to get an extra one by saving coupons. The point is that, at present, they are not able to buy all the things they need without worrying about coupons.

The hon. member for Mundingburra rightly touched on another point, when he said that coupon trading is merely a variation of the whole system of advertising that exists in the present system of society. The hon. member points out the enormous amount of advertising that is unnecessary and parasitic.

He might have gone further and pointed out the advertising methods that some of our daily papers have used to increase their circulation in the mad rush or the mad competition in which they engage in order to be able to say that their sales greatly exceed those of any competitor. So we find today the "Find-the-Ball" competitions, press competitions for picking the scores in a cricket match, guessing how many men will make over a century, and so on. These are really variants or illustrations of the principle underlying the coupon system. The papers use these methods to increase their sales and they succeed because many people are anxious to make some more money. Those variants of the basic principle to which I have referred can be traced to the fact that the vast majority of people are in such a bad economic position that they are only too anxious to obtain a few extra "bob" or a few extra pounds to make their lives happier and more bearable. I suggest, therefore, that the only way to root out this evil is to alter the whole system of production for profit. Let us put the profit-making system away and let us produce for the use of the people, for the good of the people; let us produce not for profit but for the use and welfare of the people themselves. (Opposition interjections.) You can always be sure of a bite and interjections from the Opposition the moment you attack the basic fortress of the capitalistic system. The moment you do so you can hear them come in, yet many of them will get up at the opening of Parliament and talk about the need to maintain the dignity of Parliament.

Mr. Aikens: Some of them may have shares in a coupon company.

Mr. PATERSON: I will not accuse any of them of that.

This is my point: let us get at the root cause of the evil; root out that basic cause and change the whole system of society. I know it will be said that if the system is changed efficiency and all the other so-called virtues of the present system will be lost. To that, for the present, I shall say only this: our State educational system is not run for profit; it is run merely for the purpose of providing education for the needs of the people. I am not concerned for the moment to criticise or praise what the Department of Public Instruction does—I will go into that later when we are discussing the Estimates for that department—but for the present I shall content myself with saying that the services we obtain from our school teachers under that system is as good as and, in my opinion, often much better, than the services rendered by any of our managers and controllers of industry where the industry is run for profit. No-one in this House would for a moment condemn our school teachers on the ground that they lack ability, initiative or keenness. All these good qualities they show in their work: and yet they work under a system in which education is provided to meet the needs of the people and not to make profit.

Motion (Mr. Gledson) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING.

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

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

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

Hon. D. A. GLEDSON (Ipswich—Attorney-General) (12.7 p.m.): I move—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Friendly Societies Acts, 1886 to 1943, in certain particulars.”

This is another small Bill, Mr. Mann, but I suppose that I shall be accused by the Leader of the Opposition of wasting time. Every time he rises now he accuses the Attorney-General of wasting time.

The Bill proposes a necessary amendment to section 8 of the Friendly Societies Acts. That section provides for registration of societies under certain conditions, one of which is that no friendly society or branch can be registered that contracts with any person for the assurance of an annuity exceeding £52 per annum, or of a gross sum exceeding £200, or of a periodical payment other than an annuity at a rate exceeding £2 a week. The Act was enacted some years ago, and as time has passed it has been found necessary to make provision for increased payments in some instances, and the societies find it is necessary to ask for an amendment of this Act to enable them to meet these demands for increased annuities and increased payments. As I have said, the Bill is only a small measure, but provides for an alteration of the £52 per annum to £104 per annum, and of the £200 to £500.

An Opposition Member: Will you get that when you retire—£500?

Mr. GLEDSON: When I retire? When? I do not know what will happen when that time comes; of course, it is a long way off (laughter). We do not know what will happen by that time. This sum might be increased to £1,000 or something else. The Bill deals purely with friendly society matters. I am a member of a friendly society, and I do not know what I shall get when I retire; I think it is a funeral allowance or something like that.

Those are the whole of the provisions contained in the proposed measure. It is simple and it is put forward not for the purpose of delaying the business of Parliament but because it has been asked for by the friendly societies and the Government feel that the request is reasonable.

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumba—Leader of the Opposition) (12.11 p.m.): Let me assure the Attorney-General that the remarks I passed when dealing with the previous Bill were not directed at him personally. I am sure we must congratulate him on the way he goes

through the legislation under the care of his department each session and brings forward necessary and desirable amendments. I repeat that I congratulate him on his attention to his work as Attorney-General.

Mr. Aikens: He has the best patchwork department in the Government.

Mr. NICKLIN: He has certainly done a good deal of patching during the last few sessions to the legislation under his care.

It is interesting to note that all legislation dealing with payments, pensions, annuities and things of that kind has had to be amended during recent sessions to increase the maximum benefits provided. That is indicative of the inflationary times in which we are living. The amount set aside in the days when this legislation was first passed was ample, but the value of money today is such that we find it necessary to provide for increased benefits or payments under this legislation to enable them to get the same value as they got originally.

Another point is that Dame Rumour had it that the proposed legislation was being brought down to exempt from taxation the payments made by hon. members opposite to the assurance scheme they have operating to provide against their retirement from Parliament. I was interested to know that hon. members opposite were members of a friendly society. Anyone hearing the rows emanating from the room at the other end of the passage could be pardoned for thinking that they were anything but a friendly society.

I do not know whether this legislation will have any effect on the little friendly society hon. members of the Government side are conducting to provide for their retirement from Parliament, but when I look back over those hon. members who have been retired from the Government by the electors from time to time I find that there is very little need for them to obtain any payment through their assurance scheme; the Government have taken very good care of them.

Let us look back over the years and see how adequately the Government have cared for those hon. members who have been retired from their ranks at the wish of the electors from time to time. Taking the list alphabetically, we have Mr. G. P. Barber first. He went to a position in the Sub-department of Forestry. Mr. Bertram went to the State Stores Board. Mr. Bow was given a job at the Brisbane abattoir. Mr. Brassington, the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, during his time of temporary retirement, was employed in the Department of Labour and Industry. Mr. W. J. Copley was taken care of by the same department. Mr. J. B. Donnelly went to the Department of Public Instruction. Mr. G. P. Farrell went to the Department of Public Lands. Mr. W. N. Gillies went to the Industrial Court. Mr. H. L. Hartley went to the State Stores Board. Mr. J. J. Healy went to the State Transport Commission. Mr. A. Jones went to the Department of Labour and Industry. Mr. J. D. Kane went to the Railway Department. Mr. M. J. Kirwan went to

the Queensland Tourist Bureau. Mr. B. McLean went to the Treasury. Mr. E. J. Riordan went to the Department of Labour and Industry.

Mr. Aikens: A Rear Admiral now in the Navy.

Mr. NICKLIN: Mr. W. Forgan Smith went to the Sugar Board, Mr. H. Turley to the Department of Mines, Mr. H. Williams to the Department of Labour and Industry, and Mr. A. H. Wright to the Brisbane Fire Brigade Board. I do not say that is a complete list but it is a few I can think of at the present time.

Mr. Aikens: You forgot Judge Brennan.

Mr. NICKLIN: Hon. members are at liberty to fill in the gaps. I am quoting a few to suit the point I make. Therefore I say I do not see how there is any necessity whatever for hon. members to become a friendly society and become registered under the Act. As I said before, there is no doubt when we consider the value of the £ note today, and observe the inflationary tendencies that exist, there is need to increase the amounts laid down by legislation passed many years ago in regard to pensions and annuities and other payments in order to bring them up to present-day values.

Mr. PIE (Windsor) (12.18 p.m.): I congratulate the Leader of the Opposition on the splendid form he is in this morning and I congratulate also the Attorney-General, the simple Minister, on the simple way and the simple smile with which he introduced this Bill.

It is common knowledge to us all—after all, we have eyes—that this amendment is actually one for the Labour members of Parliament. I was rather perturbed because I thought that the Government were going to bring down a pensions Bill similar to the one every other Labour Government in Australia have brought in. The New South Wales Labour Government have brought in and the Federal Labour Government intend bringing in such Bills and I was thinking that perhaps the Premier of this State was going back on a promise he made during the elections that he would not bring in a pensions Bill.

I am pleased to see that under this amending Bill members of Parliament will have to pay a little more—double the amount they pay now—but where they got £200 they will now get £500 on the payment of £104.

A Government Member interjected.

Mr. PIE: That is what the Attorney-General said. I am just wondering—

Mr. Gledson: Where is there anything in it about payment?

Mr. PIE: I do not know where I got it from but I heard the hon. gentleman say that the payment being made at the present time by Labour members is £52—

Mr. GLEDSON: I rise to a point of order. I hope that the hon. member for Windsor will keep to the truth.

The CHAIRMAN: I hope the hon. member for Windsor will accept the denial of the Attorney-General.

Mr. PIE: I accept it. I am working on an inference. What he did say was that with the payment of £52 per annum into the fund, the benefit was limited to £200. Is that so?

Mr. Gledson: No. Under the friendly society, £52 is the annuity, to be raised to £104.

Mr. PIE: And the payment is to be increased from £200 to £500. That is the point I want to make. The Attorney-General can be quite fair about it and announce that the Government intend to bring Labour members of Parliament under this friendly society.

A Government Member: No.

Mr. PIE: If you say no, then that is the answer. Does the Minister say that it is not the intention of the Government at present to bring Labour members of Parliament under this friendly society?

Mr. Gledson: I did not say anything of the sort.

Mr. PIE: Now that we have the Minister's reply I am quite happy, but I did want to get to the bottom of the thing.

I join with the Leader of the Opposition in stressing the fact that the increased cost of living for people on pensions is very real, and at this stage I make a plea for the public servants of this State on that point. Although they have paid into a fund over a period of many years, they will not on their retirement get nearly enough out of it to keep them going.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The matter before the Chamber is an amendment of the Friendly Societies Act, not the Public Service Superannuation Act.

Mr. PIE: But this can become a superannuation scheme under the Friendly Societies Act.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Public servants do not come under the Friendly Societies Act.

Mr. PIE: I was merely making a comparison. I suppose there is no reason why Labour members of Parliament should not form a friendly society to be registered under the Friendly Societies Act.

Mr. Gledson: None whatever, if they like to register. The members of the Queensland People's Party can form a friendly society and have it registered under the Friendly Societies Act, although they are not too friendly.

Mr. PIE: Expressions of unfriendliness emanated from the other side of the Chamber, but I do not want to labour that point. There is nothing in the Bill to which we can object at this stage. It is simply a proposal

to amend the Friendly Societies Act, but we should have liked the Attorney-General to deal with some of the rumours that have been published concerning the proposed amendment.

Hon. D. A. GLEDSON (Ipswich—Attorney-General) (12.23 p.m.): I want to remove any misapprehension there may be in the minds of some hon. members about this Bill. It provides purely for an amendment of the Friendly Societies Act. Any body of men or women, as the case may be, can form themselves into a friendly society to be registered under the Friendly Societies Act. Then they must comply with the provisions of the Act. The Bill simply amends the Act, but it does not say that any body of persons must register as a friendly society under that Act. It simply amends the Act by laying down the conditions under which any body may register as a friendly society. That is all the Bill contains.

Mr. Pie: It lays down the conditions?

Mr. GLEDSON: Yes. It simply lays down the conditions under which any body of persons may register as a friendly society. It does not go any further than that. It does not say anything about payments into a fund or out of a fund. That must be done in conformity with the rules of the friendly society. Rules are drafted and registered in terms of the Act, but of course they must first of all be approved by the certifying barrister, and when the rules are approved by him they must then be approved by the Registrar of Friendly Societies. The friendly society must then work and operate in accordance with the Friendly Societies Act. That is all that the amendment means.

Motion (Mr. Gledson) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING.

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

LEGAL PRACTITIONERS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

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

Hon. D. A. GLEDSON (Ipswich—Attorney-General) (12.26 p.m.): I move—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Legal Practitioners Acts, 1881 to 1946, in certain particulars.”

