

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 11 MARCH 1952

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Queensland Parliamentary Debates.

Legislative Assembly.

SECOND SESSION OF THE THIRTY-SECOND PARLIAMENT

(Second Period)

[VOLUME 3]

TUESDAY, 11 MARCH, 1952.

Under the provisions of the motion for Special Adjournment agreed to by the House on 23rd November, 1951, the House met at 11 a.m.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. J. H. Mann, Brisbane) took the chair.

DEATH OF KING GEORGE VI., AND
ACCESSION OF QUEEN ELIZABETH II.

MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR.

Hon. V. C. GAIR (South Brisbane—Premier) presented the following message from His Excellency the Governor—

“The Governor acquaints the Legislative Assembly, in accordance with the provisions of the fourth section of the Constitution Act of 1867 that Our Late Beloved Sovereign King George the Sixth of Blessed and Glorious Memory, departed this life at Sandringham on the sixth day of February, one thousand nine hundred and fifty-two, and that on the eighth day of February, one thousand nine hundred and fifty-two, Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second was duly and lawfully proclaimed as Queen, by the Grace of God, of Great Britain, Ireland, and the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Defender of the Faith.

“The Governor further acquaints the Legislative Assembly that, before Members thereof sit and vote as such, it is necessary that they should take or make the Oath or Affirmation of Allegiance to Her Most Gracious Majesty, as required by the Act hereinbefore mentioned.

“Government House,

“Brisbane, March 11, 1952.”

The Clerk read the message.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have to inform the House that on Thursday, 6 March and Monday, 10 March, His Excellency the Governor administered the Oath of Allegiance to all Ministers, and that on Friday, 7 March, His Excellency administered the Oath of Allegiance to me.

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OATH OF ALLEGIANCE TO
QUEEN ELIZABETH II.

THE PREMIER produced a Commission under the public seal of the State empowering him, the Hon. John Edmund Duggan, the Hon. Thomas Andrew Foley and the Hon. John Henry Mann, or any one or more of them, to administer to all or any members or member of the House the Oath or Affirmation of Allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II., which commission was then read to the House by the Clerk.

MEMBERS SWORN.

The Commissioners (the Hon. Vincent Clair Gair, Hon. John Edmund Duggan, Hon. Thomas Andrew Foley, and Hon. John Henry Mann), having been themselves previously sworn before His Excellency the Governor, then administered the Oath or Affirmation of Allegiance to all other members present, namely—

Aikens, Thomas, Esquire
Allpass, Frederic James, Esquire
Bjelke-Petersen, Johannes, Esquire
Brosnan, Michael Timothy, Esquire
Brown, Richard Kidston, Esquire
Burrows, James, Esquire
Byrne, Peter, Esquire
Chalk, Gordon William Wesley, Esquire
Clark, James, Esquire
Coburn, Arthur, Esquire
Davis, Edward William, Esquire
Decker, Eric Paul, Esquire
Dewar, Alexander Tattenhall, Esquire
Dittmer, Felix Cyril Sigismund, Esquire,
B.A., M.B., B.S., B.Sc.
Donald, James, Esquire
Dufficy, John Joseph, Esquire
Dunstan, Thomas, Esquire
Evans, Ernest, Esquire
Ewan, William Manson, Esquire
Farrell, David, Esquire
Gardner, Robert James, Esquire
Gaven, Eric John, Esquire
Graham, Frederiek Dickson, Esquire
Gunn, William Morrison, Esquire

Heading, James Alfred, Esquire
 Hiley, Thomas Alfred, Esquire
 Jesson, Cecil George, Esquire
 Jones, Vincent Edward, Esquire
 Kerr, Thomas Caldwell, Esquire
 Keyatta, George, Esquire
 Lloyd, Eric Gayford, Esquire
 Low, David Alan, Esquire
 Luckins, Louis Wells, Esquire
 Macdonald, Duncan, Esquire
 Marsden, Ivor, Esquire
 McCathie, Colin George, Esquire, B.A.
 McIntyre, Malcolm, Esquire
 Moores, Thomas, Esquire
 Morris, Kenneth James, Esquire
 Müller, Adolf Gustav, Esquire
 Munro, Alan Whiteside, Esquire
 Nicholson, David Eric, Esquire
 Nicklin, George Francis Reuben, Esquire
 Noble, Henry Winston, Esquire, M.B.,
 B.S.
 Pizzey, Jack Charles Allan, Esquire, B.A.,
 A.Ed.
 Plunkett, Thomas Flood, Esquire
 Rasey, Thomas William, Esquire
 Riordan, Ernest Joseph, Esquire
 Roberts, Frank Edward, Esquire
 Roberts, Lloyd Henry Scurfield, Esquire
 Smith, Alfred James, Esquire
 Sparkes, Walter Beresford James Gordon,
 Esquire
 Taylor, Harold Bourne, Esquire, D.S.O.
 Taylor, John Russel, Esquire
 Turner, John Albert, Esquire
 Watson, Robert Hodgson, Esquire
 Whyte, Patrick James, Esquire
 Wood, Leslie Arnold, Esquire.
 Wordsworth, Carlisle Favell, Esquire

DEATH OF KING GEORGE VI.

ADDRESS OF CONDOLENCE.

Hon. V. C. GAIR (South Brisbane—Premier) (11.14 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“1. That the following Address of condolence to Her Majesty be adopted:—

‘To Her Most Gracious Majesty, Elizabeth the Second, by the Grace of God, of Great Britain, Ireland, and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Queen, Defender of the Faith.

‘May it please Your Majesty,—

‘We, the Members of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland, on assembling for the first sitting of the Parliament since the lamented death of our late beloved Sovereign, King George VI., desire to express our profound sympathy in the great loss which your Majesty, your Royal Mother and other members of the Royal Family have sustained.’

“2. That His Excellency the Governor be requested to forward the above address to Her Majesty.”

Motion agreed to, hon. members standing in silence.

ACCESSION OF QUEEN ELIZABETH II.

ADDRESS OF CONGRATULATION.

Hon. V. C. GAIR (South Brisbane—Premier) (11.16 a.m.) by leave, without notice: I move—

“1. That the following address of congratulation to Her Majesty be adopted:—

‘To Her Most Gracious Majesty, Elizabeth the Second, by the Grace of God, of Great Britain, Ireland, and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Queen, Defender of the Faith.

‘May it please Your Majesty,—

‘We, the Members of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland, in Parliament assembled, respectfully submit congratulations on Your Majesty’s accession to the Throne and desire to assure Your Majesty of our loyalty and allegiance.

‘We pray that under the Divine Guidance Your Majesty may be long spared to rule the British Commonwealth of Nations and that Your Majesty’s reign may be distinguished by peace, prosperity, and a general advancement in the social and economic conditions of Your Majesty’s subjects.’

“2. That His Excellency the Governor be requested to forward the above Address to Her Majesty.”

Motion agreed to.

COMMISSION TO ADMINISTER OATH.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have to inform the House that His Excellency has been pleased to issue a Commission under the Public Seal of the State empowering me to administer the oath or affirmation of allegiance to such members as may hereafter present themselves to be sworn, which I now direct the Clerk to read to the House.

Commission thereupon read by the Clerk.

DEATH OF HON. E. M. HANLON.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have to inform the House that I have received from the Registrar-General a certified copy of the registration of the death on January 15, 1952, of the Honourable Edward Michael Hanlon, lately serving in the Legislative Assembly as member for the Electoral District of Ithaca.

SEAT DECLARED VACANT.

Hon. V. C. GAIR (South Brisbane—Premier): I move—

“That the seat in this House of Edward Michael Hanlon, Esquire, hath become and is now vacant by reason of the death of the said Edward Michael Hanlon, Esquire.”

Motion agreed to.

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE.

Hon. V. C. GAIR (South Brisbane—Premier) (11.21 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“1. That this House desires to place on record its sense of the loss this State has sustained by the death of the Hon. Edward Michael Hanlon, member for the electoral district of Ithaca, and Premier of the State of Queensland.

“2. That Mr. Speaker be requested to communicate to the family of the deceased gentleman the above resolution, together with an expression of the sympathy and sorrow of the members of the Parliament of Queensland, in the loss they have sustained.”

The late Mr. Hanlon was first elected to the 24th Parliament of Queensland as member for the electoral district of Ithaca, on 8 May, 1926, and represented that electorate continuously until his death on 15 January, 1952, during the currency of the 32nd Parliament of Queensland. In the Forgan Smith Ministry, he was Home Secretary from 17 June, 1932, to 5 December, 1935, and Secretary for Health and Home Affairs from 5 December, 1935, to 16 December, 1942. He retained that portfolio in the Cooper Ministry from 16 September, 1942, to 27 April, 1944. He was Treasurer from 27 April, 1944, to 3 March, 1946. He assumed the office of Premier and Chief Secretary on 3 March, 1946, and retained that position until his death.

The late Mr. Hanlon came to this Parliament, as I have stated, in 1926 and was first elected to the Ministry or the Government of this State after the return of the Labour Party at the elections in June, 1932. He continued, as his record shows, to hold Ministerial rank until ultimately he became Premier and Chief Secretary of Queensland.

In the first Forgan Smith Government, Mr. Hanlon held the portfolio of Home Secretary, afterwards known as Secretary for Health and Home Affairs, an office in which I believe he distinguished himself by his constructive mind and clear vision of the future. Our hospital service, which today stands as a pattern for the rest of Australia, owes a great deal to his energy, his broad sympathy for suffering humanity, and the enthusiastic pursuit of his aim of bringing the service to everybody. The other sub-departments under his control felt the influence of his driving force and, I believe, benefited greatly from it.

In 1944, when the late Mr. F. A. Cooper was Premier, Mr. Hanlon was transferred to the Treasury. He was Acting Premier in 1945 when Mr. Cooper was abroad and when Mr. Cooper resigned in 1946 he was the unanimous choice of his party as leader and Premier.

Shortly after becoming Premier, Mr. Hanlon suffered a severe blow in the loss of his wife on 11 June, 1946, and amid his grief he was confronted with a serious industrial upheaval in the meat industry. Two years later there was another State-wide industrial upheaval. In those clashes Mr. Hanlon

enjoyed the fullest support of his ministerial colleagues and the other members of his party, and when peace was restored he had retained the respect and frequently won the good will of his opponents, who, at length saw the wisdom of the Government's stand at that time.

Mr. Hanlon will be remembered also for his great faith in the future of Queensland, particularly the northern part of the State. Come what may, his name will continue to be associated with major developmental projects, the importance of which he so strongly advocated in the councils of the nation that few people in Australia, or in the Commonwealth of Nations, have not heard of them.

The late Mr. Hanlon was a kindly man, and although he dearly loved a fight he seldom bore ill-feeling in his heart for any time. I think I can truly say that, generous alike to friend or foe, he was one for whom the people of Queensland had a warm affection; he was one of themselves. From a humble home he rose by his own merit to be Premier of the State, but always he had his roots deep down into the soil from which he sprang. He was never so happy as when talking in the homely Australian way among his working-class friends.

Those of us who served under him and knew him well were the better for his leadership, and we sorrow with those who were nearer to him in the great loss they have suffered.

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. NICKLIN (Landsborough) (11.28 a.m.): I desire to second the motion of sympathy that has been moved by the Premier in the death of the late Premier, Mr. Hanlon. In the passing of Mr. Hanlon, this State and this Parliament have suffered a great loss. The party that he led so ably and so well for so long has, too, suffered a great loss.

The late Mr. Hanlon was a redoubtable political opponent, a gentleman who, as the Premier has just said, dearly loved a political fight. Immediately the fight was over, however, he carried no personal animosity outside this House. As a result, we of this Parliament, who had been with him here for so long, felt that we had lost a personal friend when Ned Hanlon passed on.

Mr. Hanlon was one who, as the Premier has said, rose as the result of his own endeavours to the highest position that this State offers, and became the first citizen of the State. It is a great tribute to our democratic system that that can be so. No doubt, his great rise in the public and political life of this State was the result of the drive and energy that he showed in all his political undertakings. The record that he leaves behind him is due to the vision that he showed in tackling the problems that came his way and in laying down a programme that he thought would be the best for the development of this State. He was a man who knew what he wanted and he went after it. He was an indefatigable worker; indeed, the fact that he worked so hard and never spared himself no doubt contributed to his untimely end.

Mr. Hanlon put Queensland first at all times. As the Premier said, he fought hard for the rights of this State in his communications with the national Parliament. No doubt he was disappointed at times in not being able to bring some of his schemes to fruition, nevertheless he tried hard to do so. We may have differed with him at times, not so much from the viewpoint of the benefit or the need of the schemes for the State as the way in which he endeavoured to bring them about. I repeat that he tried hard to do things for this State. He made a great contribution to the welfare of the State during his political life, and it will go down in the political history of Queensland to his credit and the credit of the party he led.

There is one aspect of the life of the late hon. gentleman to which no reference has so far been made and I should like to refer to it. Our late Premier was a Digger and he never forgot his fellow Diggers. Many a time, times out of number, he went out of his way to help a Digger who might not have been in the best financial or economic position. He was never too busy to listen to the plea of some unfortunate Digger who might have fallen by the wayside. The returned soldiers will always remember the late Premier with gratitude and in their councils they will always make feeling and generous references to the way in which he helped them from time to time.

One would have expected that a man who led such a busy political life would have been compelled therefore to neglect his family somewhat, but that could never be said of the late Premier. He was a family man and he always placed his family first. He received a great deal of comfort and support from them and he was the first to acknowledge it.

In the passing of Mr. Hanlon we have suffered a personal loss and the State a great public loss. He made a great contribution to the future of this State while he was its leader and while he occupied his various ministerial positions. The best epitaph that one could write of the late Premier is the few words, "Well done, Ned Hanlon."

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Motion agreed to, hon. members standing in silence.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

APPOINTMENT OF GAIR MINISTRY.

Hon. V. C. GAIR (South Brisbane—Premier) (11.35 a.m.):

I desire to inform the House that on 17 January, 1952, His Excellency the Governor appointed—

The Honourable VINCENT CLAIR GAIR, to be Vice-President of the Executive Council of Queensland, and

EDWARD JOSEPH WALSH, Esquire, to be a member of the Executive Council of Queensland.

