

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

FRIDAY, 24 OCTOBER 1952

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Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. J. H. Mann, Brisbane) took the chair at 11 a.m.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Assent to the following Bills reported by Mr. Speaker—

Charitable Collections Bill.

Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Acts Amendment Bill (No. 2).

QUESTIONS.**RAILWAY STATISTICS, 1939-1952.**

Mr. KERR (Sherwood), for **Mr. CHALK** (Lockyer), asked the Minister for Transport—

“1. What was the number of railway employees at 30 June in each of the years 1939 to 1952, inclusive?

“2. What was the amount of wages and overtime paid in those years, showing amounts separately?

“3. What was the profit or loss in those years after providing for interest?

"4. What was the tonnage of goods carried and the number of passengers, respectively, in those years?"

Hon. P. J. R. HILTON (Carnarvon—Secretary for Public Works and Housing), for **Hon. J. E. DUGGAN** (Toowoomba), replied—

"I would refer the hon. member to the various annual reports of the Commissioner for Railways, also to the supplement to the Commissioner's annual reports issued in September, 1947, in which he will find information as to the number of employees, salaries and wages paid, profit or loss, tonnages of goods, and numbers of passengers. No useful purpose would be served by any further dissection of that information."

4KQ BROADCAST, "YOUR BUSINESS."

Mr. MULLER (Fassifern), for **Mr. NICKLIN** (Landsborough—Leader of the Opposition), asked the Premier—

"In reference to the radio session called 'Your Business' over 4KQ on Sunday evenings—

1. Is payment for this made by the State Government?
2. If so, what is the cost?"

Hon. V. C. GAIR (South Brisbane), replied—

"1. and 2. No. But I am gratified to know that the hon. member is a listener to this very informative session from Brisbane's most popular radio station."

STARTING AGE, ADEQUATELY STAFFED SCHOOLS.

Mr. WATSON (Mulgrave), asked the Secretary for Public Instruction—

"In reference to the Government's decision to advance the starting age for State school children to six years, as there are many country schools, such as Woopen Creek and Mirriwinni, where the teaching staff is adequate to cope with the previous starting age, will he kindly give consideration to allowing the head teachers of such schools either to use discretion regarding the starting age or to recommend to them that the previous age be retained?"

Hon. G. H. DEVRIES (Gregory), replied—

"The Government's decision to restrict admission of pupils in State primary schools to the year in which they attain the age of six years applies to all schools throughout the State. Discretionary powers will, however, be used in those cases where the operation of the Regulation might lead to the closure of a school."

BITUMEN SURFACING, ROAD AT DELTA SIDING.

Mr. COBURN (Burdekin), asked the Minister for Transport—

"As the bitumen surfacing of the section of the Bowen-Collinsville Road at Delta Siding was approved by the Wangaratta 1952—2E

Shire Council in 1947, and as such section is used extensively for transport of produce from the Upper Don, will he kindly give consideration to this work as an item to be included in the roads programme for 1952-53?"

Hon. P. J. R. HILTON (Carnarvon—Secretary for Public Works and Housing), for **Hon. J. E. DUGGAN** (Toowoomba), replied—

"Plans are in course of preparation, but it will not be possible to provide for the work in the programme for the current financial year."

BRITISH TRADESMEN FOR RAILWAY DEPARTMENT.

Mr. COBURN (Burdekin), for **Mr. AIKENS** (Mundingburra), asked the Minister for Transport—

"How many tradesmen, and in what classifications, did Mr. S. G. Franklin secure for the Queensland Railways on his recent visit to England for this purpose?"

Hon. P. J. R. HILTON (Carnarvon—Secretary for Public Works and Housing), for **Hon. J. E. DUGGAN** (Toowoomba), replied—

"The final result of this officer's visit will not be known for some time as negotiations with a number of applicants are still being carried on through the Agent-General, it not being considered necessary that the officer should remain in England pending their finalisation."

LAW REFORM (TORTFEASORS CONTRIBUTION, CONTRIBUTORY NEGLIGENCE, AND DIVISION OF CHATTELS) BILL.

INITIATION.

Hon. W. POWER (Baroona—Attorney-General): I move—

"That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the law relating to proceedings against, and contribution between tortfeasors, to amend the law relating to contributory negligence, and to amend the law relating to the division of chattels belonging to persons jointly or in undivided shares, and for purposes connected therewith."

Motion agreed to.

ANIMALS PROTECTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION.

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

"That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness

of introducing a Bill to amend the Animals Protection Act of 1925 in certain particulars.’

Motion agreed to.