This Bill has been introduced to correct an existing anomaly. The present Legal Practitioners Act deals with the time that officers of the Public Curator's Office, the Supreme Court, &c., shall serve before being able to sit for their examinations. The present provision is that if such an officer has served continuously for 15 years as a clerk in the Supreme Court office at Brisbane, Rockhampton, or Townsville, or in the Crown Solicitor's

Office at Brisbane, or in any petty sessions office in Queensland, and has passed the examination prescribed by the Public Service Regulations as the qualifying examination for admission to the Public Service, he shall be excused from passing the preliminary examination. We are providing in this Bill that certain war service shall be taken into consideration in the cases of any articulated clerk studying to become a solicitor or barrister. The provision will enable his war service to be taken into consideration.

The provisions reads—

“The board may direct that naval or military service (including service in the Air Force and any period spent as a prisoner of war) by any articulated clerk or a judge's associate shall in the case of such articulated clerk count as service under his articles and in the case of such associate count as service as a judge's associate in accordance with these rules: Provided always that such articulated clerk shall not be admitted as a solicitor unless he has during an aggregate period of not less than two years been actually employed as an articulated clerk in the proper business practice and employment of a solicitor and that such judge's associate shall not be admitted as a solicitor unless he has during an aggregate period of not less than two years been actually employed as an associate to a judge or judges of the High Court of Australia or the Supreme Court of Queensland.”

We found that men employed in the Public Curator's office, the Supreme Court office, or the Crown Solicitor's office were not provided for, as far as their war service was concerned. This amendment provides that they shall be given the credit of war service in the same way as articulated clerks and others. If we did not do this, some of our young men who were studying law and who have had five years' war service would have to wait 20 years before they could become solicitors. This amendment will bring them into line with those who are articulated to solicitors and associates to judges.

Mr. WANSTALL (Toowong) (12.32 p.m.): The amendment, judging by the explanation made by the Attorney-General, will, I am sure, receive the commendation of members on both sides of the House. The Attorney-General has pointed out that it is for the purpose of correcting an anomaly whereby the provision as to war service that applies to articulated clerks and judges' associates does not apply to officers in the legal branches of the Public Service. The amendment will correct that defect and bring the exemption periods into line with those applying to other branches of legal work.

I have found that the Solicitors' Board and the Barristers' Board and the Full Court have been most considerate in their attitude towards young men whose studies were interrupted by war service.

There is only one query I wish to raise. I ask the Attorney-General whether there is not some similar provision applying to

clerks in the clerks of petty sessions offices? My impression—and I rely on my memory—is that clerks in petty sessions offices also are entitled, after a certain number of years' service, to some sort of exemption from the preliminary qualifying examination. Will this amendment be sufficient, in order to correct any anomaly that may exist in regard to their interrupted period of service on account of war service?

Mr. Gledson: I read them out.

Mr. WANSTALL: Did you refer to clerks of petty sessions?

Mr. Gledson: Yes. I referred to the Supreme Court, Rockhampton, Townsville, and any clerk of petty sessions office in Queensland.

Mr. WANSTALL: Thank you. I see no further reason for delaying the Committee. I look forward to receiving the actual details of the Bill.

Motion (Mr. Gledson) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING.

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

LIQUOR ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

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

Hon. D. A. GLEDSON (Ipswich—Attorney-General) (12.37 p.m.): I move—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Liquor Acts, 1912 to 1945, in a certain particular.”

The object of this amendment, Mr. Mann, is to enable those who are operating air transport services from State to State to supply liquor to their passengers while a plane is in flight. This matter has been raised because of an amendment put through this House during the war prohibiting the carrying of liquor in aircraft. We had a provision making it illegal to carry liquor for illegal purposes in trains, ships, motor vehicles, and things like that. We had also to provide for the carrying of liquor in aircraft. As hon. members know, during the war period there was a good deal of black-marketing in liquor and attempts were made to bring liquor from other States and also to carry it within the State. In instances of sly-grog selling it was discovered that the liquor was being conveyed by aeroplane.

Mr. Macdonald: You widened the scope of the term “vehicle” to embrace that.

Mr. GLEDSON: We provided that it would be illegal to carry liquor in aircraft. That is the law as it stands at present, but we find that in the operations of the various firms carrying on air services now, Qantas, A.N.A.—

Mr. Luckins: T.A.A. now serves liquor on its planes in Queensland.

Mr. GLEDSON: That is a Commonwealth service and I do not know whether this Parliament or we in Queensland would have power to interfere. (Opposition interjections.)

Mr. Barnes: If the Commonwealth law is inconsistent with our law, they have to obey ours.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope hon. members on my left will allow the Attorney-General to proceed without interruption.

Mr. GLEDSON: It is a moot point whether we have the power to interfere in such a Commonwealth instrumentality. At the present time I am not prepared to say whether we have the power to deal with the matters. There is a difference of opinion, but the general opinion is that we have no power to interfere with the Commonwealth service.

That is generally admitted. There are some who have the opinion that the Commonwealth people must conform to our law, as the hon. member for Bundaberg says, but it is a doubtful point. I understand that T.A.A. has not been serving liquor on its planes in Queensland but that it is waiting until the law is amended to allow of its doing so. A deputation from A.N.A. and Qantas waited on us to complain that they are handicapped because they can serve liquor only until they cross the border into Queensland and then have to get rid of it, either to jettison it or lock it away.

This matter has received serious consideration and the Government have decided to amend the law. We considered whether it would be possible to give aircraft a licence similar to the packet licence issued to ships. The private firms were only too anxious to do whatever was required of them in order to get the right to serve liquor with meals in aircraft. As they are allowed to do it in the other States, they felt that it should be permitted in Queensland also. We are proposing this simple amendment to allow liquor to be served in aircraft in actual flight. It will not be permitted while the aircraft is on the ground. The companies will be responsible for seeing to it that liquor is not served in such a way as to allow anyone to become troublesome on a plane. I understand that if the hon. member for Maree, for instance, were to go to Archerfield or Eagle Farm under the influence of liquor he would not be allowed to get on the plane. That is a rule they enforce strictly.

That is all the Bill contains. It is a simple and desirable measure.

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumbidgee—Leader of the Opposition) (12.44 p.m.): I do not think anyone can offer any objection to the proposed amendment. After all, if this facility is allowed in aircraft travelling over other States there is no reason why it should not be permitted in Queensland too. We have to realise that in this State at the present

time we are endeavouring to cater for the tourist traffic, and if privileges are denied to tourists while they are in Queensland there will be no incentive for them to come to this State.

The point I raise is that T.A.A. has apparently been serving liquor on its planes when in this State in contravention of our laws. What I want to know from the Attorney-General is whether T.A.A. is something apart and can contravene our State laws with impunity? After all, I say that if it flies its planes over the borders of this State it should be compelled, like every other air service, to obey the laws of Queensland. I contend that the Attorney-General, instead of airily waving this to one side—seeing that T.A.A. has apparently done what it likes—should have exerted his authority and prosecuted T.A.A. if it has contravened laws of this State, particularly laws controlled by his department. It is indicative of what is likely to happen in this State if other monopolies, particularly Commonwealth-controlled monopolies, operate in Queensland. The Attorney-General is falling down on his job if he does not take action against the T.A.A. for contravening the laws of this State.

Mr. Gledson: It does not break the laws.

Mr. NICKLIN: If the Attorney-General inquires he will find that T.A.A. is selling liquor on its planes whilst they are in transit over this State. I ask him to make inquiries and if he finds that T.A.A. has broken the laws that he institute prosecutions. I take it that this amendment applies only to air services, whereas the section of the Act with which the amendment deals includes trains and other moving vehicles right down to velocipedes and even wheelbarrows, if my memory serves me right. It has been suggested that if we are going to attract tourist traffic to our trains we should provide all services on those trains, such as buffet cars, and sections set aside for the care of children and mothers. We have to realise that in other parts of the world train services provide for the supply of drink from buffet cars, and I should have thought that the Attorney-General would have amended the Act in regard to trains at the same time as he was amending it in regard to air services. He could have provided for additional facilities in the future.

There is no doubt that if we are to hold business for our railways, we must give facilities on our trains similar to those provided by competing forms of transport. If air services are now going to supply meals and liquor on planes, I think there should be some provision for train travellers to have the opportunity of having a leisurely drink if they desire it, instead of running the risk of breaking their necks by getting out at railway refreshment rooms and swallowing down a quick one. I commend that suggestion to the Attorney-General and hope that he will take into consideration the extension of a similar provision to our railway service.

Mr. WANSTALL (Toowong) (12.50 p.m.): This amendment introduced by the Attorney-General, I think, gives him a record number of simple little amendments that he has introduced into this Chamber. The Bill, I believe, will meet with the general approval of all open-minded people in this State. I do not think that it was ever the intention of the legislature to impose the restrictions of which we are speaking upon reputable operators of aircraft carrying on a routine service in this State and so create the anomalous position that obtains today in Queensland compared with the other States.

The amendment made in 1944 applied the definition of vehicle to aircraft engaged in giving services and so made it unprofitable for them to attempt to supply liquor, under penalty of becoming liable to the forfeiture of such a valuable machine as a sky liner. Consequently the airline companies were able to serve liquor in transit between the capital cities in the other States of Australia but in coming from Sydney to Brisbane they, like the Attorney-General, were somewhat cautious about jettisoning liquor when crossing the McPherson Range and so removed their liquor bar at Sydney. Frequently passengers who travelled from Melbourne to Brisbane could partake of liquor between Melbourne and Sydney but could not repeat the experiment between Sydney and Brisbane because the Queensland legislation provided that the airline company could not serve liquor while the aircraft was in flight over this State. As a frequent traveller on airliners, I have been placed in the embarrassing position of having had the accusing finger pointed at me by fellow travellers who said, "It is your fault." However, this Bill will remove that defect.

I think this amendment will be restricted in its operations to those licensed commercial airlines carrying out a routine service and that this concession will not extend to aeroplanes carrying out a taxi service or one for pleasure. I hope the Attorney-General will clear up that point.

Mr. Gledson: It applies to any aircraft.

Mr. WANSTALL: To any aircraft in flight? It may go further than it is necessary and it may open the door to illegal trafficking in liquor which was the very reason why the prohibition against serving liquor was extended to include aircraft generally. However, I am not going to elaborate on that point. I reserve any further remarks about it until a later stage. The existing anomaly is now about to be cured and no reasonable person can object to that. I think the Bill will meet with general approval.

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra) (12.53 p.m.): In his introductory remarks the Attorney-General either directly or indirectly said that the Bill was designed to deal with the liquor traffic and I take it that I shall be within my rights in replying in those terms. I have made several statements in this Chamber from time to time on the result of which I have been accused of being irresponsible,

of having no sense of value. But time has always vindicated my statements. I do not usually have to wait three years to have my statements vindicated but on this occasion I have. I made a statement in this Chamber on 26 October, 1944, accusing Samuel Allen & Sons of black-marketing. I supported my allegation by tabling next day, that is, 27 October, 1944, a statement of the profit of Samuel Allen & Sons, which showed that despite the fact that the firm said it had had terrible trading years its profits had grown alarmingly.

On that occasion my remark was pooh-poohed. The hon. member for Kennedy, who was the political darling of Samuel Allen & Sons in 1944, had a few days before read a letter from the manager of Samuel Allen & Sons, Mr. J. Hackett, calling me in very nice terms a liar for some remarks I made in the House. I merely mentioned the fact that in 1944 Samuel Allen & Sons had openly black-marketed, and that they found it expedient to curry favour with the Government to cover up their actions. Consequently they supported the hon. member for Kennedy in the 1944 election, and the hon. member for Kennedy relied on their support. Mr. Hackett on one occasion sent a telegram to a certain party—they evidently found it was embarrassing—urging the support of the hon. member for Kennedy. As I said at the time, it was like sending a telegram to General MacArthur asking him to support W. J. McKell in winning the war.