On the same date, His Excellency appointed—

The Honourable VINCENT CLAIR GAIR to be Premier and Chief Secretary of Queensland;

The Honourable JOHN EDMUND DUGGAN to be Minister for Transport of Queensland;

The Honourable THOMAS ANDREW FOLEY to be Secretary for Public Lands and Irrigation of Queensland;

The Honourable HAROLD HENRY COLLINS to be Secretary for Agriculture and Stock of Queensland;

The Honourable JAMES LARCOMBE to be Attorney-General of Queensland;

The Honourable ARTHUR JONES to be Secretary for Labour and Industry of Queensland;

The Honourable WILLIAM POWER to be Secretary for Mines and Immigration of Queensland.

The Honourable GEORGE HENRY DEVRIES to be Secretary for Public Instruction of Queensland;

The Honourable WILLIAM MATHEW MOORE to be Secretary for Health and Home Affairs of Queensland;

The Honourable PAUL JEROME REMIGIUS HILTON to be Secretary for Public Works, Housing and Local Government of Queensland;

The Honourable EDWARD JOSEPH WALSH to be Treasurer of Queensland.

I lay upon the Table of the House a copy of the Queensland Government Gazette Extraordinary containing the relevant notifications.

Mr. NICKLIN (Landsborough—Leader of the Opposition) (11.36 a.m.): I wish to take the opportunity of congratulating the Premier on his appointment as Premier of this State. For a considerable time he has acted as Premier and carried out the duties of the office with credit to himself and his party. I wish him well in the occupancy of his position; I hope he may not occupy it too long. (Laughter).

May I also take the opportunity of congratulating the Minister for Transport on his elevation to the position of Deputy Leader?

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. NICKLIN: He has earned that position as a result of his industry and ability in carrying out his ministerial office and I think the party have made a wise choice in selecting him as Deputy Leader.

My congratulations go also to the hon. the Treasurer, on the confirmation of his appointment. I hope he will be very liberal in administering his office. (Laughter).

A Government Member: Very Labour in his office.

Mr. NICKLIN: I am sure he will not be that. I believe he will be fair to all parties, irrespective of politics.

May I also congratulate the hon. member for Flinders on his elevation to the Ministry? As a result of his long political associations I feel that he will make an excellent Minister. May I suggest to the Premier that if he is going to appoint any more men of the physical size of the hon. member for Flinders he will have to enlarge the front bench, because it is getting a bit crowded. (Laughter).

There has been another change in the Ministry; the versatile Minister, the hon. member for Baroona, has taken another office. I wish to express on behalf of the Opposition regret for the fact that health reasons caused the hon. member for Rockhampton to retire. We wish him well and trust that as a result of relinquishing the duties of Minister he will make a quick recovery and soon be his old self again.

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

CHANGES IN MINISTRY.

Hon. V. C. GAIR (South Brisbane—Premier (11.39 a.m.): I desire to inform the House that on 10 March, 1952, His Excellency the Governor accepted the resignation of the Honourable James Larcombe as a Member of the Executive Council of Queensland, and as Attorney-General for Queensland.

On the same date, His Excellency appointed Ernest Joseph Riordan, Esquire, to be a Member of the Executive Council of Queensland.

His Excellency the Governor, also on 10 March, 1952, appointed—

The Honourable William Power to be Attorney-General for Queensland; and

The Honourable Ernest Joseph Riordan to be Secretary for Mines and Immigration.

I lay upon the table of the House a copy of the Government Gazette containing the relevant notifications.

I will take this opportunity of briefly, but nevertheless very sincerely, thanking the Leader of the Opposition for his very kind words of congratulation to me on my appointment to the very important and responsible position of Premier and Chief Secretary of Queensland. Naturally I am delighted to have been chosen for this very exalted position but I can assure you, Mr. Speaker and gentlemen, that I am fully conscious of the great responsibility that accompanies the honour. It will always be my desire to do the best for Queensland and its people, and I feel that if I fail it will not be because of any lack of that desire or of industry on my part. I assume the office with a great measure of confidence, because I have the loyalty and support of members of my party, and I believe I shall continue to have the support of all the right-thinking people of Queensland.

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

ELECTIONS TRIBUNAL.

JUDGE FOR 1952.

Mr. SPEAKER announced the receipt of a letter from His Honour the Chief Justice, Mr. Justice Macrossan, intimating that His Honour Mr. Justice Mack, would be the judge to preside at the sittings of the Elections Tribunal for the year 1952.

NASH ELECTION PETITION.

REPORT OF ELECTIONS TRIBUNAL.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have to report that I have received from the Elections Judge his certificate in regard to the Nash Election Petition.

“Judges’ Chambers,
“Brisbane, February 25, 1952.

“Dear Sir,

“Grant v. Dunstan.

“Enclosed herewith is my certificate under Section 117 of the Elections Acts, 1915 to 1948, relating to the above Election Petition, together with a copy of the transcript of the evidence taken at the hearing of the said Petition.

“I am also returning to your custody the electoral papers in connection with the election held on 29 April, 1950, for the Electoral District of Nash.

“Yours faithfully,
“A. Mansfield, J,

“Judge of the Elections Tribunal
for the years 1950 and 1951.

“The Hon. The Speaker of the Legislative
Assembly of Queensland,
“Parliament House,
“Brisbane.”

“In the Supreme Court of Queensland.

“Court of the Elections Tribunal for the
Trial of an Election Petition for the
Electoral District of Nash between
Henry Grant (Petitioner) and Thomas
Dunstan and Harold Bolton Carney
(Respondents).

“To—

“The Honourable the Speaker of the
Legislative Assembly of Queensland.

“Sir,

“The Petition of Henry Grant presented on 24 July, 1950, complaining of the undue election and return of Thomas Dunstan as a member of the Legislative Assembly for the Electoral District of Nash and that the said election and return were void, was tried before me, the Elections Tribunal Judge, at Gympie in the said Electoral District on the first, second, third, fourth, seventh, eighth, and twenty-ninth days of May, 1951.

“I found that the said election of the said Thomas Dunstan was not undue and void and therefore dismissed the said petition and declared upon the questions of fact and law arising before me, that the said Thomas Dunstan was duly

elected a Member of the Legislative Assembly for the Electoral District of Nash. I further ordered that the Petitioner pay to the said Thomas Dunstan his costs of the Petition limited to the sum of one hundred pounds, and that of the sum of two hundred pounds paid into Court by the Petitioner, the sum of one hundred pounds be paid out of Court to the Respondent's solicitors, and the balance of one hundred pounds plus any interest accrued upon the total sum paid in, be paid to the Petitioner's solicitors.

"The said Henry Grant instituted an appeal to the Full Court of Queensland on certain grounds appearing in his Notice of Appeal filed in this Court on 12 June, 1951.

"On 9 October, 1951, the Full Court of Queensland ordered and adjudged that the said appeal be dismissed and that the question of costs of the said appeal be adjourned to a date to be fixed.

"On the twelfth day of December, 1951, the said Full Court of Queensland ordered that the said Henry Grant pay to the said Thomas Dunstan his costs of the appeal to be taxed.

"All of which I hereby certify.

"A. Mansfield, J,

"Judge of the Elections Tribunal
for the years 1950 and 1951.

"Brisbane, the twenty-fifth day of
February, 1952."

Hon. V. C. GAIR (South Brisbane—
Premier) I move—

"That the certificate of His Honour the Elections Judge declaring that Thomas Dunstan was duly elected a member of the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Nash, be entered on the Journals of the House."

Motion agreed to.

DEATH OF HON. J. DASH.

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE.

Hon. V. C. GAIR (South Brisbane—
Premier) (11.46 a.m.), by leave, without
notice: I move—

"1. That this House desires to place on record its appreciation of the services rendered to this State by the late Hon. John Dash, a former Member of the Parliament of Queensland and a Minister of the Crown.

"2. That Mr. Speaker be requested to convey to the widow and family of the deceased gentleman the above resolution, together with an expression of the sympathy and sorrow of the Members of the Parliament of Queensland, in the loss they have sustained."

The late Mr. Dash was elected for the electoral district of Mundingburra on 9 October, 1920, and continued to represent that electorate until 23 February, 1944. He served continuously through the 22nd, 23rd,

24th, 25th, 26th, 27th, 28th, and 29th Parliaments. On 17 June, 1932 he became Minister for Transport and held that portfolio until he resigned it on 4 August, 1939. He died on 1 January of this year.

Mr. Dash was known for his serious and selfless devotion to duty. He had a great capacity for painstaking effort, and in the inner councils of the Labour Party, during the three years between 1929 and 1932 in particular, his wide experience of industrial matters and his balanced judgment were a source of great strength. Unfortunately, his regrettable accident had such an effect upon him physically as to cause him progressively to weaken, and in 1939 he was forced to resign his portfolio and become a private member of the House.

In the early days of unionism in Queensland, the late Mr. Dash, who was born at Blackall, was secretary of the Western Workers' Association and when that body joined with the Amalgamated Workers' Association to become the Australian Workers' Union he became the first Northern District secretary at Townsville. It has been officially acknowledged that virtually the whole of the awards under which members of the Australian Workers' Union operate in North Queensland today were originally piloted through the Industrial Court by the late Jack Dash. Those years of close association with unionism in the North and West gave him a thorough understanding of the daily lives of the working people, and no-one championed their cause with greater sincerity and conviction than he.

The late Mr. Dash was for a time president of the Australian Workers' Union in Queensland, and he subsequently held the position of vice-president of that body for many years. He had a quiet manner and his voice was seldom raised in anger; he had a very kindly and sympathetic disposition towards all men. He was most helpful to younger members of the party and I remember clearly when I came into this Parliament in 1932, prior to the late gentlemen's meeting with his unfortunate accident, listening on innumerable occasions with rapt interest to the late Jack Dash's stories of his industrial experiences prior to his entry into Parliament.

As I said before, Mr. Dash's advice to the Government on industrial matters was invaluable. It can be said that in every way he served the Labour Party in this State with distinction, and I feel that he served the State of Queensland also and its people with advantage. I do not think he had an enemy in this House, nor anywhere else for that matter. All hon. members were deeply shocked by the unfortunate accident that deprived him of his health and strength, and now that he has passed into the Great Silence, I am sure we speak sincerely when we express our sympathy with his widow and family.

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. NICKLIN (Landsborough—Leader of the Opposition) (11.53 a.m.): In seconding the motion moved by the Premier I associate all members of the Opposition in the

condolence of the House with the relatives of the late John Dash. Most of us who were in Parliament in 1932 and before then remember the late gentleman for his unassuming manner and his likable personality. He was at all times very approachable, particularly when a Minister of the Crown, and he gave very close attention to any request made to him.

As the Premier has said, the late Mr. Dash gave great service to the Labour Party and as a result, when the Forgan Smith Ministry was appointed in 1932, he was appointed Minister for Transport. During the time he occupied that portfolio he carried out his duties with credit to himself and advantage to his party. He had a great capacity for analysing various problems and I remember Mr. Forgan Smith saying to me on one or two occasions that if ever he wanted a Bill analysed he gave it to John Dash and could feel assured in a very short time the late gentleman would find out whether there were any niggers in the wood pile. It is unfortunate that he should have met with his accident in the course of his duties as Minister for Transport and that as a result he suffered for many years a painful illness before at last he crossed the Great Divide. During the time he was a member of this Parliament he made valuable contribution to the work of Parliament and to the advancement of this State, and his family can be proud of the record he built up. We of the Opposition join in extending to them our personal sympathy for the great loss they have sustained.

Motion agreed to, hon. members standing in silence.

DATES FOR BY-ELECTION.

ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF ITHACA.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have to inform the House that, in accordance with the direction of the 10th Section of the Legislative Assembly Act of 1867, I issued a writ this day for the election of a member to serve in the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Ithaca in the room of the Honourable Edward Michael Hanlon, deceased. The dates appointed are—

Issue of Writ—Tuesday, 11 March, 1952.

Nomination Day—Friday, 21 March, 1952.

Polling Day—Saturday, 5 April, 1952.

Return of Writ—Wednesday, 23 April, 1952.

PAPERS.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Orders in Council under the State Development and Public Works Organisation Acts, 1938 to 1951 (6 December, 1951).

Regulations under the Public Service Acts, 1922 to 1950 (14 February).

Proclamation under the Public Works Land Resumption Acts, 1906 to 1951, and the State Development and Public Works Organisation Acts, 1938 to 1951 (28 February).

Order in Council under the Racing Limitation Act of 1946 (29 November, 1951).

Regulation under the Labour and Industry Act of 1946 (31 January).

Regulations under—The Stock Routes and Rural Lands Protection Act of 1944 (31 January), the Land Acts, 1910 to 1951 (28 February), the State Forests and National Parks Acts, 1906 to 1948 (28 February).

Orders in Council under—The Stock Routes and Rural Lands Protection Acts, 1944 to 1951 (3) (7 February), the Rural Fires Acts, 1946 to 1951 (3) (28 February).

Orders in Council under—The Abattoirs Acts, 1930 to 1949 (14 February), the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Acts, 1926 to 1951 (28 February).

Regulations under the Abattoirs Acts, 1930 to 1949 (14 February), the Banana Industry Protection Acts, 1929 to 1937 (17 January), the Dairy Produce Acts, 1920 to 1944 (6 December, 1951), the Diseases in Stock Acts, 1915 to 1950 (8), the Fruit Marketing Organisation Acts, 1923 to 1945 (9), the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Acts, 1926 to 1951 (17 January, 28 February).

Orders in Council (2) under the Labour and Industry Act of 1946 (22 November, 1951, 10 January).

Regulations under the Fish Supply Management Acts, 1935 to 1951 (10 January), the Statistical Returns Acts, 1896 to 1935 (7 February).

Orders in Council under the Landlord and Tenant Acts, 1948 to 1950 (5), the Profiteering Prevention Act of 1948 (3), the Magistrates Courts Act of 1921 (2) (10 January, 7 February), the Aliens Acts, 1867 to 1948 (36), the Financial Emergency Act of 1931 (2) (13 December, 1951), the Purchasers of Homes Relief Acts, 1930 to 1932 (13 December, 1951), the Lessees' Relief Acts, 1931 to 1932 (13 December, 1951), the Supreme Court Act of 1921 (4).