LIQUOR ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

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

Debate resumed from 22 October (see p. 831) on Mr. Power’s motion—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Liquor Acts, 1912 to 1948, in certain particulars.”

Mr. DEWAR (Chermside) (11.11 a.m.): When the Committee adjourned on Wednesday last, I was quoting from the report of the Commissioner of Police for 1951 as to the cases brought before the courts of petty sessions throughout the State, 41,366 males and 2,566 females, a total of 43,932. Of these cases those attributable to drunkenness numbered 25,032 males and 1,882 females respectively, 26,914 in all or 60 per cent. of the total. This list comprises the offences of obscene language, vagrancy, indecent, riotous or offensive conduct, offences against good order, assault, assault occasioning bodily harm, assaulting the police. In numbers of these cases nobody knows how much of the cause is directly attributable to liquor. I believe the Minister was quite sincere when he said that there is no proof that drink contributes to crime, but I think I should be right in saying there is little doubt that drink has helped to contribute to crime, not only in this State but all over the world. Many people think that a person who drives a motor vehicle whilst under the influence of liquor is a maniac at large. An intoxicated person in charge of a motor vehicle is a person in charge of a lethal weapon and in the report I have quoted we find that 290 cases came before the Courts in which the drunkenness of the drivers of motor vehicles, the riders of motor-cycles and push-bicycles and other vehicles, pedestrians and passengers was responsible for the offences charged and that these 290 cases involved 21 deaths.

Twenty-one valuable Queensland lives were lost from causes directly attributable to liquor. Moreover, perusing the report of the Director-General of Health and Medical Services for 1951 we find at page 97 that of 386 males admitted to the Brisbane Mental Hospital in that year—these figures are for Brisbane only—41 were alcoholic cases. In other words, 10 per cent. of the males admitted to the Brisbane Mental Hospital last year were admitted as the direct result of liquor. It seems to me a pity we can legislate to prevent a man from attempting to take his own life; we can deal with a man who endeavours to poison or inflict bodily harm on himself, but we are not able to do anything to deal with or help to any great extent a man who is in the grip of liquor

and is, in my opinion, inflicting greater bodily harm on himself and his family than by doing many of the things for which he can be dealt with.

When the hon. member for Toowong was speaking, the Minister asked for suggestions as to how we can eradicate some of the evils caused by drink and I would instance one or two incidents that I observed when overseas. I was in San Francisco, America, for two or three hours and I went into a drug store to have a malted milk. I noticed that at one end of the drug store, or chemist shop as we know it here, there were facilities for buying intoxicating liquor. On the other side there were tables in alcoves similar to what we see in cafes here. There it was possible for a man to take his wife to a table where they could sit and have a meal together with a glass of beer, or a bottle of wine, or something else. That seemed to me to be a very sane method of serving liquor.

Then I went to England, and no doubt the hon. member for Kedron will confirm what I say about the custom there. The whole life of many of the small villages there seems to centre round the village pub, as it is called. Members of the Air Force—that was the main reason why I am able to speak about this—would go there at times when they were not flying. Although I was a teetotaler, if my flying mates wanted to go down to the local, as it is also called, I went with them and mixed with them, and in these old-style buildings in all parts of England I saw men with their wives and elder sons and daughters sitting down having a glass of beer, ale or stout and having some food, such as cheese and biscuits, with it. The part that impressed me was that neither in England nor in Canada or America did I see any man under the influence of liquor on the streets. I suggest, therefore, that it would be well for the Licensing Commission and the liquor trade of this State to investigate the introduction of what I call saner methods of the sale of liquor.

One of the main scourges in this State in connection with the liquor trade and one of the main causes for the bad effect it seems to have on certain members of the community lies in the fact that in this industry, as in all others, shortages tend to create a demand. It is an old maxim that if one has a huge stock of something that is hard to sell all one needs to do is create the fear that there will be a shortage of that article and once that fear begins to take effect the whole stock is sold fairly quickly. In my opinion, this evil that has grown in the distribution of liquor has led to the creation of an unnatural demand in the minds of certain people, with the result that we see in hotels what we call sessions. When those sessions are on we have the unseemly spectacle of men lining up outside the hotels to get what they think is their due. This method of drinking, which has grown up only since the war, has the effect of making the man who finishes work at 5 o’clock and who knows there will be a session from half past 5 until 6, rush to a hotel and drink probably more than he would if he was able to go along and have a glass of beer

quietly at 5 o'clock, knowing that if he had to go out after dinner that night he could have one or two more then, or even take a bottle home to share with his family. I think that the spurious shortages that have been created in the liquor trade have caused an unnatural, an unreal demand for liquor. This in turn has led to abnormal drinking conditions under which men are inclined to drink more than they would if the distribution was made on saner lines. I am told, too, that another result of drinking greater quantities more quickly than normally is that the alcohol takes effect quickly whereas if it is taken more slowly and more sanely the effect is not so noticeable.