Not only was it condemned by various hon. members, but the "Worker," the literary supplement to the Sydney "Bulletin"—(laughter)—said—

"Ever since he was elected for Mundingburra, Aikens has expended much Parliamentary abuse against the A.W.U. and its officers. No phrase has been too splenetic; no distortion too sweeping; no insinuation of corruption too damaging for his embittered tongue."

It also said—

"As a further example of what appears to be Aikens's Parliamentary irresponsibility, the cases of 'Artie' Fadden and Samuel Allen & Sons Ltd., of Townsville, are already public property."

This is the "Worker" of 6 November, 1944. The article is introduced by the black headline—

"Aikens, M.L.A., Thumped by Transport Minister."

Now I am glad to say I am grateful that the hon. member for Kennedy is at last repentant, as he himself the other day levelled a charge of black-marketing at Samuel Allen & Sons. This Bill does not affect them, and there are no longer opportunities for black-marketing, and consequently they now see no reason for pandering to the Government any longer, so in the 1947 election they dropped the hon. member for Kennedy and openly supported the Queensland People's Party candidates, they being the representatives of the black-marketeers, the profiteers,

and the racketeers of this State. Samuel Allen & Sons can now afford to come out in their true colours.

The point I wish to make is that the hon. member for Kennedy, when making his speech the other day, and in talking of Samuel Allen & Sons, mentioned a document that he alleged existed in the offices of the Rationing Commission, which would prove up to the hilt that Samuel Allen & Sons had engaged in black-marketing, and the Attorney-General, sitting on the front Government bench, was soothing him on.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member for Mundingburra to connect his remarks up with the Bill.

Mr. AIKENS: I am going to. (Laughter.) I want to know this: if this document exists, if the Attorney-General is convinced in his own mind, as he was so obviously convinced the other day when he was soothing on the hon. member for Kennedy—

Mr. Gledson: No.

Mr. AIKENS: The hon. gentleman was. I was sitting here listening to him, watching him and enjoying it, thinking that after three years I had been vindicated again. The Attorney-General said to the hon. member for Kennedy, "Remind them about the document at the Rationing Commission." The hon. member for Kennedy then said, "Yes, go down to the Rationing Commission and you can see the document for yourselves."

I accept the repentance of the hon. member for Kennedy. There is a Biblical quotation that says—

" . . . that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance."

It is obvious now to the Attorney-General that Samuel Allen & Sons engaged in black-marketing during the war.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. GLEDSON: I rise to a point of order. I do not mind what the hon. member for Mundingburra says, but I do not want his statement to go out that I turned to the hon. member for Kennedy and said to him, "What about the document in the Rationing Commission?"

Mr. AIKENS: You did.

Mr. GLEDSON: I did not say anything to the hon. member for Kennedy about the Rationing Commission. I ask, Mr. Mann, that the hon. member accept my denial.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member for Mundingburra to accept the denial of the Attorney-General.

Mr. AIKENS: I must accept the hon. gentleman's denial since you have asked me to do so and since I always obey your ruling, Mr. Mann, but I leave it to all the other hon. members of this Committee to decide whether I am telling the truth. I challenge the

Attorney-General to tell this House why, if he is so obviously convinced that Samuel Allen & Sons have indulged in black-marketing, they still hold a wine and spirit merchant's licence issued by the Licensing Commission of which he is the Ministerial head.

Mr. Gledson: I know nothing whatever about it.

Mr. AIKENS: During the luncheon adjournment the hon. member for Kennedy approached me, and it appears there has been a misconception as to the remarks I made before lunch. I want to clear them up because in this Chamber I have never sought to take unfair advantage of any member, and I do not propose to do so on this occasion. The hon. member was of the opinion I had said that he condoned the black-marketing of Samuel Allen and Sons during the war years. I checked up on the rough proof of my speech during lunch and I find that no such statement occurs; although it may be possible for some evil-minded person to draw that inference.

I conclude by clearing up that point. I never accused the hon. member for Kennedy of condoning the black-marketing activities of Samuel Allen and Sons during the war. I did say, however, that during the war and at the 1944 election Samuel Allen and Sons found it expedient to support the hon. member for Kennedy and the Labour Party because by supporting the Labour Party they hoped their black-marketing activities would not be investigated; now that the opportunity no longer exists for black-marketing they can come out in their true political colours and support the Queensland People's Party, which party stands for all the things that I condemn in Samuel Allen and Sons, and all the things any decent man will condemn in trading activities.

Mr. Chalk: You know that is incorrect.

Mr. Jesson: You keep quiet; you are nothing but a wowser.

Mr. AIKENS: The point I make is that in 1944 when I accused Samuel Allen and Sons of black-marketing I was called "liar" from one end of Queensland to the other. I mentioned that the "Worker" published a statement referring to my "irresponsible statement," and notwithstanding the fact that I laid on the table of the House the trading balance of Samuel Allen and Sons for the war years, showing an abnormal rise in profit, no action was taken by this or any other Government to curb the black-marketing activities of Samuel Allen and Sons.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is getting a long way away from the subject before the Committee.

Mr. AIKENS: Having cleared up that, I will conclude by saying that it has taken three years for me to be vindicated on this matter. Now we have the hon. member for Kennedy—and it is to his credit—also charging Samuel Allen and Sons with black-marketing. We shall see now whether the

Government will take action when one of their own members has made the charge I made in this House three years ago.

Mr. CHALK (East Toowoomba) (2.18 p.m.): I have listened to the various speeches on the motion before the Committee and from them I think it is a fair conclusion to draw that all sides of the Committee are in favour of this amendment. I want to make it quite clear to hon. members that I am not a wowser, as was suggested by the remark hurled by the hon. member for Kennedy at me across the Chamber when I saw fit to interject when the hon. member for Mundingburra was speaking. If a person is to be called a wowser because he does not take intoxicating liquor, then I for one have proved that I am not a wowser by having had a glass of ale in the bar of this House during lunch hour; therefore I cannot be accused of being a wowser.

However, I do want to raise three points in connection with this simple amendment, as the Attorney-General has termed it. The Leader of the Opposition made reference to the fact that apparently in all States throughout the Commonwealth they serve liquor on T.A.A. and other regular interstate planes while they are in flight. The hon. gentleman said, too, that in all other States than Queensland liquor is served on aeroplanes and therefore the amending Bill is only bringing Queensland into line but, because other States do this sort of thing, is it right that we should lend ourselves to the practice and follow their ways of thinking? What we have to do is to sum up the position ourselves and decide whether the amendment before us is in accord with our wishes. Apparently T.A.A. will break the law so far as liquor is concerned, if it is not doing so already, and Qantas and other airlines are seeking this amendment. I admire them for doing so because at least they are not breaking the law but waiting until they can lawfully serve liquor on their aircraft. Until the law is altered I contend that we must ourselves decide whether this is right or wrong.

The other point I wish to raise is that the Attorney-General assured the hon. member for Toowoong that this amending legislation covers all aircraft. Am I to understand that it will become legal for liquor to be served on any aeroplanes flying throughout Queensland while in flight? What a farce it will be if that is so and what a danger, not only to our people but also to our cities! What is to prevent a couple of friends from legitimately taking a dozen bottles of giggle-water to a plane, boarding the aircraft, and then consuming the liquor. If this amending legislation permits liquor to be served in aeroplanes it will be quite legal for two or three people to get together in an aeroplane and in their flight consume liquor.

If liquor is permitted to be carried in any aircraft, too, what a glorious opportunity it gives for the black-marketing to which the hon. member for Mundingburra has already made reference! If liquor can be brought across the border legitimately by aeroplane

and taken to a place where it can be disposed of, not necessarily on the ground, what is to prevent any young man from going to some outside area with an aeroplane full of liquor and selling joy flights at £1 a flight with grog included? (Government interjections.)

We must sum up the position and make certain about these things. I know that this is a modern age and I hope that I keep up with the modern times, although some hon. members on my left appear to be heckling me. I hope all legislation brought into this House is so worded that it gives the privileges desired but prevents an abuse in the future.

Mr. JESSON (Kennedy) (2.24 p.m.): I wish to say a few words, principally on account of the boggy raised by the Leader of the Opposition in regard to T.A.A. He is only imagining something to make charges that this Government are making this amendment to legalise some breach of the law by T.A.A. That is not true. The Commonwealth airline carried out its operations exactly the same as A.N.A. Only recently I travelled on a Skymaster of T.A.A. and no liquor was served on the Queensland side of the border. It is only a boggy raised to cast a slur or some reflection on this Government. As a matter of fact, the whole thing is ridiculous. The Liquor Act was amended some years ago to prevent black-marketing by the flying of liquor from one place to another. When the Americans were here we know that a big Douglas aircraft touched down at Ingham and picked up 25 cases of grog and flew off with them.

Such a plane would pick up 25 cases of beer and away it would go and no-one could catch it although officers of the law lay in wait on several occasions. That was the reason why the amendment was introduced in the first place. In anxiety to overcome this evil, the convenience of travellers was overlooked.

Today we heard the hon. member for East Toowoomba suggesting that the people who flew round in aeroplanes were drunks who would not look after themselves or the safety of the community. He also would have us believe that the pilots are drunks.

Mr. Chalk: You have always got to have one mug in a party, and you are it.

Mr. JESSON: I object to that remark. The hon. member did a little squealing while the Attorney-General was speaking, and I accused him of being a wowser. I repeat that accusation. His only reason for having a drink during the luncheon adjournment was so that he could claim here that he is not a wowser, and the hon. member for Toowoong paid for his drink.

The hon. member for Mundingburra has made mention of Samuel Allen & Sons, and congratulations received by me. The fact is that the telegram I received congratulating me on my fight for North Queensland was sent by the Townsville Chamber of Commerce of

which Hackett was chairman. I also received a letter from the Communist Party. It is dated 14 March, 1943, and reads—

“Mr. C. G. Jesson, M.L.A.,
“Parliament House,
“Brisbane.

“Dear Sir,

“At the last meeting of my council attention was drawn to the agitation you have been waging in support of increased supplies for civilians in Townsville. There is no doubt Townsville has had a raw deal in respect to supplies, and I was instructed to congratulate you on your efforts to relieve the situation.

“Yours faithfully,
“J. W. Clubley.”

That man opposed me twice at State elections. Nothing is said about his sending me a letter of congratulation, but because Hackett is connected with Samuel Allen & Sons and I have accused the firm in Townsville of having liquor stored to the rafters at that time and very little food, mention is made of it now. I accused them of using the shipping to cart grog for sale to soldiers instead of transporting food for civilians.

On 20 October, 1945, I rose to make a personal explanation and I quoted a letter written to me by the Townsville Chamber of Commerce, which says—

“That telegram was sent as a spontaneous act of appreciation of your straightforward and plain statement of Townsville conditions at the time, and in view of the reception which your speech got from the metropolitan Press and from certain members of Parliament it was felt that your outspoken statement merited the appreciation which was conveyed to you in the telegram from the Chamber.”

There was no association of the Chamber with Samuel Allens but one person connected with that firm happened to be the president of the chamber. That being so, the hon. member for Mundingburra is mistaken in his suggestion. At that time no-one, either inside or outside this Chamber, knew about Johnston's going around black-marketing Allens' butter. I do not know whether the head at that time knew he was doing that business, but the fact remains that the only remark the Attorney-General made to me last week was, “Don't forget to bring up about Hervey's Range.” That was very important at that time, because I was accused of seeing how people voted at that place.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. member can connect his remarks with the question of having liquor in aircraft.

Mr. JESSON: The Attorney-General said, “Don't forget about Hervey's Range.” He did not say anything about the black-marketing of Allens' butter.