Proclamation under the Aliens Acts, 1867 to 1948 (28 February).

Regulations under the State Children Acts, 1911 to 1943 (22 November, 1951), the Traffic Act of 1949 (10 January), the Hospitals Acts, 1936 to 1946 (17 January).

By-laws under the Opticians Acts, 1917 to 1939 (28 February).

Regulation under the Motor Spirit Vendors Acts, 1933 to 1934 (17 January).

Order in Council under the Roofing Tiles Act of 1949 (21 February).

Proclamations under the Valuation of Land Acts, 1944 to 1951, proclaiming the first valuations of portions of the area of the City of Brisbane, viz.: the Divisions of Stephens, Enoggera, Yeerongpilly, Ithaca, Belmont, Taringa.

QUESTION.

SCHOOL TRANSPORT, ABERGOWRIE.

Mr. JESSON (Hinchinbrook), without notice, asked the Secretary for Public Instruction—

“Has his attention been drawn to the letter in today's issue of the “*Courier-Mail*” regarding school transport, written by Ronald G. Hooper, head teacher, state school, Long Pocket; if so, has he any comment to make.”

Hon. G. H. DEVRIES (Gregory) replied—

“I have read the article in the “*Courier-Mail*” of today's date regarding school transport. We all know that recently the hon. member for Coorparoo, who holds the high and exalted office of Leader of the Liberal Party of Queensland—and who should be a leader of the party and not a mis-leader of it—toured the North of Queensland and that his mission was merely to get what muck he could to throw at the Government on his return to Brisbane. I am making this statement in defence of a teacher in my department in North Queensland. The hon. member for Coorparoo, on his return to Brisbane, deliberately endeavoured to mislead the people of Queensland and particularly endeavoured to besmirch the name of a good teacher.”

Mr. Nicklin: What right have you to say that?

Hon. G. H. DEVRIES: The Leader of the Opposition asks what right I have to make that statement and I shall answer his question by quoting the letter that appears in today's “*Courier-Mail*.” It is as follows:—

“School Transport.

“Mr. Hiley, the leader of the Liberal Party, upon his return from his Northern tour, criticised the school transport from the Abergowrie area on the grounds ‘that the children remain on the road for hours after school waiting for their bus.’

“This statement is absolutely wrong and misleading. The bus in question serves three schools, Long Pocket, Trebonne, and Trebonne Convent. On its return trip leaving Ingham at 3.30 p.m., it frequently waits five to seven minutes at Trebonne for children to walk up from their schools, arriving at Long Pocket at 4.15 p.m.

“The children of the Long Pocket School are dismissed at 3.35, and remain within the school grounds playing under the supervision of their teachers until the arrival of the bus. A period of 40 minutes, and not hours, as stated by Mr. Hiley. At no time do they wait by the roadside.

“The statement regarding the time of departure, 7 a.m., and time of arrival, 6 p.m., is correct. But as the journey each way is more than 25 miles and the bus carries mail and runs to a regular time-table arranged by the Transport Board, this cannot be avoided.

“The bus proprietor has ready a special bus, which he can bring into commission and run to a more suitable time-table as soon as the number of the children in that area is sufficient to provide a reasonable return.—Ronald G. Hooper, Head Teacher, State School, Long Pocket, North Queensland.”

That is my reply to the Leader of the Opposition who asked what right I had to accuse the hon. member for Coorparoo of misleading the people and besmirching the good name of a teacher. After my explanation the hon. member should be decent enough to offer an apology to the teacher for besmirching his good name.

ORDER IN HOUSE.

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra), proceeding to give notice of question: Do not get excited, George.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. AIKENS: You cannot fool the North.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I warn the hon. member early in the proceedings of this Parliament that if he continues to disregard my call to order and to misbehave I shall have to deal drastically with him.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Mr. LARCOMBE (Rockhampton) (12.17 p.m.), by leave: I wish to make a personal explanation.

In connection with my announcement to the Parliamentary Labour Party of my intended resignation as Attorney-General, the “*Courier-Mail*” reported me, on Saturday last, as saying—

“Mr. Lacombe told colleagues he had not been in good health for some time and he did not intend to remain in harness and be killed by work, like the late Prime Minister (Mr. Chifley) and the late Premier (Mr. Hanlon).”

Mr. Speaker, I give that report an emphatic denial. I did not utter such arrogant, selfish and uncouth remarks, nor did I have the presumption to use the names of those two great leaders in regard to any action that I was about to take. I am sure that the Hon. Premier, who was chairman of the meeting, will verify my denial if necessary.

I should be pleased if the “*Courier-Mail*” would publish my disclaimer.

PANEL OF TEMPORARY CHAIRMEN.

NOMINATION OF MR. J. A. TURNER.

Mr. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the requirements of Standing Order No. 13, I nominate John Albert Turner, Esquire, Member for the electoral district of Kelvin Grove, to fill the vacancy in the Panel of Temporary Chairmen caused by the appointment of Mr. Riordan to the Ministry.

WORKERS' ACCOMMODATION BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Farrell, Maryborough, in the chair.)

Hon. A. JONES (Charters Towers—Secretary for Labour and Industry) (12.19 p.m.): I move—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to consolidate and amend the law relating to the provision of accommodation for workers.”

The title of the Bill indicates something of its nature; it is to consolidate and amend the Workers' Accommodation Act. The Act has been on the Statute Book of the State for many years and there are certain anomalies to be rectified; but apart from that, only three or four new principles are being introduced. I shall outline them as I proceed.

The Act provided for the same districts as those constituted under the Shearers and Sugar Workers' Accommodation Acts, 1905 to 1906 which enacted that the districts should be the sheep districts under the Act for the prevention and cure of diseases in sheep. These were defined in the Government Gazette of 19 February, 1899, and hon. members will thus realise that the Act has become somewhat outdated. They have no relation to the districts served by our inspectors at the present time and we have found some difficulty in taking action against employers in parts of the State. In one or two cases prosecutions we have launched have been held invalid by industrial magistrates because of these variations in districts and therefore it is necessary not only to make the Act clear, but to cut out the districts altogether. The Act is of State-wide application and there is no reason for the constitution of districts.

The Act is being tidied up in one or two other respects. In the first place, there is some doubt whether an employer is legally obliged to provide the prescribed accommodation for his workers if an order to do so has not been served upon him by an inspector. It was held by an industrial magistrate some time ago that because an order to do certain work had not been served upon an employer by the department, the prosecution must fail, and it did. We appealed to the Industrial Court and our appeal was upheld but we are now removing any ambiguity in that respect.

Mr. Athens: You might as well say that the employee need not be paid the award wages.

Mr. A. JONES: An industrial magistrate held as I have indicated. As to workers' accommodation generally, I might say that the recent Royal Commission on Pastoral Lands Settlement had this to say in its reported dated 13 November, 1951:

“We consider that action should be taken by an amendment of the Workers' Accommodation Act, to provide for improved accommodation for station workers, particularly in regard to the ceiling of quarters, lighting and water and

also that consideration be given to the necessity for the provision of adequate and suitable accommodation for married men.”

I would point out—and hon. members realise this—that the Act only lays down a minimum standard of accommodation. Certain employers provide accommodation above the required standard, and see that their workers have decent accommodation, but there are many—and this applies to the big pastoral companies—who provide accommodation of the coolie standard. When I worked in the shearing industry some 25 to 30 years ago I found that the accommodation in some places was very poor and in the last five or six years I have visited again some of the properties I knew and have found that very little has been done to improve it.

Only a few days ago, 4 March, 1952, an article appeared in “The Courier-Mail” under the name of K. P. Logan, which was written from his property at Richmond in North-West Queensland. Mr. Logan, who is fairly well known in pastoral circles, spoke about inducing migrants to take up work in rural districts and said—

“To revert to the migrant labour suggestion—in England and Europe the farmhands usually live in the nearby village, in a solidly built reasonably comfortable cottage with the village pub or inn, dance, halls and amusements close handy.”

“How long would these people be content to remain stuck out on a back-track farm or selection in the corrugated iron shanties which pass for workers' accommodation in Queensland?”

That man has a property of his own at Richmond. He knows something about these things, and what he says is true.

I believe that one of the greatest factors in keeping people from taking up work today in our rural industries is the lack of amenities that could easily be provided by employers. Of course, some employers are providing them. One employer, who is well known—I do not want to mention his name—provides septic tanks and other amenities for the station hands in exactly the same way as in his own residence. There is no reason why all these facilities should not be provided for pastoral employees, for if we are to attract people to the country we shall have to do something better than keep them on coolie standards.

“The Sunday Mail” recently conducted a survey among young fellows of 18 to 22 who were employed on pastoral properties to discover their reactions to the life, and every one said that the accommodation provided was so crude that he intended to leave and return to the cities. There was a time, of course—and nobody knows it better than I—when selectors found it very hard to provide the accommodation set out in the Act, but things have changed since then. There is no reason why, for instance, inspectors of the Department of Labour and Industry last year should have had to issue to employers 583 orders to provide proper accommodation for their employees. The orders covered such

matters as sleeping-room alterations, meat houses, bathrooms, washhouses, drinking-water facilities, and lavatory accommodation. I know that hon. members opposite will make all sorts of excuses and say that materials have not been available and consequently it has not been possible to provide the prescribed accommodation, but many of Queensland's big pastoralists today provide accommodation for their employees that is very little better than it was in the early 90s, when the shearers' strike took place.

I refer hon. members to the following comments by the Chief Inspector of Factories and Shops in his report for the year ended 30 June, 1950:—

“Much is written these days deploring the drift of population from the country to the cities and lack of amenities is one of the reasons given for such drift. I suggest that employers of rural labour can help to an appreciable extent in arresting the drift by making employment conditions more attractive, particularly for those workers who are required to live on the job. The Workers' Accommodation Acts and industrial awards prescribe the minimum standards which must be provided, but there is no limit on the maximum standards. Youths will not leave their homes to work in the country and parents are loth to allow them to do so unless the living conditions approximate home conditions. For many years lack of finance was advanced by some employers as the reason for their failure to provide the minimum prescribed accommodation. At the present time it is doubtful whether any employer in the agricultural or pastoral industries can attribute his workers' accommodation shortcomings to financial stringency.”

And so he goes on.

I am making the point that, if they so desired, employers could do something about providing reasonable accommodation. At present the Act makes provision for the supply of water coolers. That provision was brought down in 1946, and at that time, one after another, hon. members opposite objected to it as if it were out of all reason. On this occasion we are making provision that refrigerators shall be supplied in lieu of water coolers. I believe that employers who employ a number of men should provide refrigerators for them. About 12 months ago I went to the trouble of having a survey taken by our industrial inspectors in the south-western part of the State, and I found that a large percentage of employers there were already providing refrigerators for their employees. As a matter of fact, I have a list of their names. After all, the provision of refrigerators is reasonable and I believe that no decent-minded person would argue that it is not.

Mr. Sparkes: Are you referring now to married men?

Mr. A. JONES: No, I am referring to cases where, for example, five or six station-hands and a cook are employed. Where the Act says that coolers shall be supplied the Bill stipulates that refrigerators shall be

supplied. It will depend to some extent on the number of employees engaged. For instance, where only two men are employed they will not engage a cook but will have their meals at the homestead where perhaps the wife of the owner of the property or someone else will cook the meals for them and for others on the property. The refrigerators will be required, for instance, at shearing sheds and on other jobs where there are a considerable number of employees. In the past we have had difficulty in persuading employers to install coolers. I am not suggesting that a refrigerator shall be supplied say, to a man baching out on the run.

Mr. Morris: What are the conditions that demand that coolers shall be supplied at the present time?

Mr. A. JONES: They are laid down in the Act and the hon. member can read them for himself. It is provided that they were to be installed at shearing sheds, and in the sugar industry to a very large extent. However, about 15 months ago the Government decided that refrigerators should be provided on all Main Roads and Forestry jobs and they have been provided ever since. Therefore we are only asking private industry to do what we are already doing ourselves.

The present Act provides that complaints shall be heard by a stipendiary magistrate with the right of appeal to the Full Court of the Supreme Court of Queensland. The Bill now provides that complaints under the Act shall be heard before an industrial magistrate with the right of appeal to the Industrial Court. Similar provisions exist in the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act and Factories and Shops Act. It is thought desirable that the right of appeal from decision in the lower court should be to the Industrial Court rather than to a court with the standing of the Full Court of the Supreme Court. That is only a reasonable proposal; workers' accommodation is an industrial matter and it is logical that complaints under it should be heard before an industrial magistrate.

Those are the important provisions of the Bill, apart from the fact that it is a consolidating measure. There are some minor important changes, such as improved definitions in certain circumstances. There will, for example, be more detailed power for inspectors in connection with what constitute the obstruction of an inspector. The Bill provides for the omission of districts, as I have explained, and of course there is provision for the supply of refrigerators, perhaps the most important condition of all. The duty of providing the accommodation rests on the owner of the premises as well as on the person entitled to immediate possession. The Bill contains more detailed power relating to the provision of temporary accommodation and makes it clear that an employer will be required to provide the prescribed accommodation even though an order has not been served upon him by an inspector. The Bill appears to be a bulky document but that is only because it is a consolidating measure. Procedure has been simplified and general

the Bill is one that I have had in mind to introduce ever since I became associated with the department. Anomalies have occurred in the past, particularly in relation to the districts, and as there is no need for districts there is no reason why they should be continued in the Bill and so complicate matters. I have much pleasure in moving the motion.

Mr. SPARKES (Aubigny) (12.35): There is no doubt that the Minister was sincere in his introduction of the measure but it was rather amusing to hear him on the subject of workers' accommodation. He reminded me of the man who belted his kids and then went along to the school teacher to see that they were well looked after and were not caned.