The fact that there are shortages is one of the greatest indictments of the liquor trade in the State and although it may seem unsound reasoning on my part I really think that if there was a more adequate and regular supply during the hours the hotels are open there would be, if not less drinking at least sane drinking and less ill-effects on the community.

The Attorney-General asked for concrete suggestions, and although I know that there are arguments against the one I propose to make—I throw it out for what it is worth. In my heart I think it should be a crime to sell liquor to a man who is under the influence of drink. The profit motive has, as in most things, raised its ugly head in the liquor trade because one often sees a man in such a state that he cannot drink any longer but is still able to get more of the snake that bit him.

Mr. Moore: Who is going to decide that he is in that state?

Mr. DEWAR: For that matter, who is going to decide anything? Common sense should be applied in all things. Let us engender in our people a feeling of responsibility for their fellows. There should be a spirit in the community that will cause one man to say to another, "You have had enough." We should not have the spectacle in our community of another man selling that man more liquor to get more money out of him. The suggestion is worthy of consideration.

Mr. Power: It is already provided for.

Mr. DEWAR: I have been informed that it is provided for, but let us see that the law is policed and carried out. Let us have a disappearance of drunks in our streets and let there be a disappearance of these 26,000 drunks going through the courts of the State.

Mr. KERR (Sherwood) (11.22 a.m.): I appreciate, Mr. Farrell, that you have allowed a good deal of latitude in this matter and I will endeavour to keep within the limit you have set. I want to point out one or two things that would make for an improvement in the trade.

Drinking sessions are bad in principle and in their effect on the people who drink. That is my first comment. The present trading hours of hotels are from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. and I think the spread is too long. I have

no objection to not opening hotels until 10 a.m. but I think they should be closed at 8 p.m. Most drinking is done in a period of four hours, namely, between noon and 2 p.m., when the beer session is on, and between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m., when the beer is on again. The hours during which liquor may be sold should be reduced and at the same time we should do something to see that beer was available from the opening of hotels until they closed at 8 p.m. From the little experience I have had I should say that there is far less drunkenness as the result of drinking beer than there is as a result of drinking spirits. I do not know how many glasses of beer it takes to make a man drunk; I should say that each man has his own capacity. One man might get "boozed" on five or six glasses of beer and another might take 12 or more before he got as full. I press that point upon the Minister. When the beer sessions end chronic drinkers turn to spirits and that is the cause of most drunkenness.

A Government Member: Is that your experience?

Mr. KERR: That is what I have been told by some of my clients. I do not go into hotels except in the course of my professional practice.

I should like to remind the Minister that the William Powell Home is in my electorate. The Minister knows, of course, the excellent work that is being done there by the superintendent, Mr. Collard. He is a man of fine Christian character, and as strong physically as he is mentally. Since the inception of that home 1,600 people have gone through his hands, and he has told me that 50 per cent. of them have been alcoholics. I asked him what percentage of those chronic alcoholics he thought had been completely reformed and redeemed and his reply was, "I should not like to say definitely, but it is certainly no more than 5 per cent." The Minister said there was no place but gaol for these alcoholics—

Mr. Power: I said it was the only place where you could put them at present.

Mr. KERR: The Government should give consideration to establishing more homes for these chronic drunkards. The Minister knows how much good work has been done in the William Powell Home. Although it is only a temporary home for these people, the fact remains that some good has been done by it. Every religious organisation should establish a home similar to the William Powell Home, which is conducted under the auspices of the Methodist Church. There is no getting away from the fact that drinking is extending. I admit that the population of this country is increasing, but the consumption of liquor per head of population is increasing at a greater rate.

Some time ago the question was raised about instruction in schools in the use of alcohol in our daily lives, and I understand that provision was made in the syllabus for instruction in that direction. I want to know, however, how far and to what extent

it is inculcated into the minds of the children in our schools. I think we can give up the idea of trying to reform adults who are chronic drunkards. When Nicodemus asked Christ the way of salvation He said, "Ye must be born again." Chronic drunkards cannot be born again physically, but perhaps they can be born again mentally and spiritually. It is very difficult to do very much for chronic drunkards. However, I suggest that farms could be established on a fairly large scale under the jurisdiction of religious organisations. They should not be controlled by the State.

Getting back to the question of religious instruction in our schools—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have given the hon. member a fair amount of latitude. I should now like him to deal with the principles of the Bill.