Mr. PIE (Windsor) (2.30 p.m.): I am pleased to see the Attorney-General bringing forward this amendment. I think the Premier will remember that about 12 months ago I brought this matter up on an opinion given

by Mr. McGill, K.C. I had the experience of wanting a drink on the plane going south and I was told that I could not get one until we got past Sydney. I saw Mr. Holyman and I said, "What is this business of not being able to get a drink on a plane in Queensland?" He said that it was in the Queensland Act but I said that it was never intended that it should apply that way. It was never intended that a plane should unload its liquor in Sydney and come on empty to Queensland.

If the amendment before the Committee will overcome the difficulty I outlined to the Premier I am sure every sane person will realise that it is in the best interests of the State.

So far as I personally am concerned I have been accused of all sorts of things—a man told me the other day that I was drinking myself to death. Temperance people say that we should not have a drink. I say that I do not smoke but I do not say that others should not smoke.

Mr. Hanlon: You must have a few vices.

Mr. PIE: You have got to have a couple. There was only one man who was perfect and he had a sad ending. I feel that the Attorney-General, in bringing this amendment before the Committee, is doing a wise thing, as it will overcome a difficulty the Act was never intended to create.

Hon. D. A. GLEDSON (Ipswich—Attorney-General) (2.32 p.m.): There are only a couple of points to be cleared up. The Leader of the Opposition commended the provisions of the Bill but said that it did not go far enough. He said that I should have brought in an amendment to provide that tourists would be able to get a drink whilst travelling on our trains. I want to point out, however, that train travelling and plane travelling are two entirely different things. Could you imagine a plane stopping at a station and letting people out so that they could go to a bar to have a drink? It would not be possible, Mr. Mann. At the present time we have our railway refreshment rooms and if anybody feels thirsty he can get out and have a drink. There is no need to carry liquor on the train just to supply to tourists. If we are to depend on getting tourists to come to this State because they can get booze on our trains, then we shall perhaps be better off without them. There would be no use in having them here if that was all they came for.

There is difference of opinion on this matter and I was sorry to hear the young hon. member for East Toowoomba saying that he was induced to go into a bar and drink a glass of ale to prove that he was not a wowser. I have always been taught that the first drink is the beginning of many more and I hope that the company he is keeping with the Q.P.P. is not inducing him to take to drink.

Mr. Chalk: I will challenge the Attorney-General to see who goes under the table first.

Mr. GLEDSON: There is no need to challenge the Attorney-General because he has not had even a glass of ale in his life and he does not intend to have a glass of ale either. If the hon. member for East Toowoomba reaches the age I have and does the amount of public work that I have done without taking ale he will be able to say he has done something for the people of Queensland.

Honourable Members: Hear, Hear!

Mr. GLEDSON: I hope again that the company the hon. member keeps will not induce him to take to drink, and cause him to talk as he has talked here today. If a single glass of ale is enough to influence him to make the interjections that he has made here then the sooner he gives up the glasses of ale the better for him.

The hon. member for East Toowoomba expressed the hope that the amending Bill will not permit aeroplanes to fill up with liquor and sell it simply to joy-riders, that it will not permit aeroplanes to charge £1 or so for a joy-ride with the inducement of having a drink while in the air. That certainly is not the object of the Bill, and to suggest that it is open to that danger is just going from the sublime to the ridiculous. The object of the Bill is to give air travellers in Queensland the same privilege as they have in the other States. The rights of the people in general and the air travellers in particular will be protected, and there will be no unnecessary restrictions or severe restrictions that do not apply elsewhere. The Bill provides that the liquor must be used solely for the convenience of the people travelling on the plane, that it is not to be taken from one place to another and sold. If it is found that aeroplanes are carrying liquor in contravention of the law, that will not be allowed. For instance, they will not be allowed to carry the liquor from one spot to another simply for the purpose of selling it illegally.

There could be a great deal of danger in unrestricted drinking on aeroplanes, and I do not think that should be allowed by any means. The people who conduct the air services will, as it were, be put on their honour, and if we find that any breach of the law is being committed, that this right or privilege is being abused and there is a danger to the travelling public or others, the matter will have to be reviewed.

Mr. Muller: You will bolt the stable door after the horse has gone.

Mr. GLEDSON: No. We generally bolt the door before the horse is put in.

The object of the Bill simply is to give air travellers an opportunity of having a drink in flight if they wish it. They will now have the right to have a drink in flight while travelling between the New South Wales border and Cairns, Townsville, or whatever their destination may be. The companies controlling the airlines will see that the provisions of the Bill are properly observed, and they will take care to guard against any danger or injury to the crew or the travelling public.

In any case, we have enough confidence in these companies to know that they will do that, that they will not abuse this right or privilege.

Many hon. members, including the hon. member for Windsor, expressed the view that when the Act was previously amended it was intended to prevent aeroplanes from carrying liquor for sale without a licence, or in short, engaging in black-marketing. It is not intended to prevent people from having a drink while travelling by air. That was not the intention and we promised at the first opportunity the Act would be amended to allow air travellers to do what it was always intended they should be able to do, that is, to have a drink in the air while bona fide air travellers. It is not intended that aeroplanes should be allowed to carry the liquor simply for sale in some other place, unless of course it is done through the recognised licensed agents.

The hon. member for Mundingburra had a great deal to say about black-marketing in connection with a certain company, and he challenged me, as the Attorney-General, to take legal action. The hon. member for Mundingburra has been long enough in this House, and long enough in Townsville, which I believe was the home of black-marketing during the war owing to the number of Service personnel there, to know that the provisions of the Act dealing with black-marketing and the prosecutions thereunder were all matters subject to Commonwealth law and administration. It was the Commonwealth Government who launched those prosecutions. It is the Commonwealth Government who administer the provisions of that Act.

Mr. Aikens: They must still hold licences under the State Liquor Act.

Mr. GLEDSON: The hon. member knows that black-marketing prosecutions are taken under Commonwealth law. Samuel Allen & Sons hold what is known as a wine and spirit licence. They are wholesale merchants and sell liquor supplies to licensed victuallers. They have no right under that licence to sell to individuals less than a certain quantity; if they do, they depart from the conditions of the licence. They break the State law as well as the Commonwealth law. Therefore, his challenge to the Attorney-General falls to the ground. We know nothing about the matters, except as mentioned by the hon. member himself, and as he well knows, and as every hon. member knows, they are matters controlled by the Commonwealth Government. We have no control over butter rationing, or coupons that are issued for the purchase of butter. That is a matter subject to Commonwealth law.

Why do we not stick to our own law? This amendment is designed to deal with a specific matter affecting the State. We would look foolish if we took any action with respect to a matter controlled by the Commonwealth Government and their laws. Their administrative officers would tell us to mind our own business, to look after our own laws, and if we looked after our own laws and kept our own houses in order then we should be doing

a very good job. As I said, this amending Bill is a very simple one. We do not enter into the question of licensing air transport, or of giving airline companies wholesale power to carry liquor for sale, but only to sell when in flight. While aircraft are in flight they will be able to sell a glass of ale, as the hon. member for East Toowoomba pointed out, during meal hours.

Mr. PIE (Windsor) (2.43 p.m.): There is just one point I want to raise and I shall be very brief. The Attorney-General mentioned that aircraft would not be allowed to carry liquor for sale from one place to another. Freight traffic by air will develop tremendously and I trust that under this Act there will be no restriction on the transport of liquor supplies by plane from one part of Queensland to another for licensed wholesale merchants.

Mr. Gledson: That restriction is not contemplated.

Hon. S. J. BRASSINGTON (Fortitude Valley—Mr. Speaker) (2.44 p.m.): I merely rise to thank the Attorney-General and the Government for introducing this very sensible reform. A number of reputable business men who have occasion to use planes to travel between Brisbane, Sydney, and Melbourne and vice versa approached me and pointed out the disadvantage they were under in not being able to get a little liquid refreshment after passing over the border of Queensland. I promised them that I would make representations to the Attorney-General and place their point of view before him in the hope that they and other travellers would be put on the same basis as air travellers in other States.

I think the Bill introduces a very sensible reform and one that will not be abused in any way. I think it is a reform that will prove altogether different from the extreme view expressed by the hon. member for East Toowoomba. I do not think in our wildest dreams we could see such a state of affairs come to pass after the passing of this legislation. I believe this reform will work very smoothly and give to the people who desire this convenience that to which they are entitled. I commend the Attorney-General for introducing it and I have pleasure in supporting it. I think it will work out very sensibly and successfully in the interests of the people who use the plane service.

Mr. LUCKINS (Maree) (2.46 p.m.): I should like to know who will control the licence that will permit members of the plane crew to serve liquor. According to our laws the licensed victualler is the person permitted to serve liquor. How will you get over the matter in the air?

Hon. D. A. GLEDSON (Ipswich—Attorney-General) (2.47 p.m.): I do not know whether the hon. member was present when I outlined the amendment. The airline authorities will control the liquor; the liquor will belong to them; they will sell it to the customers; it will be under their control. The

amendment is an exemption from the provision that prevents them from carrying it on the plane.

Motion (Mr. Gledson) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING.

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

CORONERS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

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

Hon. D. A. GLEDSON (Ipswich—Attorney-General) (2.50 p.m.); I move—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Coroners Acts, 1930 to 1943, in certain particulars.”

According to the Coroners Act, once an inquiry is closed by the coroner there is no provision in law for the reopening of that inquiry. In practice, it has been found that something could arise after the closing of an inquiry that would make it beneficial in the interests of justice and of the public to have that inquiry reopened. The law, as it at present stands, does not allow that to be done.

In the second place, in certain circumstances a coroner, in the course of his duties, may furnish the Attorney-General with a certificate that an inquiry into a death is not necessary. If the certificate is approved of by the Attorney-General, there is then no power to order an inquiry should it be found later that one is necessary. Something may be brought to his notice to make it desirable that an inquiry be held. He can, of course, over-ride the decision of the coroner in the first place and order that an inquiry be held, but if the Attorney-General agrees to the coroner's certificate there is no power under the law to hold an inquiry later. This Bill will give power to the coroner to hold an inquiry, to reopen an inquiry or inquest that has been closed by him at any time after the closing of that inquiry.

Mr. Nicklin: Without any direction from the Attorney-General?

Mr. GLEDSON: Without any direction from the Attorney-General.

Mr. Pie: At his own discretion?

Mr. GLEDSON: Yes, he can of his own volition reopen the inquest—if certain matters are brought to his notice.

Mr. Kerr: You are amending the Act to give him power to do that?

Mr. GLEDSON: That is the amendment. The Bill also provides that he can reopen the matter if he has already certified that there is no necessity for an inquest, if something is brought to his notice that suggests that it is necessary to hold an inquest.

Mr. Kerr: Is there any limitation of period?

Mr. GLEDSON: We do not limit the period.

Mr. Kerr: Is it retrospective?

Mr. GLEDSON: No, it will operate only from when the Act is passed.

The Bill also gives power to the Minister to direct that an inquiry be reopened, just as under the principal Act, the Minister has power to direct an inquiry in the first instance.

The Bill also provides that certain persons can ask for an inquest to be held if one has not been held, or reopen an inquest when it has been closed. This power is confined to the Commissioner for Police and to inspectors of police. They have the right to ask a coroner to hold an inquiry to hear certain evidence they wish to submit.

The Bill also gives power to certain authorised persons to request a coroner to proceed with an inquest. Close relatives of the deceased, a husband or wife, father or mother, sister or brother, son or daughter, or a guardian of the deceased person, can ask for an inquest to be held in particular circumstances.

Those are the whole of the provisions contained in the measure. There have been certain cases in which it may have been in the public interest to reopen an inquiry, or to hold an inquiry, but we had no power to do so. The proposed amendment will give us the power we need.