I suggest that the Minister in charge of the Bill start at home and ask his own Government to do some of the jobs that he is advocating in this Chamber. I belong to the school of thought that believes that if other people are required to do certain things I should set an example by first doing them myself. That is what the Government should be doing here. The worst offender in the State in regard to workers' accommodation is the Railway Department.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is not in order in discussing the Railway Act.

Mr. SPARKES: I am not discussing the Railway Act. I am only discussing the employer under this Bill. The Minister said that they were only asking us to do something that they did themselves. Let the hon. gentleman come up next week and travel down from my area on a special train with cattle and he will see the deplorable conditions under which the stock attendant has to travel. The accommodation provided is not fit for a blackfellow.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. A. Jones: You are talking all round it.

Mr. SPARKES: I am dealing with accommodation.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. SPARKES: I bow to your ruling. Of course, it hurts and the Government do not like it. Some of the schools are overcrowded and lack proper facilities.

It is all very well for the hon. gentleman to suggest these improvements, but will he tell us where we can get the materials with which to make the improvements? His colleague the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock will confirm what I say. Let the hon. gentleman get some more cement, which is necessary for the construction of bathroom floors. I was fortunate—the Minister got me some the other day—but generally speaking it is almost impossible to get it.

Mr. A. Jones: It has taken some of them 40 years and then they have not got it.

Mr. SPARKES: It has taken the hon. gentleman's department well over 40 years and then it has not given decent quarters.

Mr. A. Jones: What do you refer to?

Mr. SPARKES: I refer to what the Chairman will not let me speak of. (Laughter.)

Mr. A. Jones: If you send cattle down the drover is your employee.

Mr. SPARKES: I do not have to provide the train for him to sit in; the Railway Department provides that. I pay for the train and the accommodation, which is poor and no better than that afforded by a hovel. The drover would be more comfortable riding in with the cattle.

A Government Member: You would make him walk if you could.

Mr. SPARKES: He could walk as fast as the train anyway. (Laughter.)

I agree with the Minister in regard to the provision of refrigerators for married men. I think it is good business; I told the House many years ago that I provided a refrigerator for the married men in my employ. Meat is the staple diet in the country and most of it is supplied by the station, and if the men have a refrigerator they can keep the meat much longer and there is little waste.

Mr. A. Jones: It does not only apply to the married men.

Mr. SPARKES: I am coming to that. We have introduced some silly provisions in regard to accommodation. I ask the hon. gentleman, who is an old shearer, whether he has not noticed the gauze doors all wide open at any shed.

Mr. A. Jones: That is to let the flies out. (Laughter.)

Mr. SPARKES: And let the hon. gentleman in. (Laughter.) There is a provision in the Act about providing boarded mattresses but in our district we find that the men do not like to camp on them. It is necessary to approach this matter sensibly. If you are going to lay down that two or three single men must have a refrigerator you will have all sorts of trouble. I agree that they should be provided for married men.

Mr. A. Jones interjected.

Mr. SPARKES: It would be simply childish to lay it down that you must send a refrigerator out to a boundary rider's hut.

As to different districts, I hold the view that if Smith lives at Dalby and Jones at Roma, the employees of both should have similar conditions.

Mr. Jones: Of course, this is a very old Act.

Mr. SPARKES: That is so, and I suggest to the Minister that he and his colleagues might well consider amending the Fencing Act; it, too, is very old.

We shall wait until we see the Bill, but at this stage we feel that it would be well for the Minister to put his own house in order before ordering other people to do all these things.

There is also the matter of cooking for different people and that merely brings me back to the provision of a refrigerator for a married man and his family. The wives of several employees might all do cooking and it would be unnecessary to provide six refrigerators, for instance, if the men are all together. But I leave that point to the hon. member for Roma; I repeat that in all these things we should be guided by sane, sound principles, and not attempt something that is not practicable. Again I ask any hon. member of this Assembly who has been to shearing sheds whether he has not seen the gauze doors propped open. I reserve further comment until I see the Bill.

Mr. NICKLIN (Landsborough—Leader of the Opposition) (12.45 p.m.): We on this side have approved at all times of any proposal by Ministers to consolidate their legislation and bring it up to date. In this instance the Minister is taking a wise step in connection with workers' accommodation legislation because it is undoubtedly out of date in many respects and requires consolidation. We have no objection whatsoever to that, and we agree with the general principle of providing decent accommodation for workers but we say that the instances quoted by the Minister, in which certain employers had not brought their accommodation up to the required standard, are the exception rather than the rule. The majority of employers in this State make an honest endeavour to bring the accommodation of their employees up to modern requirements. If they did not do that, they would, in this period of shortage of labour, be unable to get employees. It is to the employer's advantage to provide the best possible accommodation for his employees, because in that way he attracts better workers and gets better results from them.

At the same time, it is not fair that we should lay down certain standards for one set of employers in the community and absolve others entirely, as we do by this legislation. We lay down all sorts of accommodation standards for the private employer, but the Government make no attempt whatever to bring the accommodation of their employees up to the standard they require of private employers.

Mr. A. Jones: To what employees do you refer?

Mr. NICKLIN: We have a splendid example in the employees of the Railway Department.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. NICKLIN: Why am I being called to order?

The CHAIRMAN: I do not intend to allow the Railways Act to be discussed.

Mr. NICKLIN: I am not discussing the Railways Act; I am replying to a question by the Minister. Surely I can quote illustrations to make the point I am bringing before the Committee? To put the matter beyond doubt, I move—

“Add to the question the words—

‘including the provision that the Act shall apply to the employees of all Government departments.’”

We have no need to go very far to find examples where it is necessary that the provisions of this Act should be applied to employees of Government departments. In the first place let me take the Department of Railways, which is a notable example of a Government department providing sub-standard accommodation for its employees. If any private employer provided the standard of accommodation that department does for many of its employees, he would jolly soon find himself in court with an officer of the Minister's department prosecuting him for not providing decent accommodation for his employees. If we are to pass legislation in this Chamber requiring private employers to provide a certain standard of accommodation for their employees, it should be incumbent upon the Government to provide the same standard for their employees. In fact, it should not be necessary to do this; the Government should set an example to the private employer. Every time the Estimates of the Department of Railways are debated in this Chamber hon. members on both sides of the Committee complain about the standard of accommodation provided for many railway workers, but the Government have not done anything about that accommodation. It is essential that whilst amending this Act that we should make certain that the conditions we set out shall apply to all employers in the State, Government and private. If we did that we should be doing a good job for the workers of Queensland. At the present time the Government are the biggest employers of labour in the State and should set an example to other employers but instead of setting an example in the matter of decent accommodation they set an example of what should not be provided.

Mr. A. Jones: Give us some information and some examples.

Mr. NICKLIN: The Minister in his travels through the State has surely seen the deplorable conditions under which many railway employees are working and we find similar conditions amongst the employees of other Government departments. Certain Government departments, such as the Main Roads Commission and the Sub-Department of Forestry, after a considerable amount of agitation by the men employed by them, have brought their standard of accommodation up to reasonable requirements. Might I say however, that not so very long ago the conditions under which many Forestry employees had to work were no credit to the Government; as the result of agitation by the men themselves, and by their union, and because of the sympathetic consideration given to them

matter by senior officers of the department, the standard of accommodation provided today is not too bad.

Mr. A. Jones interjected.

Mr. NICKLIN: The Minister implies that these senior officers had nothing to do with the raising of the standard of accommodation but I know differently. I know that many senior officers of the sub-department went out of their way to improve the conditions of the employees within it and as a result they stopped the very considerable turnover of labour that occurred in forestry camps. Before that action was taken very few men employed in the sub-department stayed beyond the first pay day; when they got their first pay they went looking for fresh fields of employment. The standard of accommodation has been improved and employees—

Mr. A. Jones: When I was Secretary for Public Lands and Irrigation I was in conference for a day with the late Mr. Clarric Fallon and Mr. Bukowski on forestry accommodation. I know the attention that the present Minister has given to accommodation requirements. He has been responsible for great improvements.

Mr. NICKLIN: That bears out my contention. The Minister must admit as the result of his investigations, that the standard of accommodation was not as high as it should have been. I know that he is sincere in his efforts to improve the accommodation standards of the employees of this State irrespective of whether they are employed by the Government or by private enterprise, but let him demonstrate, by accepting this amendment, that he and his Government are prepared to give to their employees exactly the same standards as they compel private employers to give. If he does that there will be no objection from this side of the Chamber. When we are dealing with workers' accommodation it is essential that our legislation should apply to every employee of this State, irrespective of whether he is employed by the Government or by private enterprise. That is only fair, particularly when we consider many of the provisions that are included in the Workers' Accommodation Act.

Not very long ago an amendment was passed in this Chamber regarding the colours in which workers' accommodation should be painted, and that amendment disclosed certain anomalies. After all, possibly the same thing could apply to refrigerators. We agree that a refrigerator should be installed where a sufficient number of men are employed to warrant the use of one, but in our opinion it is not reasonable to insist on the installation of a refrigerator where there are only one or two employees, or where it would be used for only a few weeks each year. That would be just as absurd as the motion that came before the recent A.W.U. conference in Mackay asking that the services of a trained nurse be provided at all shearing sheds. As I say, that would be an absurd request and it shows the tendency of some of the irresponsible in the union movement at the present time.

What we on this side of the Committee are endeavouring to secure is that employees throughout the State, whether they are employed by the Government, by local authorities or by private enterprise, shall have a decent standard of accommodation. We do not agree with any legislation that exempts from its provisions such a large section of the employees of this State as those who are employed by the Government.

I move the amendment in the hope that the Minister will accept his responsibility as Secretary for Labour and Industry, and the Government will accept their responsibility and ensure that employees of the Government enjoy a decent standard of accommodation.

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra) (2.15 p.m.): The oratorical gyrations of the Leader of the Opposition are always a source of infinite amusement to me. Today he said that the working conditions of forestry employees and others employed by the Government were improved as a result of union agitation and union action—I believe that they were; I applaud union agitation and union action—but every time anyone suggests that the workers should improve their living conditions or their wages by union agitation and union action the Leader of the Opposition brands them as Reds and Coms and wants punitive action taken against them.

However, I agree with the Minister, who said that in order to keep people in the country, to stop the drift from the country to the city it is necessary to improve the living conditions and the amenities of the workers in the country areas of the State. An idea is prevalent in some quarters that while city workers are entitled to the best possible conditions country workers should be content with the cawdung floor, the hurricane lamp, corned beef and damper—and a tin of treacle every Christmas. Those days, I hope, are gone forever. I can remember the time when I first went to work in the north-western part of the State at a shearing shed on a pretty big property that shore between 50,000 and 60,000 sheep. You can see that it was not a selector's property. There the shearers and the rouseabouts were housed in a galvanised hut divided into small rooms that were unlined and unceiled. The beds were flat wooden slabs on posts on each side of the doors with a third one across the back of the little room. All that we had for illumination was either a fat lamp or a kerosene lamp. The older shearers told me that that was a distinct improvement on what obtained on western stations a few years before, when they used to have double-decker or three-decker bunks, and of course all of them of wood. All that we had for a mattress was a wool bale, which we pinched from the shearing shed and filled with grass until shearing started, when we would pinch a little bit of wool to put into the bale in place of the grass.

So that if we are going to keep the people in the country, if we are going to entice workers to go to the country it is obvious that we must improve the amenities of the people who go to work there. In almost every

town of any size in Queensland today the people have become accustomed to wooden dwellings that are ceiled either wholly or in part. They have become accustomed to electric light and power, they have become accustomed to reticulated water, and in many places they have become accustomed to sewerage. So that you cannot expect a worker to go out into the bush and be content with the coudung floor, the hurricane lamp, and corned beef and damper.

I do, however, agree with the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition. He really beat me to the punch, as I intended to move it. A similar amendment was moved some years ago either by the former member for Bowen or the former member for Bulimba when a similar measure was going through the Chamber. This Bill should apply to all Government instrumentalities and Government jobs. Because I am an ex-railway man I can speak from experience of the deplorable conditions under which many railway employees have to live. The Minister in charge of the Bill cannot deny what I say on the point nor would the Minister for Transport, if he were present in the Chamber, contradict my views in any way. Young railway workers who are sent to outside centres and outside stations are walking off their jobs simply because of the poor accommodation provided for them and in some instances because no accommodation is available at all. Young night officers and other traffic employees are sent to responsible positions in outside stations and have to camp on the veranda of the goods shed or under the goods shed, if there happens to be a goods shed. If there is no goods shed they are not even supplied with tents. Fettlers and others are supplied with canvas tents and the most primitive cooking utensils.

That is why the Railway Department cannot attract young men to its service today—because of the deplorable accommodation and in some cases the lack of accommodation in outside centres. There are many well established camps, but there are some fettlers' camps in Queensland where the accommodation is not even up to the shanty class. It is still down in the gonyah class. If the Minister wants a list of the stations where this class of accommodation is provided I am happy to inform him that the secretary of the Queensland branch of the Australian Railways Union, which has been fighting for years for better accommodation for railway employees, will be only too happy to give him a list of the stations and depots where the accommodation is definitely sub-standard. So far their representations have been of little avail because the Government contend that they cannot be prosecuted for a breach of their own laws if they fail to provide accommodation within the terms of the Act. The Crown can do no wrong, is their contention. The Government can get over that—and this might be incorporated in the Bill—by making provision that the Government shall make the Commissioner for Railways responsible for failing to provide this accommodation, and then the union could summon the Commissioner for a breach of the Act, as the

union can now summon him for a breach of the award. We can get over it in that way—if the Government are afraid that by including the amendment the Government will be liable to prosecution.

In the far west and other areas where the temperature is torrid, there are big railway quarters where what are known as foreign men camp every day. By foreign men I mean men from other depots. For instance, a Bundaberg man who works to Maryborough is a foreign man when at Maryborough, and the man who works from Maryborough to Bundaberg is a foreign man at Bundaberg. It is a railway term applied to men who are camping in depots other than their own. The department provides some very good quarters in which these men may sleep and eat while resting. Time and again the Australian Railways Union has made representations to the Department for the installation of refrigerators where scores of men are coming and going all day. Recently I made personal representation for refrigerators in quarters in the Northern Division and the Minister told me that there were other important works on hand. When the union has made representations to the Minister for Transport and the Government for the provision of a decent standard of accommodation for the workers, the old parrot cry is raised, "There are no men and materials." If the Government can use that cry to dodge their responsibilities they cannot blame the private employer for using the same old cry. It is obvious that a law that operates against one section of the community and not against another is unjust and inequitable. The Government should not make laws that will bind a private employer to do something the Government are not prepared to do.