Mr. KERR: I am in full accord with the amendments that are to be brought down by the Minister. From time to time he has shown us that he likes to find the weaknesses in legislation under his control, and to correct them. I commend him very heartily for what he has done in that respect, but it does not cover the whole liquor evil. There are other matters to attend to and I leave that thought with him for future consideration.

Mr. WATSON (Mulgrave) (11.31 a.m.): I had not intended to speak at this stage but with other hon. members I was not particularly clear about what the Bill contained.

Mr. Power: Are you quite clear about it this morning?

Mr. WATSON: I am not quite clear even yet. In any event, there are some points I should like to make that should be useful to the Minister later on. I have gathered some idea of the measure from speakers who have already debated it but further amendments of the Liquor Act are required. We in the North in particular know that there are many anomalies in the trade that cannot be removed entirely by the Licensing Commission. The subject is very extensive and calls for close administration. I was particularly pleased to hear the hon. member for Carpentaria refer to a glaring anomaly in his electorate. Then there is the glaring anomaly that the beer houses, because of fires and other circumstances, give no consideration to the provision of accommodation. The Minister said that that would be rectified.

Mr. Power: They have been directed to rebuild.

Mr. WATSON: There is one such example in a central position in the city of Cairns, and another in my own electorate. My point is that there seems to be one or two difficulties in the way of granting new licences, and it is a matter that the Minister might clarify. It can be done, I suggest, through the operations of the Licensing Commission. He knows that I have pressed for a licence for a particular town, and let me

say to his credit that the Minister has been favourably disposed towards my representations. I have been informed by the Licensing Commission that favourable consideration will be given to the granting of a new licence in the town but that certain formalities must be attended to first. There would appear to be some anomalies in connection with those formalities, as I shall show. There is only one other hotel in the town. The legal procedure is to intimate that a new licence may be granted and in the meantime objections may be lodged against it. This one hotel is privately owned but leased to a merchant and the merchant and the owners are the only persons who have opposed the granting of a new licence in the town. It has been suggested that they have objected simply for the purpose of delaying the legal procedure associated with the new licence and it would look very much like that. I asked the Minister when the objection to the new licence would be heard and he said, "I do not know." I do not suppose that he does know, because the Licensing Commission has much work to do.

Mr. Power: That has already been fixed up.

Mr. WATSON: I know nothing about that, but if the objection has been overruled, I am pleased to hear it. A merchant who is the lessee of the only hotel in the town should not be allowed to hold up the matter simply for monetary reasons.

Mr. DECKER (Sandgate) (11.34 a.m.): I agree that weaknesses are disclosed in the law from time to time and that amendments must be introduced to bring it up to date. The Liquor Act is no exception to the rule. Therefore I suggest that we should give the maximum amount of power from all angles to the Licensing Commission. We should go further and cover some of the objections that have been mentioned in the debate on this measure.

I do not intend to repeat what has already been said, but I should like to direct attention to the lack of accommodation that hotels give. For instance, legislation is required to provide for safety in hotels; they should be brought up to a proper standard of safety. My experience in travelling throughout the State tells me that most of the hotels in country areas are two-storey buildings. On the ground floor are usually found the bar, dining room, kitchen and other accommodation required for the running of the business, and the upstairs portion is invariably reserved for sleeping accommodation for the owner and guests, either overnight or for long periods. Most of these places are absolute death-traps from the point of view of fire.

Mr. Power: It is a matter for the local authority.

Mr. DECKER: It is a matter for the Licensing Commission, too.

Mr. Power: It is a matter for the local authority.

Mr. DECKER: It is a matter for the Licensing Commission, because the Minister has already mentioned that new hotels will be built of brick or concrete or partly brick and partly concrete. The powers of the commission should be enlarged to cope with this danger. When a guest is shown to his room in a wooden hotel, the first question he asks himself is, "How can I get out of this building in the event of fire?" and he proceeds to look for the fire escape. In some hotels the fire escape is situated at the end of the corridor, but it would take a fire to give a guest courage to use some of the fire escapes I have seen. I suggest that when this Act comes up for review again we go into the question of fire escapes in hotels, particularly with a view to clothing the commission with the greatest powers necessary for securing the safety of all guests in these wooden fireboxes. We do not want to make extravagant demands on hotel proprietors by prescribing something which will put them to a great deal of expense in correcting the danger. A simple method was brought to my notice when I was called on to share a room in a hotel with a commercial traveller. To my astonishment he opened his port and produced a light rope. I said, "What is the idea of the rope?" He replied, "By cripes, I know how to get out of this place if a fire breaks out." One realises the need for an adequate fire escape in wooden hotels when one becomes a guest at one of them and we have had more than one instance of the danger, but there is no necessity to put owners or proprietors to great expense. Racks could be built on the balcony, and they could contain ropes, so that in an emergency, guests could lower themselves to the ground. Provision should also be made on the ground floor to enable people attempting rescue work to reach the guests on the balcony. The fire risk in wooden hotel buildings is so great that we should do something to overcome it.