Mr. KERR (Oxley) (2.55 p.m.): It is evident that this amendment has been found necessary because of certain cases that have taken place in the past. About 18 months or two years ago the parents of a family I know were very much aggrieved at the death of one of their children in a private hospital. A coronial inquiry was held but it was hard to get the witnesses before it and ultimately it was closed. As there was no provision in the Act for having it reopened, nothing further could be done at a time when the parents felt that they could prove that negligence had occurred in the hospital concerned and that there was justification for a request that the matter be reopened. I feel that this legislation has been brought down largely because of cases such as that. There is no doubt that the closure of the inquiry to which I have referred was precipitate and nothing could be done about it. The provisions outlined by the Attorney-General will meet such cases in the future.

I was glad to hear the Attorney-General say that the parent, guardian, husband, wife, or close relative of anybody concerned would now have the right to request that an inquiry be reopened or that one be held. That, too, is a desirable amendment.

Motion (Mr. Gledson) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING.

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

**SUGAR EXPERIMENT STATIONS ACTS
AMENDMENT BILL.**

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

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

Hon. H. H. COLLINS (Cook—Secretary for Agriculture and Stock) (3.1 p.m.): I move—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Sugar Experiment Stations Acts, 1900 to 1946, in certain particulars.”

The main provision of the Bill will be to increase the amount of the levy that can be collected for the purpose of carrying out certain functions in connection with the sugar industry. The amendment is submitted at the request of the Sugar Advisory Board, which I might say is composed of representatives of the industry. The levies laid down under the Act were fixed many years ago, in 1900, and have not been altered since then. During the intervening period there has been a tremendous alteration in the amount of work carried on for the benefit of the industry, and there has also been a great increase in the value of a ton of cane. In 1900, when the Act first laid down the present levies, sugar was worth approximately 13s. a ton, but by to-day it has increased to more than three times that amount. It is a remarkable thing that we have not had to alter the levy at an earlier date, and the fact that the present levy has been sufficient for 47 years shows that the industry lays its foundations pretty well and pretty securely.

The Sugar Advisory Board is mainly composed of representatives of the industry. There are four representatives of the industry, two Government representatives, the Minister being one of them and the chairman and the other a technical officer who has in the past given excellent advice to the industry.

Mr. Brand: Do you always follow its advice?

Mr. COLLINS: A Minister naturally uses due discretion. That is the reason for having the Minister on the board; he can perhaps give more seasoned advice than an ordinary layman, and is in the position to know the industry and safeguard the welfare of the public.

I suppose the sugar industry can be said to be one of the biggest employing primary industries in this State. It pays the highest wages to its employees, and gives them the best conditions of employment. The amendment before the Committee will, I feel sure, do nothing to break the industry, as it will only allow us to increase the present levy by a not very big percentage. This will be explained later on.

We have several Sugar Experiment Stations, one at Bundaberg, one at Mackay and one at Gordonvale near Cairns, the Meringa station, all of which have done particularly good work. This year we propose to establish

another, in the dry irrigation area on the Burdekin.

The station at Bundaberg is situated at the southern-most point of the area where sugar-cane is extensively grown. Of course, a great deal of cane is grown south of Bundaberg, but Bundaberg is representative of the southern area. It can deal with all the varying rainfalls, soils and climatic conditions in that area. The experiments that have been conducted there have been of great value to the sugar industry.

The same can be said of Mackay. That station is further north than Bundaberg, in an intermediate area with a higher rainfall and different classes of soil.

At Meringa we have the heavy-rainfall belt although not the excessively heavy-rainfall area. Meringa has an average rainfall of nearly 90 inches and so presents an entirely different set of circumstances to those at Mackay or the southern district. With the establishment of the new station on the Burdekin River we shall have a station to serve areas growing cane under irrigation conditions.

The different areas have their different problems. The object of the stations is to carry out plant-breeding. We have been so successful in breeding new types of sugar-cane that we have been able to increase the yield of sugar per acre to an enormous extent. I have always held up the sugar industry as more or less a splendid example of what a well-run farmers' organisation can do for an agricultural industry and it is one that other industries might copy. Over the past 20 years, through a better knowledge of the industry, better facilities in the mill, increasing milling capacity and ability to extract the highest sugar content, a better class of sugar man, better cultural methods in the field, and to a greater extent the use of more suitable fertiliser, we have been able to increase the production of sugar per acre by over 50 per cent. That is almost a staggering figure and it is hard to estimate the value of this increased production, because in the past, when production was 50 per cent. lower than it is today, the farmer still had to have the same farm and the same land, carry out his production in the same way, have the same implements, bear the same overhead in his home, his farm buildings and barracks; but today, with the increase by 50 per cent, apart from the small amount spent by the industry in carrying out research and experiments, the increase is more or less all profit to the industry. Of course, I do not say that the sugar-grower has got the whole of the increase; it has been divided in the industry.

One has only to see how the industry has developed since 1918 to realise what science has done for the industry. In 1918 Queensland produced less than 200,000 tons of sugar-cane, but as the result of building more mills, giving farmers easy access to those mills and under particularly easy conditions that output has been considerably increased. That brings to my mind the fact that the Tully and South

Johnstone mills were built by the Government and other mills received financial help from the Government.

For their security the Government depended on the increased production from the assignments created. It was a very unusual move. Prior to that nearly all sugar mills were built by the farmers, who mortgaged the deeds of their properties for that purpose. Most of the money required was borrowed. Whilst the farmers got out of their enterprise well, nevertheless the Government's move was entirely new and the method of finance proved to be very sound, because those mills have today virtually repaid their original indebtedness to the Crown. The industry has thereby been extended, the highest pre-war level of production being a little under 900,000 tons. That meant that the amount of extra money created by the sugar industry was roughly between £7,000,000 and £8,000,000. Much of that money was spent in wages, and much of it, of course, provided profits to the millers and the farmers.

This expansion of the industry built up all Northern towns from Bundaberg right through to Mossman in the Far North. In doing anything for the benefit of this great industry we need to be ever-mindful of what the industry means to the State. It is pleasing to know that the industry is to be extended to permit a limited number of returned soldiers to enter it, and that their entry will not upset its economy.

Recently the season climatically has been a very good one—most of the industry was affected by drought. In fact it is still affected by the drought from which it suffered last year. The seasonal conditions today are very much better, but you cannot plant cane one year and reap a crop that year. It takes more than one season to grow, as some hon. members on both sides of the Committee know. As a result the grower has suffered very considerable hardship in the last 12 months. I wish to pay him the compliment of saying, however, that in his characteristic businesslike way he has suffered his loss quietly, he has not cried to high heaven and demanded that the State should come to his aid. He has recognised that droughts do occur and in certain areas where it could be successfully done he has extended the existing irrigation facilities to minimise his losses and in turn has successfully submitted a case to the Federal Government, through the Premier, for an increase in the price of sugar. It was not the drought that caused the sugar-grower to put up a case for an increase in the price of sugar.

Mr. Brand: Hear, hear!

Mr. COLLINS: The drought was regarded as an ordinary circumstance that occurs periodically and affects not only the sugar industry but all our land industries. The increased price of sugar to the sugar-grower is overdue. He has been very temperate in his demands and the way in which he presented those demands is certainly a pattern

for any farming or any other industry. He has never overstated his case. He has gone into the figures very carefully and submitted all the facts.

The sugar industry was probably the only industry that during the war had to submit to higher costs of production combined with difficulties of production and yet did not receive an increased price for its product. But with the increasing cost that the grower has suffered all through the war, he still stuck to his guns.

Labour shortages were very difficult to overcome and even today the labour shortage is one of the biggest problems in the industry. The increase in the price of sugar at least does give him the satisfaction of feeling that as during the war he did a mighty good job, that as he has been patient all through the peace so his patience has been rewarded.

I give the industry great credit for the way it has stated its case. I give Mr. Muir, the secretary of the Queensland Cane-growers' Association, great credit for his work. He has been most painstaking in the preparation of the case. As secretary of that organisation he necessarily works with the Minister and the Department of Agriculture and Stock, and to that great extent he has been an exemplary man to work with.

The sugar-grower is getting an increased price of $\frac{1}{2}$ a lb., but it does not mean that the increase will be felt very much by the rank and file of the people. I think in the case I quoted the cost each week amounted to another 6d. a head. The value to the industry, however, is somewhere about £2,000,000, so that while the increase will not affect the individual, because there are so many consumers, it is of great assistance to the industry itself.

The seasonal conditions I spoke of a while ago are good, but production will still be down on account of the disastrous drought that occurred last year. I think it will take a few years to get the industry back to the big production that it reached prior to the war. I look forward to the day when the industry will exceed all previous records. With an increase in population in this country, with industries coming into this State, and with migration, there will be a gradual expansion. In that regard it is pleasing to note that we have almost unlimited land into which we can expand. We have the rich coast lands right from Nambour, not only as far as Mossman, but in the Cooktown district, and as far north as the Peninsula, if you like to go there, where there are very good areas that will grow sugar-cane successfully under natural rainfall, or lands that can be properly irrigated. So it will be seen that the possibilities of the expansion of the industry in this State are almost unlimited.

I feel sure the preference on the British market will be maintained, but if it is taken away from us I feel sure also that the industry will be sufficiently safeguarded to be able to maintain the high standard of conditions that it has always maintained since it was put on a sound footing around about 1922.

The fixation of the price for sugar at a figure that was profitable to the growers, I think, was one of the soundest steps taken in any primary industry. It was a very bold and unusual step. I believe it was beyond the expectation of the industry of the day. The growers certainly wanted an increase in the price of sugar because it was down to almost a kanaka standard of living. In those days sugar-workers were getting round about 25s. and 30s. a week, plus keep. Today, with the industry paying amongst the highest award wages in the State, the whole outlook is entirely different. Let us hope that we shall go on as we have done in the past and keep the sugar industry expanding.

It is not only the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations that has done very valuable work in the breeding of better cane. I give the Colonial Sugar Refining Company very great credit indeed for the work it has done. With the breeding of Trojan cane in North Queensland, some districts have doubled the output of the farms. It is a fairly hardy cane. This is just one of the things that private enterprise has done a good deal of in the past and we must give private enterprise credit for it. It is pleasing to find private enterprise working in the industry in very much the same way as the sugar experiment stations, which are under Government control.

Mr. Aikens interjected.

Mr. COLLINS: I am giving the C.S.R. Company Ltd. due credit because I think it has done very good work. Private enterprise has done very good work in other directions, for instance in the breeding of high-class stock. This is similar to what it has done in the cane industry in the breeding of high-class and better cane and I feel sure that work will go on for a long time.

On several occasions I have spoken to the men representing the industry and as practical men no doubt they are probably appreciative of the fact that as Minister I have pointed to the necessity of getting away, where it is possible, from pinning the assignment down to a given area of land. If we could see a way of spreading the assignment over more land it could be made very much more profitable to the sugar-grower and to the State. I believe there is a very big field there that we must explore as the years pass on. I do not care what crop it is, if the same crop is continually grown on the same land, do what you like with that land, it becomes more or less sick of that crop. In this industry in many areas—I do not say in every area—land that is just as good as the land growing cane is to be had right alongside the cane paddock, but the law says that the grower must not go outside a certain area to grow his cane. Probably the grower is not using the best land he has on his farm and I see no reason why the industry cannot find ways and means of making better use of its land and making the industry more profitable. See what it would mean—land capable of growing sugar today would not be lying idle, as is much of the land that is not under assignment today. Whilst the land now in use, having been cleared, could be grassed and used for dairy-

ing purposes or for fattening cattle or for some other crops that can be grown in the sugar-cane areas.

Mr. Macdonald: You do not believe in monoculture?

Mr. COLLINS: No. That applies to some of the industries as it applies to most of our primary industries. As time goes on I feel sure the industry will see the wisdom, even if it is necessary to alter the law, of making it possible for growers to use the whole of their land by rotation of crops.

I was interested at Bundaberg about a year ago, to see what Mr. Young was doing at Fairymead plantation. He had some of the finest Hereford cattle on his property that I had seen for some time. I think even the mouth of the hon. member for Aubigny would have watered if he had seen some of the cattle fattening on that property.