I support the amendment; it is something I have always advocated. There should not be one law for a private employer and another for the Government; we should make one law for all employers. This is a case where the Act is being amended to provide that private employers shall provide certain amenities; and I see no valid reason why the Government should not be made to face up to their own responsibilities.

Mr. LLOYD ROBERTS (Whitsunday) (2.25 p.m.): After listening to the Minister's remarks I perhaps got a wrong impression—that the Government had seen the light and were going to do something about the problem the Bill seeks to deal with. That was emphasised when the Minister referred to the finding of the Royal Commission on Pastoral Lands and said that some of the pastoral companies had provided very reasonable accommodation, whereas others provided very poor accommodation, some of which was only up to the coolie standard. I wondered whether I heard that word correctly or whether it was the "coal" standard. A few months ago I drew attention to the condition of the single men's accommodation at the State-owned coal-mines in Collinsville.

Mr. Power: There are still vacant houses there.

Mr. LLOYD ROBERTS: That is correct. If you read my speech you will see that I said that there were vacant houses but not for single men. Three or four single men made application to get a Housing Commission house but the department did not approve of the proposal. I still have a few photographs of huts at Collinsville. After I had delivered my previous speech, and after one of those photographs had been published, the hut mentioned was demolished and taken away within seven days. But they did not take all the huts and it would be lovely to see a refrigerator in one of those of which I still have photographs.

Mr. Aikens: Some of those huts are not big enough to hold a refrigerator.

Mr. LLOYD ROBERTS: That is true. I understand that recently the adjoining mine, Bowen Consolidated, was taken over by the Mt. Isa Company. I understand also that very shortly that company will erect modern quarters in Collinsville for single men, quarters similar to those provided at Mt. Isa now, which are an object lesson to any institution.

I strongly support the amendment moved by our leader because, apart from anything else, it should mean the cleaning up of things at Collinsville and then perhaps there will be no such difficulty as shortage of labour.

As to refrigerators, I believe I can remember an election promise of some years ago of a refrigerator in every home. Since then I have been wondering where a start will be made. Now I can see the start. There will be a refrigerator in every home and it will be provided by the employers. If the State Government begin putting a refrigerator in each of their homes also, we shall soon be well on the road to fulfilling that promise.

Mr. Jones: As a matter of fact, all Government departments, such as Main Roads and Forestry, issued instructions two years ago that refrigerators must be provided.

Mr. LLOYD ROBERTS: And it is nearly two years since I delivered my maiden speech in this Chamber. At that time I made an appeal to the Government to sell refrigerators through the Railway Department to railway lengthsmen. These men did not want the refrigerators free; they were prepared to buy them. They should have been able to obtain them at a cheap rate from the department and they were prepared to pay for them, having so much deducted from their pay over two or three years. They might provide refrigerators on Main Roads jobs to keep things cool and to preserve meat—

Mr. Gair: They usually do.

Mr. LLOYD ROBERTS: I am glad the Premier has sufficient intelligence to understand that. We agree that refrigerators should be provided, but the requirement should apply not merely to one section but to all sections, Government employees in particular.

Mr. ALLPASS (Condamine) (2.32 p.m.): I have very great pleasure in supporting the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition.

The Minister asked the Leader of the Opposition to quote one instance in which the Government have not lived up to their obligations. The implication there was that he could not quote such an instance and, that being so, the Government had nothing to fear. If they are living up to their obligation and doing what they expect the private employer to do there is no need for worry.

Mr. Aikens: They should not be afraid of the amendment.

Mr. ALLPASS: That is what I mean. There is nothing to worry about and they should accept the amendment.

If the Government accepts this amendment the effect upon public opinion will be good, but if the amendment is rejected the reverse will be the case.

Employers should provide the best possible accommodation for their employees. Any employer who does not do so is only a fool. Permanent employees should have the best possible accommodation, and it is in the interests of the employer to provide it, but there is a difference between what should be provided for a permanent employee and what is required by a temporary employee. To my mind certain things required for the permanent employee are unnecessary for the temporary employee.

Mr. Jones: Do you not realise that the temporary employee, such as the shearer, is living in somebody's accommodation all the year round?

Mr. ALLPASS: I do. I think that some of the provisions in relation to accommodation for shearers are not necessary; some of them could be replaced by others that I think are more necessary. Don't ask me to tell the Minister what they are; it is his job to know. I have never yet met a shearer who has said that blinds on the veranda of his quarters were necessary. Every room has to have a 7-ft. veranda and there is a provision in the award that the employer has to place blinds on that veranda. I have never heard of any more ridiculous a requirement than that in my life and I have not met a shearer who thought these blinds necessary. That expense could be avoided and something else done that would be of more benefit to employees. Some say that gauzing is not necessary; it is a matter of opinion. More often than not you will see the gauze doors open.

Mr. A. Jones: It is the old, old story—don't give the shearer too much because he abuses it.

Mr. ALLPASS: It is a matter of opinion whether these things should be done or not. I cannot see any objection to the Government's being under the same obligation to their employees as the private employer is to his. I am in accord with the principle that employers shall supply the best possible accommodation. Those who have not

done this realise that they are fools to themselves; they are fools to their own interests, if they do not look after their employees. If an employer has good employees he should look after them because then he will keep them, because it is not always a matter of wages that keeps an employee with the employer, it is the way the employer treats his employees and the conditions he gives them. If they are good men they are worth looking after. I like the men working for me to consider they are working with me and to have the same conditions as I would like.

Mr. Gair: That is a healthy state of mind.

Mr. MORRIS (Mt. Coot-tha) (2.36 p.m.): I find myself utterly at variance with any principle that will permit the Government's employing their own people under conditions that are very much less satisfactory than those that apply to private employers. The amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition is a very satisfactory one from more than one point of view. It is satisfactory because it will remove an unfair law that permits the Government to impose conditions or regulations on employers—small employers struggling to make ends meet—but exempts the Government from the application of those conditions to their own employees. The present state of affairs is fundamentally wrong and I cannot see how any Government can pursue such a principle.

It will be of advantage to consider whether this principle is in operation in other States. For example, let me read Section 6 of the Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment Act of 1951 passed in New South Wales. It will be very instructive to the Minister and the members of Cabinet to listen to this—

“The principal Act is further amended—

(a) By omitting Section 88A, and inserting in lieu thereof the following section—

and this is the part I should like the Minister to take notice of because it is very important—

“88A. In respect of employees of the Crown the Commission or a committee shall not—

(a) award any conditions less favourable than those awarded to employees (other than employees of the Crown) who are doing substantially the same class of work, or

(b) fix rates of wages or other payments at amounts less than the rates of wages or other payments fixed for employees (other than employees of the Crown) who are doing substantially the same class of work.”

I come now to a very important paragraph, which refers to the obligation of the Crown. It says—

“The fact that the employment is permanent or that additional privileges are allowed to employees of the Crown shall not of itself be regarded as a substantial difference in the nature of the work.

“In this section the expression ‘employees of the Crown’ includes employees of the Government or of any department of the Government or of any person or corporation employing persons on behalf of the Government and without limiting the generality of the foregoing includes employees of any of the following corporations, that is to say—”

and it enumerates them, including the Commissioner for Railways, the Commissioner for Road Transport and Tramways, the Commissioner for Main Roads, the Metropolitan Meat Industry Board, and so on.

The real principle that is enunciated in that legislation is the one that the Leader of the Opposition desires to have incorporated in this Bill today. After all, why on earth should the Crown not be just as responsible for the provision of amenities and comforts for its employees as any private employer? It is a principle that is recognised in New South Wales and the quotation that I have just read proves that the Government of that State are facing up to their responsibilities. Crown employees in New South Wales enjoy similar conditions to employees of private enterprise, but in Queensland, because they are employees of the Government, they are not entitled to the same amenities.

Mr. Gair: That is not right.

Mr. MORRIS: It is a fact, and the Premier knows that this Government have expressly excluded themselves from the provisions of this legislation. He cannot contradict that. I could give half a dozen other examples of the exclusion of Crown employees from the provisions of various Acts.

Mr. Gair: The Act from which you quoted was opposed by the Liberal and Country Party members of the New South Wales Parliament.

Mr. MORRIS: That statement I will not accept, because it is made by the Premier without any foundation. He does not know what he is talking about, and he cannot prove the statement that he has made.

Mr. Gair: Show me the division list.

Mr. MORRIS: The Premier's statement was erroneous, and he knows it as well as anybody else. Liberal and Country Party members will never oppose the responsibility of the Crown to do at least as much as private industry for its employees. I say again that New South Wales has given the lead to Queensland in this matter and I hope that the Minister, realising that New South Wales is considering its employees in the way that this Government so far have not considered them, will incorporate in this legislation the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition.

Another point to which I should like to refer is the provision of refrigerators. If it was an obligation on the Government to do the same as private employers are required to do I should take no exception to the section of the existing Act that I am about to read, but it is because the Crown is excluded

that I want the members of this Committee to realise what the legislation they are amending contains in relation to the provision of water coolers.

This Act was introduced in 1915 to replace the Shearers and Sugar Workers' Accommodation Acts, 1905 to 1906, and now applies as follows:—

1. In proclaimed districts (but not within any town or city, unless the Governor in Council otherwise declares).

2. To workers who are employed and reside on the premises during their employment.

3. To premises used in connection with construction works, meat works, pastoral purposes, sawmills, shearing sheds, sugar plantations, sugar works, and such works as may be declared by Order in Council.

The Minister may exempt any employer, wholly or partly, and for any period.

The requirements of the Act were extended in 1941 to include a cooler of a prescribed type and suitable and sufficient to the satisfaction of the inspector for the storage of meat and other foods. There is no limitation, however, to the effect that if an employer has only one or two employees, he need not provide a cooler. In the same way, the present Bill contains no such limitation in respect of the provision of a refrigerator. There is nothing in the Bill to say that an employer shall not be required to provide even one employee on his property with a refrigerator when the employee is not living at the homestead. Of course, there is the discretionary power in the hands of the Minister to exclude such a person if he so desires. If it is proposed to fasten onto an employer with one employee the obligation to provide a refrigerator it is also only right that the same responsibility should be accepted by the Government in respect to their employees. We must do this if, to use the words of the Minister, we are to arrest the continual drift to the cities.

The Minister said that at times employers gave the excuse that no materials were available to carry out improvements and to provide amenities. Probably that is true, but how often have we heard the Government make the same excuse? When hon. members on this side have during the past 12 months or so complained about the lack of adequate schooling accommodation, the Government have put forward the excuse by way of defence that no material or man-power was available to do the work. If the Government are justified in blaming the private employers for failing to provide the amenities when the employers point out that no material is available to do the job, the Government themselves are not justified in excusing themselves on those grounds.

Hon. A. JONES (Charters Towers—Secretary for Labour and Industry) (2.48 p.m.): Hon. members opposite discuss workers' accommodation as if the Act applied to every part of the State. As a matter of fact, it does not apply to local authorities. There are thousands of employees to which

the Act does not apply. The persons to whom it applies are laid down in the Act itself, and they include meat workers, pastoral workers, sawmillers, shearers, sugar workers, and so on. If hon. members opposite had read the Act they would have seen that it does not apply to town or city areas.

Mr. Morris: I read that.

Mr. A. JONES: Hon. members opposite talk about workers' accommodation as if it applied to every part of the State. Had I brought down an amendment of the legislation extending it to every part of the State, to include town and city areas embracing primary producers, farmers and others, hon. members opposite would have been up in arms about it. They only want to make political capital out of something that appears to be quite obvious. I was associated with the working of this legislation as a union official for many years, and I always knew that it did not apply to the whole of the State. The Crown is not seeking a concession for itself and then compelling local authorities and other employers to observe the conditions of the Act. There are dozens of jobs that are not covered by the Act, and it is not correct to say that it applies to everybody in the State except the Government. I know that some hon. members opposite know that. I said by way of interjection that two years ago Cabinet agreed that refrigerators should be made available on all main roads, forestry, and similar jobs. In this respect the Government gave the lead—we did not ask private industry to do it first—and then the Government follow on. The Leader of the Opposition had something to say about forestry employees: If he knew anything about the award for employees engaged on work for local authorities and main roads, the award for forestry employees, railway construction workers, or water supply and sewerage labourers, he would know that the provisions for accommodation are laid down in each award.

There is a provision in the awards the same as in the Act. In some there is a clause that the accommodation shall not be less favourable than that laid down in the Workers' Accommodation Act.

Some hon. members made statements that indicated they knew nothing about these matters. The hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha said this was happening in New South Wales. That is not true. I know the conditions that apply there; they are much in the same position as we are; a big percentage of employees are not covered by any Act. What hon. members have been saying is all hooey.

The hon. member for Condamine spoke of permanent employees. He was sincere when he said that permanent employees should receive more consideration than temporary employees. I have heard that argument used on many occasions. When I appeared in the Industrial Court many years ago it was used by the representative of the employers' organisation. It was argued that we should not provide first class accommodation for sugar workers and shearers because they were only there for a few weeks in the year and then

they moved on. As I pointed out then, you have to consider the conditions of the calling of a shearer. I started in January at Winton and finished in New South Wales at Christmas time, and during the whole of that period I had been using the accommodation provided by the various stations on which I worked all the time. It will be seen that if poor accommodation is provided everywhere the worker has to live in it all the time.

Mr. Allpass: I did not advocate poor accommodation.

Mr. A. JONES: No. I want to be fair; the hon. member referred only to permanent employees.

Employers generally have not attempted to do much to encourage employees to remain with them by providing reasonable accommodation. I know many graziers and selectors and I know that the best accommodation in western Queensland is provided by the small struggling selectors, men with 25,000 or 30,000-acre blocks on which they are running 4,000 or 5,000 sheep. Nine out of ten of these people endeavour to provide reasonable accommodation for their one or two employees. Some of the worst offenders are big pastoral companies.