Hon. W. POWER (Baroona—Attorney-General) (11.39 a.m.): Firstly, I would remind the hon. member for Chermiside that we should have less drinking if we had less Dewar's (Laughter.) Then—

I would remind the hon. member for Sandgate, who raised the necessity for provision of fire escapes and equipment in hotels, that they are now equipped with them. Every hotel is called upon to provide fire-fighting equipment and fire escapes. If he knows of any hotel where such equipment is not provided I shall be very happy to have it investigated.

The hon. member for Mulgrave is a bit worried about the need for the licensing of another hotel at Babinda.

Mr. Watson: My word! It is overdue.

Mr. POWER: The matter has been under consideration for some time. Certain procedure has to be gone through and provision made to deal with the application. The commission has now given notice of its intention to remove a licence from a certain place to Babinda.

Up to date, therefore, the Opposition have not taken a trick. (Laughter.) Let us deal with a number of other matters that have been raised, including the question: when is a man drunk. I quote the following from the Encyclopaedia Britannica, 11th Edition—

"The effects of intoxicants are variously modified by the temperament of the individual and the nature of the inebriant. When that is alcohol, its action on an average individual is first to fill him with a serene and perfect self-complacency. His feelings and faculties are exalted into a state of great activity and buoyancy, so that his language becomes enthusiastic, and his conversation vivacious, if not brilliant. The senses gradually become hazy, a soft humming seems to fill the pauses of the conversation, and modify the tones of the speaker, a filmy haze obscures the vision, the head seems lighter than usual, the equilibrium unstable. By-and-by objects appear double, or flit confusedly before the eyes; judgment is abolished, secretiveness annihilated, and the drunkard pours forth all that is within him with unrestrained communicativeness; he becomes boisterous, ridiculous, and sinks at length into a mere animal. Every one around him, the very houses, trees, even the earth itself, seem drunken and unstable, he alone sober, till at last the final stage is reached, and he falls on the ground insensible—dead drunk (alcoholic coma)—a state from which, after profound slumber, he at last awakes feverish, exhausted, sick and giddy with ringing ears, a throbbing heart and a violent headache."

I have never had that experience (Laughter) but I suppose that quotation has brought back to hon. members what may have happened in their earlier days. (Laughter).

The hon. member for Sherwood referred to beer sessions. In North Queensland at the present time there are no sessions. There are times when the hotel bars are busy when men cease work and on Saturday morning. At the present time spirits are almost off the market; there is not much sale for Dewar's. (Laughter.) Excise has fallen for the last nine months by over £1,000,000, because people are not drinking spirits in such quantities as they did.

We have one inebriates' home in Queensland at Marburg where people are treated from time to time. I believe that when dealing with drunks one has to take a firm stand so as to let them know what their position is.

I was perturbed about the remarks made by a number of members of the Opposition about the consumption of liquor in Queensland. It could be taken from their remarks that the great majority of the people of Queensland were a lot of drunkards and that they drank more liquor than the people in any other State in the Commonwealth. That is not right. The consumption of beer in Queensland has not increased more than in any other State. Actually, the consumption of beer in Queensland is much less than it is in the other States. The hon. member

for Toowong said he was concerned about the increase in the sale of liquor in this State and the hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha also expressed concern. The following figures, for the beer sales per head in gallons, could have been given by the hon. member if he desired to present the case fairly:—

Mr. Hiley: Are the figures based on total or adult population?

Mr. POWER: These figures are based on the whole population. These are the figures for the States for beer consumption per head in gallons—

States.	1938-39.	1944-45.	1949-50.
Queensland ..	7-37	12-71	13-40
New South Wales ..	12-59	11-51	16-35
Victoria ..	12-61	Not stated	20-66
South Australia ..	10-12	Not stated	20-05
Western Australia ..	16-24	Not stated	27-44
Tasmania ..	9-15	9-28	18-07

It is true that there was an increase in consumption in 1944-1945 but the greater part of that period was a war period. It can be seen that there has been a smaller increase in Queensland than in any other State.

Dr. Noble: Would the export figures be included in those of the southern States?