Mr. Evans: Do you agree with substitution?

Mr. COLLINS: Yes. It has got to be done sooner or later in the interests of the industry. I believe that it can be done and that it can be controlled.

I believe, too, that where there is suitable land the assignments would be better if they were allocated in terms of tons of sugar instead of acres of land, because in the last analysis what counts is the tons of the sugar we have to sell, not the acres of land under assignment. An assignment on an acreage basis can be misleading because by better methods of cultivation or by the use of fertiliser it may be possible to double the production of an area.

Mr. Brand: Are you amending the Act to provide for assignments?

Mr. COLLINS: No. I am merely referring to the advisability of looking at the whole of the industry. With the advanced knowledge we have to-day and the much greater use to which we can put the land, I believe that the industry itself will move in that direction.

I am not at all sure that the present method of granting assignments was not intended to build up fertiliser companies. I know many cane-growers who have sold their farms and invested in fertiliser companies, contending that thus they would still benefit from the sugar industry. The fertiliser companies have done good work. They have gone into the whole matter scientifically and improved the industry, but it is still in the hands of the growers themselves to devise ways and means of improving this already very fine industry.

Mr. BRAND (Isis) (3.30 p.m.): Last week the sugar industry received through the Premier the good news that the Commonwealth Government had agreed to an increase of $\frac{1}{4}$ d. a lb. in the retail price of sugar.

That means £4 13s. 4d. a ton but already certain restorations have been made to other interests and the Commonwealth Treasurer himself has refused to continue the subsidy of

10s. a ton on shipping sugar from Queensland to the refineries. In all, the sugar industry now will receive out of the £4 13s. 4d. only £3 13s. a ton and we have the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock making an amendment to the legislation to take something more from the sugar-growers of Queensland, the extent of which I have failed to hear from him. Perhaps my hearing may have been bad but I did not hear him say by how much it was proposed to increase levies for the sugar experiment stations.

Mr. Collins: You will get it when the Bill is introduced. I am only asking for permission to introduce it at this stage.

Mr. BRAND: We hope that all recommendations from the Sugar Advisory Board to the Government are as acceptable as this. The sugar industry will gladly pay for some help to the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations so that we shall be able to hold what we have for the benefit of the industry. The Bureau is a very necessary institution for the well-being of the industry in Queensland. It was, as the Minister said in the early part of his speech, established in 1900, when provision was made for a levy of a penny a ton, the amount so collected to be subsidised on a £1 for £1 basis by the Government of the day. In the years intervening there have been amendments to that legislation and the amendments have not been in the nature of helping the cane-sugar industry but rather of decreasing the Government's contribution to the Sugar Fund by limiting their contribution to £7,000. If the Government desired to make a contribution to the sugar industry they could easily have done so by means of the £1 for £1 subsidy and obviated the necessity of taxing the sugar-growers any further.

In 1944 the levy was a half-penny a ton, the industry provided £9,164 and the Government £5,663; and in that year the Government "pinched" some £1,400 from the Sugar Fund. In 1945, when the levy was three-farthings a ton, it brought from the industry £14,226 and the Government paid only their £7,000. If they had paid on a £1 for £1 basis there would have been another £7,000 in 1945 and 1946, which would have put the fund into a position to carry on. As a matter of fact, I think there is approximately £30,000 to the credit of the fund today.

I assume that the Minister is proposing to amend Section 7 of the Act and that the possible levy that will be provided for will be a maximum of threepence a ton, so that as time goes on the Advisory Board will be able to recommend to the Minister and he can direct that the levy so struck can be greater than one penny or at least an amount to enable the Bureau to operate as an official organisation.

I want to tell the Minister in all seriousness that he would serve the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations and the industry better by amending the law to take the Bureau out of the jurisdiction of the Public Service Commissioner and placing it under the direct control of the Minister, as the Government

have done with the Main Roads Commission and the State Electricity Commission.

Mr. Theodore: This Bill does not deal with the Sugar Board.

Mr. BRAND: It deals with the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations.

Mr. Theodore: But not with the Sugar Board.

Mr. BRAND: I have said nothing about the Sugar Board. I have referred to the Sugar Bureau, the short title given to the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations. If the Government would remove the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations from the jurisdiction of the Public Service Commissioner the industry would have no objection to any increased levy that might be imposed upon it.

Furthermore, the Minister would serve the industry well and at the same time conserve the finances of the State if he would introduce a law to permit the sugar industry to control its own Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations. The industry would then be very happy to relieve the Government of any cost in this connection whatever. In other words, the industry would bear the total cost of the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations and at the same time increase its activities. Some years ago the industry provided scholarships for its students at the Queensland University to enable them to travel overseas to qualify as sugar technologists for the purpose of manning our sugar experiment stations. The sugar industry found the money. Mr. Bennett, Mr. Kerr, and Mr. Bell won those scholarships. They travelled throughout the sugar-producing countries of the world and became sugar technologists of a very high order. Mr. Kerr, who afterwards became Dr. Kerr, was director of the Bureau for a number of years. Unfortunately the sugar industry has lost the direct services of these three gentlemen in the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations.

Mr. Aikens: Why did they leave?

Mr. BRAND: Because they were offered better inducement outside the Bureau and having regard for their families they accepted these better positions.

Mr. Collins: Mr. Bell is still here as Under Secretary of the department.

Mr. BRAND: He is Under Secretary of the department but he is not now directly connected with the Bureau.

Mr. Collins: He is not lost to the industry by any means.

Mr. BRAND: I said that we had lost the services of these men from the direct control of the Bureau and that is a very serious position for the sugar industry, especially as the present officers of the Bureau are looking afield for other jobs. We are not in the position to hold the officers we have now.

I should like to tell the Minister that if the industry had had any control over the salaries to be paid to such highly qualified

men as Dr. Kerr, Mr. Bennett and Mr. Bell, it would have fixed such an amount as would have retained their services. It would have fixed an amount that would be equivalent to the worth of their services and in keeping with the amounts paid to such men by other sugar-producing countries of the world. These men are worth much more than they are getting today and if those who have left had been paid a salary equivalent to their worth they would be with the Queensland Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations today. We do want amending legislation so that we can take steps to hold our officers.

In every cane-producing country in the world much larger sums of money are spent on experimental stations than in Queensland, yet with the small amount of money we have spent we have, as the Minister rightly said, achieved much. Our experiment stations at Meringa, Mackay and Bundaberg have done excellent work. Side by side with that work is the splendid work done by the C.S.R. Co. at Macknade on the Herbert River, where some excellent varieties of cane have been propagated and brought into production. Possibly they will become standard canes for areas farther north than the Herbert. The Trojan variety is one of the best that has been discovered. Our officers are carrying out a very good and useful work. I believe that Mr. Behne, the new director, together with his officers, will continue that good work. There is a feeling of uncertainty because some of the promising men we have in the Bureau might leave to enter other fields or businesses, or even find positions in other cane-producing countries. Our officers are outstanding men.

The Minister covered a very wide field in his introductory remarks, but I do not think that the matters he dealt with were associated with the Bill. At least we were justified in expecting information as to the amendments to be made. I did not understand, for instance, that the Minister would deal in the Bill with the substitution of assignments of cane lands. Nevertheless, he spoke of the need to make provision for the transfer of assignments. If this legislation provides for cane assignments, then the Minister's theory as to the gazetting of assignments in the first place is wrong. That was not done at the behest of any fertiliser company; it was done by the Labour Government because they recognised that land had to be assigned because there was not a sufficient market for the sugar being produced. That was the only reason for bringing down that legislation. Had the world's markets been able to absorb the whole of the surplus Australian crop that legislation would not have been required. That was a world-wide problem affecting not only Queensland but every cane-producing country. Some restriction was applied so that the production of sugar could be reduced to the world's needs.

Today, however, the production of sugar is less than the world's requirements. In Queensland we have to depend on the activities of our Central Sugar Cane Prices Board, a governmental institution, for the transfer of assignments from one area to another.

I believe that body approaches all the applications it receives for substitution or transfer from one area to another very sympathetically, and takes all factors into consideration in making its decision. I find there are considerable areas that have been substituted throughout the sugar districts—there is considerable movement and transfers from one assignment to another, all through the operations of the Central Board. We know the returned soldiers wish to settle in the sugar industry and we know that legislation was introduced for the purpose of settling them in that industry, but as yet nothing has happened. I mention this for the purpose of showing that it is proposed to bring in new areas of land in Queensland for the growing of sugar by returned soldiers. I understand that the Government, through the Secretary for Public Lands, is busily engaged on that project today; and the industry itself has given every assistance to that end. It has recommended to the Government that they implement the findings of the Royal Commission for the purpose of increasing our production and maintaining within the British Empire a reasonable quantity of sugar for its peoples. The industry's organisations have actively associated themselves with the movement for the settlement of returned soldiers for the production of increased tonnage. Furthermore, we felt that there was an obligation on areas, and actually certain transfers of land to returned soldiers took place through the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board before the passing of the legislation to which I refer. People surrendered their assignments for the purpose of providing certain returned soldiers with areas for cane-farming. In my own area of Isis, those returned soldiers are this year harvesting cane crops from their assignments granted by the Central Board. I make reference to this because the Minister may have thought that the board was not doing a reasonably good job. I say that it is doing a reasonably good job—

Mr. Collins: I said that, too.

Mr. BRAND: . . . in the matter of substitution and transfers of land submitted to it.

The sugar industry is looking to the main officers of this bureau for much improvement in the future. As far as the field is concerned, the desire of the industry is that new canes should be established that will be free of disease and will be sound canes for the farmer to work on; in the same way as the wheat-grower or any other agriculturist will look to new wheats or other crops for the purpose of increasing his production. It is true the industry is getting new varieties through the activities of the bureau. I believe those new varieties, when established, will be the means of restoring the industry from one of low production—necessitating this amendment, because if abnormal crops had been harvested in the two or three years just past there would be no necessity for it—to its pre-war standard, and with the assistance that has been given by the Federal Government the incentive will be provided for producers to go on and bring production up to pre-war level.

When that is done I think the Minister will be satisfied that it is not a question of fertiliser companies being protected but of the cane-growers of Queensland receiving an adequate treatment to enable them to produce the requirements needed, by Queensland, Australia, and the British Empire.

Mr. THEODORE (Herbert) (3.50 p.m.): The Bill to be introduced by the Minister this afternoon contains the very simple proposal to increase the amount provided for sugar experiment stations from 1d. to a figure that will enable the bureau to carry out better the job it has undertaken. As in all other undertakings, costs have increased, the job has become a large one, and the requirements cannot be met by the amount now provided. That is all that it is proposed to do.

The Advisory Board consists of two representatives nominated by the Queensland Cane-growers' Council, one nominated by the Australian Sugar Producers' Association representing the millers, and another member by the Queensland Society of Sugar Technologists. These are the representatives on the industry side. The importance of the work undertaken and still to be undertaken by this board is recognised by the industry, the growers, and others concerned, and I know they will not raise any objection. As a matter of fact, from time to time, as hon. members on the Opposition benches who are interested in sugar know, there has been an agitation for greater effort on the part of the Advisory Board. I have frequently heard discussions as to why this or that is not done. But funds are limited. That is really the position.

Mr. Evans: £28,000.

Mr. THEODORE: Indications have been given that it is restricted in its activities because of lack of funds which have not been sufficiently ample to enable it to do all the things it is expected to do. I know that. Statements to that effect have been made by men closely associated with the Advisory Board, and in discussions at conferences of the Queensland Cane-growers' Council and the Australian Sugar Producers' Association at which matters of importance are dealt with in which we know they are vitally concerned.

The Advisory Board has been doing a splendid job in carrying on the work of the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations. As has already been stated, great care has been exercised in the industry in watching closely the varying conditions that exist, and a large amount of money has been saved by a very close attention to damage that could have had a serious effect on the industry. At times, for instance, there is an outbreak of a disease. The symptoms are apparent in one district, but are not noticed elsewhere. With the close watch undertaken by the officers of the bureau the disease is taken in hand and controlled, and the possibility of further damage eliminated.