Mr. Sparkes: A man running 4,000 or 5,000 sheep would not have enough money to employ two men.

Mr. A. JONES: I noticed the other day that the profits of one of the pastoral companies were £85,000 and it was annoyed because it was so much below the amount of profit made the previous year.

I am not unreasonable, this legislation is not unreasonable. If hon. members read the Act they will find that there is nothing drastic in it, but it asks people to do reasonable things. It should not be necessary in this State for the Government or their inspectors to have to issue 100 orders to compel men to provide decent lavatory accommodation. Hygiene is a very important matter. Hon. members can read the report by the Chief Inspector of Shops and Factories and find in it particulars of the number of orders we have had to issue. We have never been too drastic. Look at the number of cases in which we could have prosecuted! In 500 breaches we prosecute a small percentage. We have always taken into consideration the circumstances of each case and the excuses offered. If the employers were unable to obtain the material—and this applied when the Premier was Secretary for Labour and Industry, I saw the files marked "No action"—no action was taken. We do give such men a fair go.

I cannot accept the amendment for the reasons I have stated. I believe that if I did so we should be doing something for which there is no need. The awards I referred to contain provisions relating to the types of accommodation that can be provided. Take the Forestry and Main Roads Awards and you will see many things in them that are not laid down in the Act. I am sure the conditions laid down in the Forestry Award are better than anything in the Act.

The Leader of the Opposition suggests that this improvement in workers' accommodation was brought about by union agitation. Of course it was. I remember discussing the accommodation of the forestry employees with the late C. J. Fallon. As a result of conferences, we were able to iron out many things and came to an agreement that was registered in the court. Many of those conditions are now embodied in the award and they are much better than those required by the Workers' Accommodation Act. We must approach this matter fairly. We must look at it from all angles. If that is done I am confident it will be agreed that the Crown have done fairly well by their employees.

Mr. WOOD (North Toowoomba) (2.58 p.m.): It is not my purpose to add to the vigorous remarks of the Minister except to answer very briefly some of the things said by the hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha. In discussing the Workers' Accommodation Acts, the hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha quoted the Industrial Arbitration Amendment Act introduced into the New South Wales Parliament last year by the McGirr Government. That covered many things, such as long-service leave, union ballots, sick leave and so on, and many of its provisions were vigorously opposed by the Opposition of that State. The hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha said that the New South Wales Act has laid down what shall be done for Crown employees there. He quoted that the Act was amended by omitting Section 88A and inserting in lieu thereof a provision that—

"In respect of employees of the Crown, the Commission or the Committee shall not award any conditions less favourable than those awarded to employees other than employees of the Crown who are doing substantially the same class of work,"

and so on, giving this Committee the clear feeling that that legislation dealt with accommodation for Crown employees. This was not so, and this Committee should be told when any hon. member quotes an Act in such a way as to lead us to believe that it means something other than what it says. I have an explanatory booklet that reviews the legislation mentioned and it discloses quite clearly that the section was included to provide that employees of the Crown shall be entitled to receive rates of pay not less than those paid to employees in outside industry who are doing substantially the same class of work.

Mr. Morris: And that is what I read to the Committee.

Mr. WOOD: The hon. member told this Committee that the New South Wales Act laid it down definitely that the Workers' Accommodation Act applied to the Crown, that in that State the objection he had to the Government's attitude towards the provision of accommodation was entirely removed. Section 88A of that Act has nothing whatever to do with accommodation.

It was purely for the purpose of explaining to the Committee why that Section 88A was included in the New South Wales legislation that I rose to my feet.

Mr. WATSON (Mulgrave) (3.1 p.m.): I do not intend to speak at any length on this subject, but as I am rather perturbed about the sugar industry, I feel that if I mention something now the Minister might clarify the position on the second reading. The hon gentleman mentioned that it was desired to widen the powers of inspectors. I hope he is not suggesting that the inspector has not wide enough powers now to enable him to carry out his duties. We have found in the North that workers' accommodation inspectors have played a snooping part. The inspector should go to the employer and, whenever necessary inspect barracks in company with him. I have found that in many instances in the North where the employer has had the duty of prosecuting a worker in respect of a breach of contract the workers' accommodation inspector has turned up with the A.W.U. representative a few days afterwards and between them they have brought charges of breaches of the Workers' Accommodation Act against the employer.

These powers are uncalled for. I say frankly that all barrack accommodation is not up to date, and I think the Minister will agree that there are many reasons why it is not. Shortages of materials principally and during my term in the House I have been making applications to the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works for the release of building materials to bring barracks up to the required standard.

Mr. Gair: They will be in shorter supply now.

Mr. WATSON: And I am told by the Co-ordinator-General that no Australian material is available but that imported stuff can be had. The Act says that barracks must be brought up to a certain standard, but it is deliberately "putting the boot in" to enforce it when one cannot get the necessary material.

I should like to say a word about the number of employees required before refrigerators are installed. In the old days most gangs of six or more had a cook and that cook remained in the barracks during the daytime and provided the daily food for the cane-cutters. Circumstances have changed and today most of the gangs cook their own meals. A refrigerator for two men who are out in the field all day would hardly be warranted. I interpreted the Minister's suggestion to mean that where a cook is employed a refrigerator would be necessary. In that I agree with him but do not put in a refrigerator for the one-man or two-men gangs.

Hon. V. C. GAIR (South Brisbane—Premier) (3.5 p.m.): I rise to reply to the remarks of the hon. member who has just resumed his seat because it was my privilege for a period to administer this Act. I know from my personal experience that the Act has always been reasonably and sympathetically administered. It lays down certain

conditions and provisions for workers, all of which have been approved of by this Parliament from time to time. Over the years those conditions and provisions have been improved as the standards of living of our people have improved. I do not think anyone could grumble with that state of affairs; no progressive person, at least, could find cause for complaint with that. I feel satisfied from my experience that most employers are desirous of doing the right thing by their employees.

The hon. member for Condamine gave expression to a state of mind that I believe is typical of the average employer.

Mr. Sparkes: It is to the interests of both.

Mr. GAIR: It is a healthy state to exist in any industry and in any place where men employ others. His expression of opinion was that he worked with his men rather than have them work under him; he believed in treating his employees as human beings and giving them the things that they were entitled to and he would like for himself. That is fair, and I said by way of interjection that it was a healthy state of mind. When I was Secretary for Labour and Industry I was satisfied that the typical manufacturing employer—and I was speaking of that time—was desirous of doing the right thing by his workers. I introduced a Factories and Shops Act Amendment Bill, which is being confused in this debate with the Workers' Accommodation Act. I suspended the proclamation of the Act because we desired to do the reasonable, and the common-sense thing by the employer. We believed that what we provided for in the proposed Act were desirable when the materials and the things we wanted were available to the employer. As the responsible Minister at the time I said, "What is the use of proclaiming this Bill when the employer can go before a magistrate and say he cannot get wash-hand basins, piping and other things that are required?" We delayed the proclamation of the Act. We were being pressed by industrial unions for its proclamation and I told representatives of industrial unions very definitely and clearly that it would be just madness to proclaim it as it would only hold the legislation up to ridicule and we could not expect the employer to do the physically impossible. We have to have regard for the employer's position as well as the requirements of the worker.

In reply to the hon. member for Mulgrave, whose speech prompted me to rise, I would say that a perusal of the report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Shops will reveal how few prosecutions are launched.

That will confirm what I am saying, that is, notwithstanding that inspectors or union secretaries and organisers may become over-enthusiastic about this and that, in the final analysis it is the Minister who decides whether a prosecution shall be instituted, and he will have due regard to all the facts. In my time, when this Act was administered reasonably, as I am sure it is today under my colleague, the present Secretary for Labour and

Industry, we found that certain property-owners complained of not being able to comply with an order from an inspector to do things that would make the living accommodation of their workers comfortable in the minimum degree, yet they were engaged in building new homesteads or adding to existing homesteads that were more than adequate for their requirements. There was no shortage of iron or other materials to do things for themselves, but they offered the shortage of materials as an excuse for not doing the minimum for their employees.

We must be fair and consistent in these matters. The decent employer who does the right thing, and shows evidence of wanting to do the right thing, is never harassed or persecuted by the department, and I am sure he will not be, but the fellow who tries to be smart and who wants to evade his responsibilities to his employees, and who at the same time can get iron and other materials to do something for himself that is unnecessary, should be proceeded against.

The same remarks apply to the Factories and Shops Act. I repeat that the average employer wants to provide these amenities for his employees. Nothing pleased me more when I was carrying out the duties of the Minister administering that Act than to participate in the official opening of many of these important amenities that were installed by companies for their employees. However, there were a few who tried to evade their responsibilities and we had to stand over them and insist that they do the right thing. For example, in one manufacturing establishment in this city the female employees had to go to the manager's office to change from their working clothes into their street frocks, which meant that he had to leave his office. When we insisted that he should provide a dressing room for them, he complained that our order was unreasonable. I put it to hon. members as reasonable men—and we are all reasonable in these things irrespective of our political views—whether they would agree that the department was doing the right thing in that case. Without pressing for a reply from hon. members I say that I know it was a reasonable action on our part, but that gentleman complained about the stand-over attitude that was adopted by the inspector.

One hon. member made reference to the provisions of blinds in barracks. I think that order went through in my time, and it conformed with a provision in the New South Wales Workers' Accommodation Act. It was put into effect in a desire to bring our legislation up to a better standard. I met representatives of the United Graziers' Association and the sugar people on that question, and notwithstanding that that order exists under the Workers' Accommodation Act, I know that A.W.U. district secretaries and organisers insist on the provision of blinds only after having full regard to the location of the barracks, and just where the sun sets, and all such factors. The blinds are required to break the sun's rays. Blinds that might be a benefit in the West might be a detriment

in the North by excluding fresh air in humid surroundings. Blinds are not required in all places and in some it would be better to do without them in order to have the fresh air. The A.W.U. district secretary spoke to me about this matter at the time the order went through and it is enforced only where it is required to confer some benefit on the workers concerned. No-one can complain about the reasonableness of that.

Mr. Hiley: Have all the inspectors sufficient experience to understand that?

Mr. GAIB: I should say so. They are experienced officers and in any case, if an employer complains he can refer the matter to the chief inspector and if the chief inspector feels that it needs further investigation or that it would lead to waste of money, time and material, he can reconsider the proposal.

I did not want to intrude in the debate but I had the privilege of controlling the department that administered this Act and I wanted to give hon. members some of my experience in that connection. No-one can say that the law is harshly enforced or that any employer is harassed or embarrassed. However, I say emphatically that we believe as a Government that the workers are entitled to reasonable living conditions. The Minister in charge of the measure explained that many of them are away from their homes living in barracks and they should have reasonable living conditions. The employers who are prepared to do the right and reasonable thing have nothing to fear but the employer who wants to evade his obligations has everything to fear. The department will administer the law in a common-sense way but the first consideration will be the welfare of the workers. There is no reason why they should not have comfortable living conditions and it is only for this purpose that the employers will be required to carry out the orders. There is nothing unreasonable in that attitude.

The Minister in charge of the measure has very adequately replied to the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition. So far as workers are concerned who would ordinarily be covered by the Act, the Government have led the way—they have decided to provide these things. I agree with those hon. members who have said that the Government should not be placed in a favoured position so far as their employees are concerned. If we require private employers to do certain things for their employees, we as a Government have an obligation to do as well as they, if not better. That is the attitude of the Government and it has been the attitude of the Government. In certain circumstances it has been physically impossible to give effect to that policy. We have made allowances for private employers in times of shortage or because of some physical difficulty in the way of the carrying out of the Act. For instance, if a building had to be remodelled in order to comply with the conditions laid down under the Factories and Shops Act, we did not compel the owner to demolish the old building and build an

entirely new one. In some cases we left it to the owner to do the best that he could in the circumstances to provide adequate accommodation.

Those are some of the difficulties that confront us. I remember that a similar question was discussed some years ago when a great point was made by members of the Opposition of the Ipswich Railway Workshops. We know it was established many years ago and that it grew up in bits and pieces, and to introduce modern amenity blocks there would be so much waste of money, especially when we have in view the building of a new workshops that will provide for them. We must be reasonable. As we have endeavoured to be reasonable in the administration of the Act as far as private employers are concerned—and I am not making any excuses for the Government—we have to have regard to all these factors when the Government, too, are concerned. Hon. members can be assured that it is Government policy that if we ask a private employer to provide these things we shall provide the same, if not better, ourselves. In this respect we have led the way. Forestry workers and others are today enjoying conditions that the Bill asks private employers to provide.

Mr. MULLER (Fassifern) (3.23 p.m.): The hon. the Premier said he rose as a result of what the hon. member for Mulgrave said, and I rise as a result of what the Premier has said. The hon. gentleman has skirted right round the principles of the Bill. He said that the Act would be administered with discretion and the Government would not be unreasonable in any way. I draw the attention of the Premier to what does take place. The Leader of the Opposition has submitted an unanswerable case. He has told the Committee that if it was right to compel a private employer to provide up-to-date accommodation for his employees, it was equally right that the Government should do the same. In a great many cases, the Premier admitted, it is not possible to do it. When the Bill becomes law inspectors will go into private employers' places and say that the accommodation does not comply with the Act. They will scour round to see what the private employer is providing but they will sidestep Government departments entirely. This is another case of "Do not do as I do, but do as I tell you." If the Government expect such legislation to be carried out they should be the first to endeavour to carry it out.

Much has been said on many occasions about the accommodation provided for a number of our railway workers. I know that it is better than it used to be, and that this applies equally to private employment, but we know that there is still much to be desired in the matter of railway accommodation.