Mr. POWER: These figures are compiled on the same basis for Queensland as for the other States and I am speaking of the consumption of liquor. It is very remarkable that drinking has increased in the States controlled by anti-Labour Governments. The records show that for wine and spirits, Queensland's consumption is 1.09 gallons a head which is lower than that of New South Wales 2.16, South Australia 1.72, and Western Australia 1.49. I think these figures completely refute the statements made by certain members of the Opposition that Queenslanders overall consume a greater quantity of liquor than the people in other States. It could be said that hon. members opposite have sought to smear Queenslanders as being drunkards or drinkers to excess and I take this opportunity of saying that I am not prepared to agree that the people of Queensland drink to excess. Of course, there are a few people in all ages and all phases of life who do.

I think it was the hon. member for Chermside who referred to the number of people who appeared before the courts on charges of drunkenness. Let me point out to him that the figures he quoted included people who had as many as 400 convictions. Since I have held my present portfolio I have endeavoured to acquaint myself with all the workings of my department and have attended our police courts to see the methods of dealing with matters that come before them. I have noticed that the same old crowd appear before the court from day to day on charges of drunkenness. It is not unusual to hear the prosecutor say such things, as "This is

so-and-so's 151st offence." Not many people, other than these habituals, appear before the court.

Mr. Hiley: Where you have evidence of habituals like that, do you not think greater use should be made of the curative places that you have?

Mr. POWER: I have pointed out already that the question of ordering a person to such institutions is entirely a matter for the magistrates. Of course, some of these people go into them voluntarily, perhaps for six months.

Mr. Hiley: But the magistrate has power to order them to go there.

Mr. POWER: That is very seldom done.

Mr. Hiley: Would it not be a good thing if it was done more often?

Mr. POWER: We do not direct our magistrates but I have pointed out that the question of habitual drunkenness is causing me some concern because it interferes with the administration of our prisons. I have been to the Brisbane Prison and I have seen what is done there. These people are segregated. Some are capable of doing a little work in the garden, but drinking of methylated spirits, cheap wine, "plonk" and other rubbish has had a very bad effect on the insides of some of these people. Those affected are only a very small percentage. I do not condemn them; I sympathise with them as I sympathise with their relatives, but some action must be taken to cure the disease from which they are suffering. At the moment they are a charge on the taxpayer. They are in prison today, they come out, get drunk and are in prison the following day. We shall have to make some provision for them. Some action must be taken to see that they are put away for a period so that every effort can be made to cure them. It is unfortunate that a number of our young people have been so affected by drinking "plonk" that their blood counts have fallen and some corrective treatment must be given to them. I am of the opinion that we must make some effort to cure them. At present there is no place for them. There is not sufficient room at Marburg and facilities for training them and rehabilitating them are not available. They are now a charge on the community and some action should be taken to cure them.

Again I remind the hon. member for Chermside that the figures he quoted include a number of people who have more than one conviction. Moreover, according to the figures I have perused, it would seem that either the people of this State cannot hold their liquor as well as the people in other States or our police are more zealous in their desire to keep the streets clean. Of course, sometimes people are arrested for their own protection. Very few decent citizens come before the courts more than once. It is true that a number have convictions from time to time. People do come before the courts for

being under the influence of liquor whilst driving motor-cars, but no-one would get drunk deliberately—it is the one over the eight that does it.

The hon. member for Carpentaria and other hon. members raised the question of the distribution of liquor the other day, and at the time I pointed out that we had no authority to control it. I think I am entitled now to give some information in regard to the North Australian Breweries Ltd., the company the hon. member for Carpentaria referred to. I would point out that when beer was rationed in 1942 distribution was made by the North Australian Breweries Ltd. under a Federal control order. Beer was distributed through merchants on a formula laid down and so far as the breweries were concerned malpractices were not possible. I know of no regulation denying any responsible firm or person the right to open a brewery anywhere in Queensland. If anybody wants to start a brewery, there is nothing to stop him from doing so. No monopoly is given to any brewery in the State, and I repeat that anyone who desires to start a brewery can do so, particularly as building controls have been lifted.

Mr. Hiley: Except, of course, that he cannot sell to any tied house?

Mr. POWER: There are few tied houses. I do not want to go over the same ground again. When this question was raised I said that only 18.9 per cent. of the hotels were owned by breweries.

Mr. Hiley: But what percentage of the gallonage?

Mr. POWER: I am talking about hotels, and I crave your indulgence, Mr. Farrell, to deal with this question because it has been raised. I think it was the hon. member for Cooroora who said that he was amazed at the alarming increase in the number of hotels owned by breweries. Breweries have not bought any hotels since 1944; they have disposed of some of them. I do not hold any brief for any brewery and I will give the output of the North Australian Breweries Ltd. since 1942. The figures are—

				gallons.
1942	..	..	..	2,200,000
1943	..	..	..	3,000,000
1944	..	..	..	3,100,000
1945	..	..	..	2,300,000
1946	..	..	..	2,500,000
1947	..	..	..	2,600,000
1948	..	..	..	2,700,000
1949	..	..	..	3,700,000
1950	..	..	..	4,500,000
1951	..	..	..	5,300,000
1952	..	..	..	4,100,000

(to end of September.)