As the Minister has stated, credit must be given to the C.S.R. Company, which has been responsible for introducing some new varieties of cane. By its efforts in introducing Trojan and Eros, it has revolutionised the production of cane in the Ingham district. Perhaps these two varieties will have similar effects elsewhere, although they cannot be expected to in all districts. I know for certain that Trojan has proved unsuccessful in some areas so far. Eros is not so readily adaptable to other districts, but there are some areas in which it is doing better than Trojan.

Mr. Brand: It is a failure in our district.

Mr. THEODORE: I know it has failed in some districts farther north. As Trojan is a tremendously heavy-cropping cane, it is naturally an enormous feeder, and for that reason takes more toll of the soil. We all admit that to date no cane has been produced to take the place of Badila, which will grow satisfactorily in any district that has reasonable soil. For that reason, this variety cannot be discarded. As yet we do not know what will happen with Trojan, because it is a comparatively new cane, but we do know that it takes a considerable amount of nutriment out of the soil, and with such a heavy-cropping cane it is advisable that the ground be fallowed longer than it usually is now. Trojan is as hard on the soil as bananas. We all know that it is not possible to grow bananas for more than four or five years in the best of our soils, and the same will apply to Trojan.

Many people who are in a position to know more about the subject than I do have written to me saying that it is their firm belief that it is time attention was given to the rotation of crops. To my mind consideration should have been given to granting soldiers who were being settled in the sugar industry greater areas than are normally given so that they may grow their assignment on any part of their areas. They should not be restricted to any particular part. They should be given a roving commission to grow anywhere on their land, with the condition that they must fallow for longer periods.

This practice should be followed throughout the sugar-growing areas, although I realise that it could not be adopted immediately. A start should be made with a view to preserving our lands and handing them on to the future generation in such a condition that it will be possible for it to make a living from them. That is what we must concern ourselves with.

Other speakers have gone very wide of the mark in this debate but I want to give the Committee some idea of the work done by the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations in regard to diseases in cane. I want to point out what damage diseases could cause to the industry if close attention was not paid to the matter. I had the experience of planting a new variety of cane known as SJ4 on my farm. It is very similar in looks to Badila. It is a splendid cane because you can fill in the misses and the new plantings catch up with the first plantings and after

a while you have a complete crop. Unfortunately, after the cane was planted, we were told that we should have to eliminate the whole of it. This notification was not given out of pure cussedness but on instructions issued by the Director of the Bureau in order to prevent the spread of a disease which had been detected in this cane in my area. The cane in other areas was not affected. That is an example of the work done by the Bureau, work by men who know their jobs. They are highly qualified men and as time goes on they will become invaluable. But I think we are not paying them sufficient salary. They are no different from people in other occupations and they feel the effects of the altered economic conditions of today the same as other people. We know that sugar technologists have come out to us from other countries and they have admitted that they can learn from us. It is only natural therefore that those countries would like some of our men to help them with their industry. We are in danger of losing our men who have become fully trained and are thoroughly conversant with our conditions.

I want to refer to a weed that has intruded itself in the Tully area and I know that hon. members of the Opposition representing sugar areas will be interested in what I have to say, as they are likely to have an infestation by this weed as we have. It is known as *Mimosa invisa* and it has presented a serious problem in the Tully district. I do not know whether it has spread to other districts but if it does it will give considerable trouble. It is a climbing vine of vigorous growth, spreads gradually, and is likely to run distances of 20 to 30 yards.

It seeds prolifically, the seeds are exceedingly hard, and thus they will remain in the ground for upwards of 10 years without losing their germinating quality. A neighbour of mine has spent about £60 in the past four or five months on a few acres of land in an endeavour to cope with the weed, and there seems to be no other way of doing it than by pulling it up by the roots. It will grow amongst the cane even after the cane has reached an advanced state of growth, and it is difficult to get cane-cutters to go into an infested block. We must take drastic measures to eliminate it, but there is no way of coping with it except as I have described. My neighbour who spent this amount of money on a small part of his farm—and it is not the only money he has spent for this purpose—has expressed the view that if this vine invaded the whole of his sugar lands he would have to get out. That shows how dangerous the weed is.

Mr. Aikens: They will have to grapple with the Noogoora burr on the Burdekin and Houghton Rivers shortly.

Mr. THEODORE: The Cane Pest Boards in the various districts are keeping a very close watch on these things, but unfortunately we could not have this weed declared a noxious weed. Three years ago I tried to have that done but the Department have no power to do it.

We must take the utmost care to see that the new soldier settlers in the sugar industry are successful. It may be some little time yet before the ballot is taken, because there are some very complicated and difficult conditions to overcome. Much of the land to be made available is scattered over a wide area, and between 800 and 900 ex-service men will want to go to the ballot. A number of them will be disqualified as being ineligible or unsuitable.

An Opposition Member: When will the first ballot take place?

Mr. THEODORE: As soon as it is practicable. As I have said, there are many complicated conditions to be faced in order to see that the ballot is fair and aboveboard and that all those ex-service men who are eligible have a fair opportunity at the ballot.

I am very much concerned that we shall not see repeated the happenings in connection with soldier settlement that followed the 1914-1918 war. I am anxious that those who are lucky enough to draw a block on this occasion will have a fair opportunity of success. These are the matters that we are watching very closely, and the Minister has introduced the Bill in order that not only the industry shall be served, but that the ex-service men who succeed in the ballot will have their interests safeguarded too.

I commend the Minister for introducing the Bill. I know that it will be acceptable to the industry as a whole, because the men in it realise its importance, and understand the great need for care in the conduct of an industry that has meant so much to this State and the nation as a whole.

Mr. EVANS (Mirani) (4.10 p.m.): I listened very attentively to the remarks of the Minister. They covered a very wide scope of subjects pertaining to the sugar industry and I appreciate many of his remarks, particularly those referring to our efficiency, to our tolerance, and particularly to our honesty in the case we submitted to the Federal Government. I can assure hon. members that the Minister was right. We were tolerant.

Mr. Crowley: You do not look very modest.

Mr. EVANS: The industry, not so much myself, was modest in the case it submitted to the Federal Government. I am heartily in accord with the Minister in the nice things he said about the industry but I cannot understand his disregarding the unanimous request of the industry as to the signing of the agreement. The whole of the industry has suffered by carrying increased costs, costs that we told the Federal Government would have to be faced in the season just finished. Notwithstanding that both Federal and State Governments have agreed to the restoration of the half-penny reduction in the price of sugar, it will not apply for another month or two months, and the industry must continue to suffer that loss until the ratifying Bill becomes law.

I agree with the Minister as to the efficiency of the experiment stations. They have done a great job and their officers are to be highly commended on their accomplishments under what in most instances were impossible conditions, and at salaries that were not commensurate with the value of their services. In addition to the names of the officials mentioned by the hon. member for Isis who have severed their associations with the stations, I would add Mr. Young, Mr. Norman Smith, Mr. Eigenhuus, Mr. Jenkins, Mr. Prager, Mr. Tesch, Mr. Cassidy, Mr. Leece, Mr. Gibbons, Mr. Cothal Dormer, a pathologist, and Mr. von Steiglitz.

We had all those persons associated with the Bureau but they entered more remunerative employment. Almost every one was underpaid and they saw no future in the work. Even today University graduates whom we desire should enter the industry will not do so and you cannot blame them. The industry is willing to pay for their services. I do not quibble about the levy for the purpose. The industry will not quibble if it is 3d. or 4d. a ton of sugar-cane, as it realises the value it has received from the Bureau's work under very difficult conditions. I make bold to say that were it not for the work of the Bureau many sugar farmers would have been insolvent. The hon. member for Herbert mentioned the Trojan and Eros varieties of cane that had issued from the C.S.R. Co. stations but what about Q.28? These new types of cane have almost doubled our production in the districts where they are suited and have saved farmers from going off their farms.

Then we have the part that the Bureau has played in dealing with pests and disease. The Government do not subsidise the fund for the control of diseases and pests. That fund obtains its revenue by a direct levy on the industry, but in return the industry receives the benefit of the knowledge of the officers of the Bureau, by whose efforts in conjunction with a district board composed of miller and grower representatives, pests and disease are kept under control.

But not only do we contribute to control our own pests and diseases; we are called on to pay also levies under the Stock Routes Improvement and Animal and Vegetable Pests Destruction Act. We have not squealed about making that payment, but have said that if it is necessary to help the people in Western Queensland to provide water for stock routes and the destruction of dingoes, that help should not be sectional; in other words, the rural people alone should not have to pay.

Spread the tax over the whole of the property-holders of Queensland. Go down to Brisbane and Toowoomba and you find that they do not pay a penny.

Mr. Jones: They do.

Mr. EVANS: They do not.

Mr. Jones: They pay it in Brisbane.

Mr. EVANS: The tax they pay in western shires is 4d. and we pay 3d., and cities are eliminated.

Mr. Jones: No.

Mr. EVANS: The Minister says they are not. I have attended many local-authority conferences and I have seen resolutions carried unanimously requesting the Minister to give consideration to altering it from a sectional tax. A resolution was carried asking the Minister to suspend the operations of the Act in the meantime.

Mr. Jones: On certain properties in Brisbane they pay at the moment.

Mr. EVANS: The Brisbane City Council did not strike a levy; neither does any other city. We are put in this unfair position: we have to levy on ourselves to handle our own diseases and pests that attack our industry, and we have to help somebody else. Unless it is a national matter and every property-owner in Queensland helps, we should not have to do that. That is the actual position.

The Minister spoke also of substitution. I agree with him. The position with many growers in many milling areas is one that they have forced themselves into by the honesty of their actions. They have measured their areas and endeavoured to control production and restrict their growers to a certain area. The Act says that an assignment is an assignment of a portion of land. The assignment may be 60 acres or 70 acres or 80 acres, and the portion may be 200 acres, but that assignment applies anywhere on that land as long as the farmer does not grow over the net assignment. What we have done—and the hon. member for Herbert will tell you I am correct—is that we have measured their areas and if they do move from the assigned area we have a certification of the area. The only way by which the assignment can be restricted to the specified portion of the area, if the farmer chooses to defy the mill suppliers' committee or the mill, is to go to the Central Board and ask the board for a certification of the area.

Mr. Collins: Why not sugar instead of land?

Mr. EVANS: I agree with the hon. gentleman—that should be the position. It is bad farming not to rotate; it means buying more fertiliser. You can have mixed farming and run cattle, and there is no better way to build up your soil. I agree with what the hon. gentleman said, and I strongly suggest to him that he give consideration to having it brought about. We cannot do it; it is a matter for the Central Sugar-Cane Prices Board to deal with. I think it would mean an amendment of the Act.

Mr. Theodore interjected.

Mr. EVANS: The mill suppliers' committee could ask to have the area certificated. Immediately that is done the assignment is confined to a particular area. Many of our people have done that in an endeavour to control production. If the farmer departs from that area he knows what will happen. He knows the cane inspector will report it to the mill and he will be certificated. A

stick should not be held over him. It is wrong, and it is increasing the cost of production.

The Minister dealt with ex-Service men in the industry. I believe the Government have a very difficult job in sorting out the Service personnel who are going to get assignments. Members who have not had anything to do with it will not realise the problems the Government are up against. In my area there are many farmers who have bought small farms and who have applied for increases in peaks from 100-odd tons to 500 tons. I suppose if the applications were granted no new areas would be given away; people with small peaks would have them built up.

Mr. Devries: Better security?