The Minister referred to Forestry workers. I should like to know what has been done to provide better conditions for the Main Roads employes, many of whom are living under deplorable conditions, and do not even have decent water to drink. Apparently it does

not matter as far as Government employees are concerned but the inspectors will go to the private employers and ask them to do more than they reasonably can. I believe if you are going to keep people employed in the country, whether they are railway workers, private employees or school teachers, decent living conditions should be provided for them. Who are the greatest offenders in this regard? A very large percentage of the country workers are employed by the Government, therefore the Government should be the first to toe the mark. What is done to provide good living conditions for school teachers in many places? I know the Minister will say it is wrapped up in their salaries. In some places they can get reasonable accommodation but in a great many they have to live under awful conditions. The Government are doing nothing to help these people to obtain better accommodation.

Mr. Devries: What has that got to do with refrigerators on station properties?

Mr. MULLER: It has something to do with living conditions. The Minister knows that in most cases refrigerators will not be provided on station properties.

If the employer is to be asked to provide amenities when he cannot afford to do so, it will lead to less employment. It is very easy to frame legislation dealing with the private employer and excluding Government departments. If we are to have better conditions for the people in country districts, the Government should set their house in order first. I repeat that I do not oppose better conditions for employees in either country or city, but the Government should be willing to lead the way. In that way we should get a great deal further than we are with an army of inspectors who order Bill Jones or Tom Smith to provide a refrigerator, a fire-proof safe or better living conditions. If the Government are sincere they should be prepared to lead the way and show the private employer how to provide these conditions.

Hon. G. H. DEVRIES (Gregory—Secretary for Public Instruction) (3.30 p.m.): I was surprised to hear the hon. member for Fassifern say that even if the Government sought to force the employer to do these things I knew they would not be done.

Mr. MULLER: I rise to a point of order. I did not mention the Minister at all. I was referring to the Premier.

Mr. DEVRIES: The hon. member is splitting straws. We have moved some distance at least during the last 25 years, I remind hon. members that when men on the land in general were in a position to provide the things the Government now propose compelling them to provide, very little effort was made to do it. Those hon. members who represent pastoral areas know that very little effort was made, on station properties in particular, to provide amenities for employees.

Mr. Muller: Nor by the Government.

Mr. DEVRIES: In the majority of cases, the accommodation provided by the Government is equal to that provided by the private employer. In the West and North-West of Queensland the accommodation provided for employees on main roads is at least equal to that provided by the private employer.

When we speak about the provision of amenities for people in remote areas, we do not lose sight of the fact that they have to be paid for, and over the years I have come to the conclusion that the grazier in my area is more generous than the grazier in other areas. After listening to the hon. member for Roma, I am convinced that the graziers in his electorate are not as generous as those of the Far North and the Far West of Queensland.

One thing the trade-union movement is asking of the Government is that they make provision for the installation of refrigerators on station properties. I can well remember the time, Mr. Turner, and so can you, when the Government brought down legislation to provide that coolers should be supplied to employees engaged on station properties. I can well remember the hostility that came from the hon. member for Fassifern and the hon. member for West Moreton at that time, now Senator Maher, who raised protests that we were placing financial responsibilities upon the grazier that would eventually send him bankrupt.

Mr. Muller: How many refrigerators does the Government provide for their employees?

Mr. DEVRIES: I shall come to that. I say to the hon. member for Fassifern that a number of refrigerators had been provided by station-owners for the convenience of their employees long before the Government ever contemplated making it compulsory. In my electorate I was agreeably surprised to find the splendid accommodation provided by the decent employer on station properties, not only for station employees but also for shearers and shed hands. It would probably be foolish to put an instrument costing, say, £200 in shearers' quarters and leave it lie idle for the best part of a year. The owners of station properties generally transfer their own refrigerators to the shearers' quarters. They have not only one but perhaps two or three in their own houses and one is transferred to the shearing shed for the shearing operations. There has been much unfair criticism of the grazier. I agree with the Premier that the typical employer does try his best to provide amenities to satisfy his employees.

The hon. member for Fassifern would have the Committee believe that if we made it compulsory for station-owners to provide refrigerators we should apply that provision to the boundary rider working miles away from the station homestead. I do not believe that is contemplated; but the Leader of the Opposition was fearful of it.

The Opposition have been attacking the Government because they say the Government have not provided these things for their

employees. I should say if members of the Opposition got into a Main Roads camp or a Forestry camp they would not argue that living conditions or amenities were terrible. After all, those conditions are reasonable.

Mr. Muller: Are there any refrigerators in those camps?

Mr. DEVRIES: All the Government are proposing to do is to compel the employer to provide reasonable accommodation. There are refrigerators in Forestry camps; I know by virtue of my association with the Australian Workers' Union of the representations made by that body to the department from time to time. The Government have as far as possible met the requirements of these Forestry employees. The hon. member for Fassifern was trying to widen the debate by talking about providing houses for teachers but I do not propose to pursue that subject because I am sure that you, Mr. Turner, would bring me to order. The whole argument put up against the Government in this matter is, "Look at the conditions that obtain in the Department of Railways." No-one can deny—and I am sure the hon. member for Mundingburra would not be foolish enough to suggest otherwise—that in recent years the Government or the Commissioner for Railways have made great progress in the matter of accommodation. In some of the remote areas fettlers have more or less lived in humpies. After all, when I hear hon. members of the Opposition talking about the drift from the bush to the cities, I often wonder how we can stop that drift. Not one member of the Opposition has given this Government any lead as to how to arrest the drift from the bush to the city other than to say, "Provide the amenities to keep the people in the western areas."

I appeal to the hon. member for Darlington, who knows something of the isolation of the bush, to tell me what amenities he would suggest could be provided in towns such as Longreach, Barcaldine, Emerald, and Winton. Is it suggested that you could erect a Regent Theatre in a place such as Longreach? If you erected a first-class cinema theatre in Longreach, would that arrest the drift from the bush to the cities? I believe that the first essential for workers in industry is security of employment. After all, the Government must be given some praise for giving electricity to small towns such as Aramac, Muttahburra, and Ilfracombe, which previously they had never known; the only light they had was the kerosene lamp. Gradually those amenities are being provided for the inland towns, but will that arrest the drift from the bush to the cities? I say no. When there are big businesses enticing people from the inland areas to the cities with good wages and good conditions, how can we keep those people down on the farm, as the saying goes? The big employer in the cities is providing his employees with all these amenities—the Premier himself has said that he is doing so—but the big employer in the western areas of the State is not providing his employees with the amenities that he could and should provide. Let us take a big station property

such as Warendra in the Boulia area, a property of 3,000,000 acres, and examine the life of a man living on it. I know that the hon. member for Aubigny supplies his married employees with refrigerators, but let us take the case of single employees.

Mr. Sparkes: It is a good business proposition.

Mr. DEVRIES: That is so, and the hon. member for Aubigny is in a position to provide those things. But let us have a look at the smaller man. No grazier can charge the Department of Labour and Industry of being unkind or cruel. I ask hon. members to look up the number of prosecutions of graziers, in the State, and to study the annual reports. Thousands of pounds have been collected from graziers as arrears of wages due to their employees. The argument they always advance is that they were ignorant of the terms and conditions of the award but seldom do they pay more than the award rate; they always pay less.

No matter what criticism may be levelled against the Government for legislating in this way, I feel that the Bill will meet with the approval of the average grazier. Do not run away with the idea, however, that it will keep employees on station properties. You can feed employees on station properties well, but that will not keep them there. The company that controls Isis Downs has built cottages on the station property for the use of its employees when they are pensioned off, but how many other employers do that today? That company has realised the value it has obtained from its employees over a period of years and has accepted the responsibility of caring for them in the eventide of life.

In spite of all the amenities that may be provided on station properties, however, it is impossible to break down the isolation. The hon. member for Fassifern, even though he is only a stone's throw from the metropolitan area, knows that the greatest obstacle that faces this Government in making people happy and contented in the remote parts of the State is their isolation. I admit that their isolation has been broken down at least to some extent by fast air transport, but the average worker is not able to get in a plane, as an employer is, and fly to Brisbane for three or four weeks' holiday every 12 months. It is no wonder that employees who are far removed from the big cities say, "Before we can reach the coast, we have to spend at least a fortnight's wages and use up at least a week of our holidays." I am not being facetious when I say that if you want to arrest the drift from the bush to the cities, you must transfer Coolangatta or Southport to Longreach. When I watch the people making their exodus to the seaside every week-end I feel that it is no wonder that people living in the West become discontented. It would be interesting to know how many shearers live in Toowoomba, Brisbane, Southport, Coolangatta and such places and travel to the shearing sheds by aeroplanes. Do not think for a moment that all the people employed in the

shearing industry live in the western areas of the State. When we speak of refrigerators we must realise that in certain parts of the year the owners of them have to go to the iceworks for ice to put into their refrigerators to keep them cool.

The Opposition are concerned about the number of employees who must be engaged before a refrigerator will be provided. They are opposed to providing refrigerators on station properties but they insist that the Government shall provide refrigerators for employees on Government jobs. When the Main Roads Commission was building a bridge across the Cooper River it had a camp there equal to anything that could be found anywhere. It had all the amenities that could be provided. The Government do provide their employees with accommodation and amenities up to a standard equal to that made available by private industry to its employees.

Mr. EWAN (Roma) (3.48 p.m.): When the debate started I had no idea of taking part in it at this stage because, being of a canny nature, I like to know what I am talking about. However, after listening to the various speakers I rise with a good deal of pleasure to support the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition. The Premier was ably supported by the Secretary for Public Instruction. They both indicated perfectly clearly that it was the desire of the Government to set an example to all other employing sections of the community in the provision of amenities for the workers. It was delightful to listen to them, particularly the Secretary for Public Instruction. He gave us a pretty good running description of conditions in the inland areas but he made one great technical bloomer when he said, I think facetiously, that the graziers in his area had over a period of time shown greater generosity than the employers in my area.

Mr. Devries: I said it was my opinion.

Mr. EWAN: Opinions are held only to be upset. I want to indicate that the conditions in the Minister's area and the conditions in my area are very different in that he represents the big pastoral lessees. One hon. member opposite said that they shored upwards of 60,000 sheep. The Minister made a statement about selectors, but there are selectors and selectors. I venture to say that in his district the area that would be required for a living area would be one capable of carrying between 8,000 and 10,000.

Mr. Devries: No.

Mr. EWAN: Well, 6,000. What is a living area in the Roma electorate?

Mr. Devries: You have better country there.

Mr. EWAN: The hon. gentleman has some pretty good country in his own electorate but perhaps he does not know about it. I am not going to be lead astray. The

hon. member was supported by the hon. member for Mundingburra who gave us a long dissertation about galvanised-iron buildings, crowding floors, and three-tier bunks.

Mr. Devries: He was going back to the dark ages.

Mr. EWAN: No. I can remember as a boy the three-tier bunks in New South Wales.

Mr. Devries: To your sorrow.

Mr. EWAN: No. The owners who were living in their homesteads were no better off than the shearers in their quarters. Those were the pioneering days and that is what we are getting away from. The basic consideration is being lost sight of—what we hear about round the stockyards in the western areas.

Mr. Aikens: The days of corned beef and damper.

Mr. EWAN: I lived on corned beef and damper up to the last few years and I wish I was back on them. They call themselves "old boys" when they are in the middle fifties, and they sit out on the rails and say, "Remember how I rode that buck-jumper when I was a young fellow; they cannot ride today as I could."

Let us analyse the remarks of the Minister. What he says is quite true; those conditions did operate. Glancing at the Minister I should say that he is in his middle fifties and he is well-preserved. He has occupied a seat in the Assembly for somewhere in the vicinity of 20 years. That would take us back to 1915 when he would be having his first experience in a shearing shed. I draw his attention to the conditions of life in 1915 compared with conditions of life today. I saw thousands of soldiers in World War I, in the Liverpool Camp outside Sydney, where they lived under round tents and dug holes in the ground for their hips.

Mr. Devries: They do not do it today.

Mr. EWAN: Of course they do not; that is the point I wish to emphasise. Conditions have altered materially from those that obtained in 1915. The amenities in every walk of life are much better, not only for the employer but for the employee. Slighting reference was made to the employers in those days. It is quite untrue to say that they were grinding down the employees. Those were the conditions under which all sections worked during that period. Shearers travel about by aeroplane today and conditions generally are getting better.

Mr. Devries: That is due to the Labour Government.

Mr. EWAN: It is not due to the Labour Government, the Liberal Government, or the Nationalists; it is due to the evolution of conditions. The Workers' Accommodation Act was introduced in 1915, and since then conditions have improved.

Mr. Aikens: Most of the employers have palatial homesteads.

Mr. EWAN: Where did the hon. member come from? I can name employers today who are wealthy men and who started off 20 years ago living in bag humpies and later moved to tin huts and who are not living in palatial homesteads today.

Mr. Aikens: I do not think you have ever been in the country, judging by those remarks.

Mr. EWAN: That is the sort of interjection I would expect from a nitwit like the hon. member for Mundingburra.

Mr. Devries: Would you not say the majority of selectors live in reasonably comfortable houses today?

Mr. EWAN: The majority do, but there is a percentage who do not. I do not know one employer who will come within the ambit of the Bill who has not strained his resources to the utmost to provide the best amenities for his employees.

Mr. Gair: The minority caused the necessity for legislation.

Mr. EWAN: I think you will find there was some good reason why the people referred to by the Premier were unable to provide the amenities.

Mr. Gair: Not in every case.

Mr. EWAN: Not in every case.

Mr. Gair: They just will not; they are bad employers.

Mr. EWAN: The Minister pointed out that a number of employers have supplied refrigerators in spite of the fact that there is no provision to compel them to do so.

Mr. Jesson: They were a bit ashamed.

Mr. EWAN: They did it because they found it paid dividends by helping them to obtain and retain labour.

Mr. Devries: And saving precious food.

Mr. EWAN: Every grazier knows that. Indeed, every grazier must be a business man if he is to survive under the conditions of nature. He does everything possible to help provide the amenities necessary for his employees and he is very shocked when he finds that the employees do not take advantage of those amenities. For instance, the hon. member for Condamine mentioned blinds. The Secretary for Public Instruction said the inspectors used their discretion in determining whether blinds should be erected, and all I can say is that I do not know of any shearing shed in my area that has not got blinds and at those properties most of the blinds have been rolled up and never let down. I have seen that when I have been on these properties during shearing. Then the hon. member for Condamine mentioned that gauze doors were propped open and there were more flies inside than outside. Is it not disheartening to an employer to find that after

going to the expense of providing these amenities they are not used? If the Government are going to set the example by providing refrigerators they will take stock of the position in those areas to which these conditions apply and raise their standard of accommodation, especially in the Railway Department.