North Australian Breweries Ltd. never owned more than 24 hotels; the licence of one was surrendered some years ago and two were sold recently.

Coming to the point raised by the Leader of the Liberal Party, I will give the figures for the distribution to the Company's own hotels. They are—

				gallons.
1942	..	..	..	125,000
1943	..	..	..	112,000
1944	..	..	..	125,000
1945	..	..	..	110,000
1946	..	..	..	140,000
1947	..	..	..	147,000
1948	..	..	..	159,000
1949	..	..	..	211,000
1950	..	..	..	262,000
1951	..	..	..	321,000
1952	..	..	..	232,000

(to end of September.)

Mr. Hiley: About 7½ per cent. of its brewing.

Mr. POWER: It will be seen that this quantity represents only 5 per cent. of the annual output of the brewery. Since January, 1950, a total of two years ten months, draught beer has been rationed in a nominal fashion only in that part of Queensland lying from Mackay northwards. The present distribution basis is a ration equal to the average weekly demand for the 26 weeks of the unrationed period 3 March to 31 August, 1951, and furthermore, it is approximately 10 per cent. more than was supplied during the same period in 1950, when beer was not rationed at all.

It will therefore be seen that this brewery has increased its output to meet all demands made by any hotelkeeper in the territory supplied. I might state that this cannot be said of Central Queensland or Southern Queensland, in both of which there is still a shortage of both draught and bottled beer. I have quoted those figures to the Committee so that members will have some idea of what has been done by North Queensland Breweries Ltd.

The hon. member for Chermside again showed how inconsistent he can be. Having complained about the drink traffic, he made a suggestion that, if given effect to, would make it easier for people to drink. He suggested that we might introduce the method of drinking in vogue in America, where people can go into a chemist's shop and have a 'pill at one end and a pint at the other. I do not think that would be a very good thing for this State.

The hon. member for Chermside showed how little knowledge he had of the liquor laws of this State when he said it should be made an offence for anyone to sell liquor to a person who is drunk. Provision is already made in our law to deal with anybody who serves liquor to one who is drunk. Provision is made also to deal with a person who supplies liquor to anyone under the age of 21.

I believe that this Government lead the world in their endeavours to stop excessive drinking. For example, many years ago excessive drinking went on in dance halls in this State. I can remember attending a

number of balls, and in every alcove one could see large supplies of liquor available for consumption by both young and old. As the result of legislation introduced by this Government, however, it is now illegal to take drink into dance halls or to be found in possession of it within a certain distance of a dance hall. Many prosecutions have taken place for breaches of the law in that respect.

The hon. member for Sherwood dealt with trading hours, but I do not propose to go into that matter, as it is not contained in the Bill.

The hon. member for Mulgrave referred to the distribution of beer supplies, which is another matter that does not come within the provisions of the Bill. However, if the Government were asked to take control of the distribution of beer there would be a lot of trouble. Hon. members opposite do not believe in State enterprise, yet they are asking us to direct manufacturers of liquor to distribute it in certain quarters. I am not prepared to recommend to the Government that we should be a party to taking any action in regard to the distribution of liquor. Hon. members can rest assured that the Licensing Commission will do everything possible to see that available supplies of liquor are distributed as equitably as possible, taking into consideration the requirements of the people in the various parts of the State.

If we are to adopt a policy of controlling the distribution of liquor, why should we not go a little further and control the distribution of such things as milk, tea, sugar, butter, and other foodstuffs, and clothing, tobacco, and everything else? I do not want to be a party to doing anything like that. As I said previously, I am not keen on controls—I do not like them—and the sooner we can eliminate them the happier I shall be. Of course, it is very necessary from time to time that we should have some form of control over certain commodities. For instance, if there was no control over the price of petrol the people in Cairns would recently have suffered an increase of 1d. a gallon in the price, whereas in fact they obtained a reduction of 2d. That is just one illustration of the advantage of control.

I have replied effectively, I think, to the points raised by hon. members opposite and I commend the Bill to their favourable consideration.