Mr. EVANS: No, it is not that. It would give these people better security but so many people with 100 tons want 500 tons that an increase cannot be given to those who buy new land. How is it to be worked out? It is all very well for people to say that the work should be expedited—although I believe that it could be expedited a little; the classification committee could speed matters up to a faster rate than they are doing—but it is not easy. The man who gave his services to his country and has a small farm must be dealt with just as fairly as the man who has an option to buy land and is asking for the 500-ton peak. I cannot see the matter being cleaned up for a considerable time. The Secretary for Public Lands is not present, but I ask him to push his representatives, particularly the land commissioners, in the various areas and the representatives of the Bureau, to have these inspections made. I know of land that has not been inspected.

Then I understand that if the land in question has a grade of 4 per cent. it is rejected as unsuitable. There is no justice in that. There are people on Crown land, people with perpetual leases, who have farms and who have given four and five years of the best years of their life serving their country; they have 100-ton cane peaks but because the land is undulating, with a grade of more than 4 per cent., they have been told that it cannot be considered.

Mr. Aikens: What is the objection?

Mr. EVANS: I do not know. I am not aware of the objection.

Mr. Collins: The hon. member for Isis could tell you perhaps.

Mr. EVANS: At South Johnstone one finds a large area of undulating land. At Childers there is a large area of land growing a heavy crop of cane with a grade of more than 4 per cent. They have been wrongly advised in wiping out these people. How are they to live? If the grade of the land is too steep to allow of their being given assignments to grow cane, how will they pay their rent to the Crown, how will they pay their wages bill and keep themselves.

Mr. Collins: They will not live if their land is washed away, will they?

Mr. EVANS: The same position applies if their land is washed away; the Government still collect rent for that land. They have still to pay the capital value for it; the Government do not say, "We will give it to them for nothing." The hon. gentleman cannot dodge that fact.

In the last 12 months at Mackay the Pests and Disease Control Board financed to the extent of about £7,000, I think, apart from levies actually struck, for the control of diseases and pests. However, I have already mentioned that and I am now repeating myself. I wish to revert to the levy. The Minister should give very serious consideration to taking control and the fixation of wages from the Public Service Commissioner. I urge strongly that the Advisory Board should control the salaries and conditions of the men employed in the Bureau. The Advisory Board is composed of two growers' representatives, and representatives of the millers and the sugar technologists. These men are engaged in the industry and have the confidence of the people in the industry and I strongly urge the Minister to consider this point. If the Minister will not agree to this change, the industry is willing to take over the whole business and finance it without any subsidy. We are prepared to finance the whole thing ourselves but if the Minister sees fit not to agree to that but to have an increase, then he should give consideration to the lifting of the maximum payment of the subsidy to the Bureau from £7,000 to half what the industry has to pay. These are the suggestions I make:

That the subsidy be increased to half of the actual payment the industry has to make.

That the power to make recommendations to the Minister be transferred from the Public Service Commissioner to the Advisory Board.

That if the Minister does not see fit to accept these recommendations the whole of the Bureau be handed over to the industry, the industry to control and finance it itself.

In making these suggestions I am speaking for the industry and voicing its unanimous decision.

Mr. PIE (Windsor) (4.26 p.m.): During the war there was an acute shortage of canuba wax, which is used for making polishes of various kinds. Dr. Kerr conducted many experiments in an effort to produce a wax that would take the place of it and when we had arrived at the stage of achieving success he resigned from his position. I should like to know if the Minister has any information as to whether it is possible to continue that research.

Mr. Brand: They are carrying it out in Nambour.

Mr. PIE: I am pleased to hear that. The company in which I am interested furnished a tremendous amount of data for Dr.

Kerr's work. Samples were sent backwards and forwards to and from the industrial chemists for testing to determine whether the wax was suitable for use as a base for polish. I suggest that there is a wonderful commercial avenue for the production of a wax to take the place of the canuba wax, hundreds of tons of which are imported from America and other countries during the year.

Mr. LOW (Coorooora) (4.27 p.m.): As the representative of a sugar area, I feel it is my duty to offer sincere thanks to the Premier and the delegates who accompanied him when he approached the Prime Minister for an increase of $\frac{3}{4}$ d. a lb. in the retail price of sugar. That extra money will be of great help to the industry at a time when costs of production have risen to such an extent as to almost cripple production.

I am pleased to be able to say that in the Nambour district we are having a very prosperous sugar season. The mill peak of 107,000 tons will be reached. In the previous year we suffered from heavy frosts, which caused considerable damage, but this year we are in a good position.

It is not generally known that the Nambour district, with 600 suppliers, can hold its own against the Northern mill areas. In support of this I should like to quote from the 46th annual report of the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations; which contains a table of the average yield of the sugar districts for 1945. The domestic crushings for that year were—

	Tons of Cane per acre.	Tons of Sugar per acre.
Mossman-Ingham ..	20.44	2.97
Lower Burdekin ..	27.85	4.37
Proserpine ..	14.79	2.20
Mackay ..	13.72	1.79
Bundaberg-Gin Gin ..	18.83	2.45
Childers-Maryborough	19.14	2.62
Nambour-Beenleigh ..	22.68	2.94

Those figures disclose that the Moreton mill area's average yield of sugar-cane an acre is the second highest in Queensland with 22.68 tons, and its yield of sugar an acre the third highest with 2.94 tons.

A Government Member: You are a long way out.

Mr. LOW: The hon. member can refer to the Minister if my figures are wrong. It is running close to the Mossman-Ingham area with 2.97 tons.

We have a new variety of cane in the Nambour area that is producing 80 tons to the acre at the present time. In this respect I give credit to the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations. That yield has not only been from one farm but is common on many other farms. The variety is known as C.P.—yes, it is also known in our district as the Country Party variety. It is testing 13 at the present time, which is good for this time of the year.

I suggest that when ex-service men are being rehabilitated in the sugar industry, the Maroochy district, with Nambour as its centre, receive consideration, and that the Moreton

mill peak be increased from 107,000 tons to 130,000 tons annually. That would allow us 1,000 acres of land for the growing of sugar-cane in the Maroochy River-Valdora-Coolumbour area, which is of an excellent type for sugar-growing. The mill machinery at Nambour is capable of crushing the additional tonnage, and at the present time, on account of the shortage of various types of machinery, this aspect of the matter should receive close consideration. We advance the claims of our district from that point of view as well as from that of the rehabilitation of ex-Service men.

Moreover, great difficulty is being experienced by most of the mills in the transport of sugar to the refineries, but the Moreton mill is only 65 miles from Brisbane, and with a regular train service cane can be crushed this afternoon and the raw sugar be delivered at the refinery tomorrow.

Furthermore, seasonal workers have not so far to go from their homes when seeking their employment. Nambour is within close radius of Brisbane and most of the seasonal workers come from metropolitan areas.

In connection with the rehabilitation of ex-Service men too, there is always the time between the planting of the cane and the crushing of it when ex-Service men could engage in the growing of small crops. The Maroochy district is close to the metropolitan area and the Southern markets and small crops could be grown efficiently with a ready market close at hand. We have a very moderate temperature and an evenly balanced rainfall.

To set up ex-Service men in the sugar industry it is necessary to make them happy and contented. We have everything in the North Coast area to make an ex-soldier happy and contented. We have seaside and mountain resorts within the district and Nambour is in the heart of a rich sugar area. It is absolutely necessary to have our rehabilitated ex-Service men happy and contented, because it is no use settling men in the industry if they are on areas far distant from civilisation. If land is assigned to men and they become discontented they may leave their assignment for somebody else—not Service men—to take over.

I ask the Government in giving consideration to this matter to bear in mind the figures that I have quoted from the annual report of the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations and the fact that the Nambour district can hold its own with any other sugar district in Queensland.

Hon. H. H. COLLINS (Cook—Secretary for Agriculture and Stock) (4.36 p.m.): There are one or two matters raised in the course of the debate to which I should like to reply. The hon. member for Windsor referred to the wax that may be extracted from sugar-cane. That is being done by a private company in the Nambour district at the present time. The method was developed by Dr. Kerr and others in the industry, and I understand it is being financed by a person previously engaged in sugar-growing in North

Queensland. A complete survey is being carried out of all the mills of Queensland to see how the wax can be extracted and what is its value to the industry. The matter is well in hand and we understand that there is a market for it. The industry itself is helping a great deal with the investigation and good work is being carried out by the sugar-mill technicians and others.

The hon. member for Isis and the hon. member for Mirani both suggested that it would be better for the industry if the control of the sugar technologists were taken away from the Public Service Commissioner and handed over to the industry itself, when the industry would accept the whole responsibility of paying their salaries. That sounds a very good idea and also sounds like a very generous offer, but you must remember that the sugar industry belongs to the State and that the whole of the people have a very big interest in it. It is the duty of the Government to see that the industry and the interests of the people as a whole are well and amply protected. I cannot see how, under the present set-up, the sugar people have suffered through the present control, because it is recognised to-day that the sugar industry in Queensland, in its present set-up mark you, is the most efficient sugar industry in any country in the world, and it is the most efficient agricultural industry in Australia. That speaks volumes for the present system of control. Why abandon that system when it is giving such particularly good service not only to sugar interests but to the community as a whole? I take it that no good case has so far been made out for taking this control away from the Public Service Commissioner.

Both the hon. members referred to said that if the control was taken from the Public Service Commissioner the salaries of the officers concerned would be increased and we should not lose good men. Many of the men they have referred to as being lost to the industry are still in the Department of Agriculture and Stock and that department has regard for many primary industries as well as the sugar industry. We must pay due attention to all our primary industries and not confine our attention to any one in particular. Mr. Bell has done very valuable work for the sugar industry and the sugar industry acknowledges the fact, but Mr. Bell is now Under Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Stock, and how can anyone by any stretch of the imagination say that as a result of his being elevated to a higher and more responsible position in the department his services are lost to the sugar industry? I contend that they are not; indeed, I say that he is in a better position now than before to give assistance to the industry.

The men the hon. members referred to were highly trained officers; in fact, very skilled and valuable men. Hon. members said these men could get higher salaries outside the service. There is some truth in that; some have gone to positions that are more highly paid and one cannot altogether blame them for that. But there is something else to be

said about competition for the services of these men. That competition does not create any more technologists or trained men. We are going through a very difficult period as a result of five years' war, but in the course of another two or three years more of these highly trained men from our universities will be available, and as a result industry will be able to absorb them instead of competing for their services. I have seen men with university degrees walking the roads looking for a living and I hope that those times will never come back; I am not predicting that they will. I am merely asserting that so many young men are now being trained in our universities that we shall catch up with this lag.

We could not pay higher salaries to some of our more skilled men and not others, probably in the same department. Any increase must be general throughout the Public Service. That would be a very fine thing, but, as I mentioned, the sugar industry is not the only industry to be considered. The welfare of the public is of paramount concern to the Government. It is the duty of the Government to attend to the paramount interests of the people reasonably well, balancing one so far as we can against the other, in an endeavour to see that everybody gets as fair a deal as it is possible to give him. If by increasing your salary by £200 you added to the number of scientists you would have something to show for it, but that mere fact does not increase the number of trained men. The number cannot be increased until you train them.

Mr. Macdonald: You are losing them.

Mr. COLLINS: They are not lost to Australia; in fact, most of them are still in Queensland. Because a man transfers from one industry to another it cannot be said that his services are lost to this State or Australia. If a highly qualified man is transferred from one department to another it cannot be said that his services are lost to our primary industries. The position mentioned by hon. members opposite is merely a phase of what we are going through. If, for example, one of our trained officers transferred his services to the cement works, it could not be said that his knowledge would be lost to Queensland.

Mr. Kerr: The point is: why does he go there?

Mr. COLLINS: His training is what is valuable to the people of the State. That does not get away from the argument that the mere increase of salary increases the number of trained men. As I said previously, the overall answer to the argument is that no industry is better served than the sugar industry.

There may be several other matters that have been raised, but I think I have answered the majority of them. I am glad to know that there is no objection to the passage of this Bill.

Motion (Mr. Collins) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING.

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

The House adjourned at 4.47 p.m.