The Secretary for Public Instruction said the Government were proud of the conditions under which their employees worked. I join issue with him and challenge him to compare the conditions on any property that has been in existence for the same time as the railway line from here to Charleville. If I am wrong when I say that the accommodation provided by the pastoralist is far and away ahead of that provided by the Railway Department, I am prepared to contribute £100 to any charitable institution he cares to name. In some instances the accommodation provided for railway workers on the western line is shocking. When introducing the measure, the Minister spoke about reticulated water, and so on.

Mr. A. Jones: Where?

Mr. EWAN: One of the Government speakers did.

Mr. A. Jones: I could not say the word.

Mr. EWAN: One hon. member on the Government side spoke about reticulation of water. Let me show how these men in fettlers' camps are provided with their water. It is brought out in a tender and shot out into open ship's tanks standing at the side of the railway line. And the Secretary for Public Instruction has the audacity to get up here and say, in good faith, that the Government are setting an example to every employing section of the community by the accommodation they are providing. If the Premier, who was ably supported by the Secretary for Public Instruction, is sincere in the honeyed words he uttered about being anxious to help the employees and is not speaking to gain cheap political kudos because a by-election is coming off in a few days, he and the members of his Government will accept the amendment of the Leader of the Opposition in the spirit in which it was moved. Let them set an example to these workers. Let them be sincere and honest, not political place-seekers.

Mr. BURROWS (Port Curtis) (4.2 p.m.): The Opposition seem to have adopted the theory that no new measure should be introduced if it seeks to interfere with the minority. Their logic always appears to me to be completely dishonest. They always seem to consider themselves agents for or defenders of the minority who will not observe the law and who will persist in dodging their responsibilities.

We have heard speakers on the opposite side say that the majority of graziers and employers are decent men who will provide the things the Bill prescribes. That is their argument against the introduction of this

measure which makes it compulsory to provide those things. In looking for an analogy, I think I have an apt one in the Criminal Code. We should expect hon. members of the Opposition, if they followed the same line of argument or logic, or illogic—it makes one ill to listen to it—to say that there should be no Criminal Code because the majority of people are honest, that there are only a few criminals unfortunately in society. One would expect the hon. members of the Opposition to say, "We do not want a Criminal Code because the majority of members of society are not criminally minded." The honest man has nothing to fear; he has a lot to thank a Labour Government for. Two wrongs will not make a right, and if somebody does not do the right thing or the decent thing that does not justify another person in doing the wrong thing. The logic followed by the Opposition no doubt accounts for their presence on the opposite side of this Chamber.

Mr. Plunkett: Tell us why the Government will not accept the amendment.

Mr. BURROWS: The Sub-Department of Forestry has been mentioned, but we know that it is a young sub-department in comparison with the majority of departments of government. Unfortunately for Queensland, particularly for the future generation, that department should have been created some 50 or 60 years ago instead of in the last 20 or 30. I have with me a copy of the annual report of the Land Administration Board on the operations of the Department of Public Lands, including the Sub-Department of Forestry. I have some forestry employees in my electorate, and I have often approached the Minister to find out how the vote for his department is going and to see whether we could not get some more houses and cottages built for forestry workers. He has assured me that he would build the lot if it was possible, but that he is limited by loan allocations, and, apart from that, he does not want to hog the market for available materials.

Mr. Muller: You admit their accommodation is bad?

Mr. BURROWS: No. I worked for Sir Edmund Jowett who at the time was reputed to be the biggest sheep-owner in Australia, and we had to camp on the bindie-i because our bunks were full of fleas and we could not remain in them. I know what these good graziers are like.

Mr. Aikens: And you paid 7s. 6d. a week for your saddle horse?

Mr. BURROWS: He did not give us a saddle; we had to supply our own. I intend to quote from the sub-department's report, a report that all hon. members get, but only intelligent members read. It states—

"As during the past few years considerable attention was paid to the provision of improved accommodation for the field workers and this is shown on list set out below.

"The barracks-building programme was maintained at a steady rate and over 700 employees are now so accommodated.

"One further ranch was completed and others are listed for construction.

"Generally, there was a stepping up of all works under this heading, while more satisfactory progress was made in the painting jobs so long delayed.

"Major items of construction were:—

	Completed 1950-51.	Under Construc- tion.
Cottages	3	4
Barracks	32	13
Bathrooms	65	6
Galleys	42	6
Lavatories	80	6
Double rigs	87	10
Single rigs	9	3
Laundries	15	2

That is one year's programme of the Sub-Department of Forestry. The men occupying camps provided by the Government are not only not charged rent but receive a camp allowance of £1 a week in addition to their wages. Would there not be a lue and cry from the hon. member for Roma if the Industrial Court tabbed that onto him and his hungry neighbours for whom he is always crying and weeping?

Members on the Government side, who are more active than those on the Opposition side and who attend to their electorates instead of going round mustering poddies, have brought this matter up. For the enlightenment of hon. members opposite, I can tell them, although I am not a Cabinet Minister, that a committee has been set up with the idea of providing these things. That committee has been functioning for some time, but as those hon. members opposite with a little imagination can appreciate, with the various complications associated with the different departments it is necessary to arrive at a general policy and to approach this matter in such a way that one department will not be supplying one particular type of unit, and another department a different type altogether.

I can remember an occasion not very long ago when I paid a visit to the Callide coal field and saw a boring camp there of four or five men for whom a woman was cooking. Frequently we find some very commendable woman who will take on the job of cooking, and this woman was doing a good job under very difficult conditions. Although it was not in my electorate—it was in the electorate of the hon. member for Callide—immediately on my return I put up a case to the Minister, and a few weeks later I received a letter from that camp thanking me for the refrigerator that was sent up to them.

I am not saying that the Government are any better than the best private employer or even the average employer, but what exasperates me is the desire on the part of the Opposition on every occasion when any

reform is introduced, to get up and defend the man who is not worthy of consideration and who will never be an asset to the country.

Mr. NICHOLSON (Murrumba) (4.12 p.m.): I rise to support the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition for one reason, and one reason only. I believe that in all instances the parents should set an example to the child and the elders should set an example to the younger. As the Government consider themselves the parents of this State—the controlling body—I believe that they should set an example to all other employers throughout the State. I believe that the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition is a good one and should be wholeheartedly received by the Government. If the Minister is left to his own devices, I believe it will be.

During the course of this debate I have listened very attentively to many of the speakers, but I was particularly struck by the speech of the Secretary for Public Instruction in which he said that the Government had set an example to private employers in the type of accommodation provided for their employees. The hon. member for Port Curtis mentioned the good things that had been done for the Forestry employees but the Hon. Leader of the Opposition has already explained that they were brought about by the great efforts made by the forestry workers themselves and on their behalf by their representatives. I, too, must give credit where credit is due. I have an intimate knowledge of a number of Forestry camps and I know that the members for the districts in which they are have played a great part in getting these amenities. However, I suggest that the Government have another look at these camps and the Main Roads camps too. Strange though it may seem, the single men are provided with wooden buildings with corrugated iron roofs and board floors and with the same type of building for messing quarters—that is an excellent contribution to their welfare—but why in heaven's name must the married people live under canvas? That is the fact. I could take you to a camp in the electorate of the Leader of the Opposition only 40 miles from here where the married people are living under canvas while the single men have wooden barracks.

Of course, I agree with the proposal to supply refrigerators and I should be failing in my duty as a representative of the refrigerator industry if I did not do so. (Laughter.) I can tell the Minister that the employees in some of the Forestry camps have provided their own refrigerators.

Mr. Gair: How long ago?

Mr. NICHOLSON: Six months ago.

Mr. Gair: No.

Mr. NICHOLSON: I can prove it. If it is good enough to insist that the station-owner shall provide his shearers and other pastoral

employees with buildings constructed of corrugated iron and wood it is also good enough to insist that the Government do the same in connection with Forestry employees and others in their service. The Main Roads camp will be at Beerburum for perhaps the next 12 months and there is no reason why it should continue as a canvas town. Better provision should be made for all the employees in the camp. The Government should not criticise or condemn the private employer but should be happy to know that he has brought his standard of accommodation up to that provided by the Government for their workers.

Mr. LOW (Cooroora) (4.20 p.m.): I shall not detain the Chamber but I must speak in support of the amendment. The Government are the worst employers in the State and I make no apology for that statement. We should insist that Government employees be given living conditions that will make them reasonably happy because it is only by making them contented that we can get the best work out of them.

The Secretary for Public Instruction said that it was essential that refrigerators be supplied to Forestry camps, Main Roads camps and to pastoral holdings generally. Although the Minister may be concerned to see that refrigerators are supplied to enable western workers and others to keep their food in a proper condition, I suggest that he make a survey of teachers' residences throughout the State to ascertain the deplorable and shocking conditions of the stoves. That is a very serious matter. In many houses the stoves are absolutely useless. When they are in operation the kitchen is clouded with smoke, the walls have been blackened, and the stain has crept into the dining room. I am replying particularly to the Secretary for Public Instruction, who made an appeal on behalf of certain people about refrigerators, and I suggest that he look after his own teachers and provide them with good stoves. I contend that the Government are the worst offenders in their lack of the provision of amenities for employees. I support the suggestion that refrigerators be supplied to people so that they will be able to keep their food in proper condition but I also hope the Minister will see that they are provided with a good stove in which to cook the food.

I support the suggestion that there is room for improvement in railway residences and police residences and teacher's residences. I have nothing further to add. I support the amendment.

Mr. A. JONES (Charters Towers—Secretary for Labour and Industry) (4.24 p.m.): The speech of the hon. member who just resumed his seat illustrates how confused some hon. members opposite are in this matter. The question of housing does not come under the Workers' Accommodation Act, which does not apply to residences at all. The argument of the hon. member is pure eye-wash and does not touch the subject before us.

Furthermore, the amendment is pure propaganda. A similar amendment was moved in 1946. After all, as I pointed out, a big percentage of hon. members were under the impression till a little while ago that the Act applied to the whole of Queensland—to every town and village. I proved to them that the application of the Act is very limited; outside the sugar industry, the pastoral industry, and one or two others it has little application. It does not apply within town and city areas.

There has been much talk by hon. members opposite about the Government's giving a lead. The hon. member for Murrumbidgee said, "The parent should give a lead to the child," referring to the Government and private enterprise. The Government have given a lead. The Workers' Accommodation Act does not apply to awards such as those covering local authorities, main roads, railway construction workers, forestry workers, and water supply and sewerage labourers. If hon. members look up those awards they will see that the conditions laid down there are much better than the conditions in the Act. That applies generally as far as the Workers' Accommodation Act is concerned.

When hon. members referred to railway employees, they referred to the accommodation provided for fettlers, in the main—the other accommodation would not be covered—and as a matter of fact, the accommodation of fettlers would not be covered because this Act does not apply to residences. Nor is anything laid down as far as residence of a married couple on a station is concerned. You might say that is anomalous. I think it is, and we shall probably have to do something about it. Nevertheless, it is a fact that the Act does not apply to residences in any way.

I repeat that hon. members must realise that the Government have done their job. It is all very well for the hon. member for Roma to tell us what private enterprise is doing. As the Premier pointed out this afternoon, we are willing to admit that the majority of employers do a reasonably good job in providing accommodation but there is a minority who must be compelled to do the decent thing.

As I said this morning, I know of accommodation that was built about 40 years ago, and in which the only change that has been made was to take down a couple of bunks and provide single bunks; the galvanised iron walls are still there. I and other hon. members have had the experience of living in such places. We know what it is to have to spend a week-end or holiday there. We know that it was not possible to lie down and rest in them, that if one wanted to read one had to take a blanket and lie under a tree. Some employers have seen the justice of lining and ceiling their accommodation to make it decent, as it is their duty to do. Again, instead of providing candles, they should install good lighting. It cannot be contended that these things are in short

supply or unprocurable. Many of these matters may seem small, but they mean a great deal and they can be done. The hon. member for Roma knows that on many occasions we have had to serve orders on him compelling him to bring his accommodation up to standard. I repeat that we have taken a lenient view in these matters, especially since the war, because we have realised that materials have been short. The obvious excuse has been shortage of labour and materials, but that does not apply to many things that could be done.

I cannot agree to the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition. I believe it is moved purely for propaganda purposes and with the object of discussing such matters as railways and other things that could not have been referred to had the amendment not been moved.

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

AYES, 29.

Mr. Aikens	Mr. Munro
„ Allpass	„ Nicholson
„ Bjelke-Petersen	„ Nicklin
„ Coburn	Dr. Noble
„ Dewar	Mr. Pizzey
„ Evans	„ Plunkett
„ Gaven	„ Roberts, L. H. S.
„ Heading	„ Sparkes
„ Hiley	„ Taylor, H. B.
„ Jones, V. E.	„ Watson
„ Kerr	„ Wordsworth
„ Low	
„ Luckins	<i>Tellers:</i>
„ McIntyre	
„ Morris	„ Decker
„ Müller	„ Ewan

NOES, 38.

Mr. Brosnan	Mr. Jones, A.
„ Brown	„ Keyatta
„ Burrows	„ Larcombe
„ Byrne	„ Lloyd
„ Clark	„ Marsden
„ Collins	„ Moore
„ Davis	„ Moores
„ Devries	„ Power
Dr. Dittmer	„ Rasey
Mr. Donald	„ Riordan
„ Dufficy	„ Roberts, F. E.
„ Duggan	„ Smith
„ Dunstan	„ Taylor, J. R.
„ Foley	„ Turner
„ Gair	„ Walsh
„ Gardner	„ Whyte
„ Graham	
„ Gunn	<i>Tellers:</i>
„ Hilton	„ McCathie
„ Jesson	„ Wood

Resolved in the negative.

Motion (Mr. A. Jones) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING.

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

The House adjourned at 4.39 p.m.