Mr. HILEY (Coorparoo) (12.5 p.m.): I must confess that the opening remarks of the Minister gave me some concern but his concluding statement left no doubt in my mind that he was seriously concerned about the problem of drunkenness, how to minimise it and how to help these unfortunates who became caught up in the craze for excessive drinking. I had begun to feel that he was inclined to slip rather easily over the subject of the constant drunk, the quarrelsome drunk, the fighting drunk, the amorous drunk, the double-seeing drunk and the dead drunk, and I was beginning to wonder whether he was

seriously exercised about the problem that faces the average citizen. No matter what the description of the drunk may be, the great majority of average citizens regret the drunkenness and hopes it can be avoided. The average citizen expects any Government to do whatever they can to lessen what is a great social evil in our present civilisation. I suggest that if we had no problem of drunkenness it is very doubtful whether we should have a Liquor Act at all. It is the great social problem of drunkenness that has called for successive pieces of legislation to regulate, control and administer social drinking.

Do not let us imagine that this problem of drunkenness is the concern only of the general citizen. I believe I am right in saying that drunkenness worries the average brewery executive. He does not want it. All he wants to do is to sell a reasonable quantity of his product and to have it consumed in a sensible and reasonable way. I do not think that any responsible brewery executive takes joy in the thought that people drink to excess. The average hotel-keeper takes exactly the same view. So let us be quite fair about it—even the people in the trade desire to avoid drunkenness just as the average citizen at large does not want drunkenness. If there is any hon. member in this Chamber who desires to see these unfortunate victims of the drinking habit let him say so and let us have a look at him.

Let us be perfectly clear about this matter. There must be something in our drinking habits, in our administrative practices, that causes more drunkenness in this country than in any other country of the world. The Minister quoted some figures so far as gallonage or quantity was concerned and I suppose I should say they gave some reassurance to the Chamber. They were on a comparative basis, although no doubt the per-capita consumption of liquor has increased. That does not alter the fact that although the number of chronic drunkards is few there is need to do something to help them. I hope that something will be done. The present situation is that a person is convicted for drunkenness in the Police Court and is committed to prison. Later he is released, he is arrested again and recommitted to gaol. We must do more for him than that; that is not enough. I am sure that more can be done for him than that.

Mr. Power: He really gets a life sentence with short breaks.

Mr. HILEY: He is entitled to something better than that. I want to make it perfectly clear that there is more drunkenness on the streets and in the public places of cities in Australia than there is in other parts of the world.

Mr. Lloyd: I doubt that.

Mr. HILEY: I am telling hon. members the results of my own observations. I purposely kept my eye open in the last six months when I was overseas and I only saw about five people who were really drunk,

although I was in crowded cities and saw cities at the busy period. That was what impressed me most.

Mr. Lloyd: There is more drunkenness in continental cities after midnight.

Mr. HILEY: I must confess I did not knock about those cities after midnight but if that is so I must accept the hon. member's information as correct, for he is evidently an expert.

Mr. Lloyd: During the war I happened to go into some of those places occasionally and that was my experience.

Mr. HILEY: I do not want hon. members to imagine that I did not see much drinking overseas. I saw a tremendous amount. I saw more public drinking overseas than I have ever seen in Australia, yet I saw less drunkenness. There is a greater prospect of finding liquor on the table overseas when food is served than at a bar in Australia where no food is served. That is supported by medical observers. That, in my opinion, is the fundamental reason for the more abundant facilities for drunkenness, and the more public evidence of drinking. You will see drinking at the tables at every hand on the Continent and in America. You will see the drinking of liquor, you will see it being offered for sale in grocers' shops, and in cafes, yet you do not see nearly the same number of people under the influence of liquor as you will in Australia.

This is where I propose to make my remarks relevant; one proposal the Minister makes in this Bill being some slight variation in the constitution of the Licensing Commission. No longer has there to be quite the same qualification for the position of chairman, and the room consequently is open for a variation of the constitution of the commission. It will be found possible to avoid the appointment of men who are too busy in other ways, and who can give only an hour or two of their time for meetings. Let us see whether it is possible to have appointed to the commission men who will have the time to devote to ascertaining the drinking habits in other countries and what drinking reforms are in evidence in other countries.

Mr. Power: Do you think the Minister should undertake that task?

Mr. HILEY: I should be perfectly happy to see the Minister do it. As a matter of cold fact there is not less drinking overseas. Notwithstanding that there is less apparent drunkenness. It is the evil of excessive drinking and drunkenness that we are concerned with. If we can discover some device and make some change in our method of approaching the drinking habits of this State without imposing further restrictions on the freedom of the people who wish to drink, and at the same time avoid the overall drunkenness, the Minister would then be able to throw his hat in the air and say he has achieved something worth while.

The other suggestion I have to offer is linked with the alteration of the constitution

of the commission. It is impossible to divorce the administration of a commission governing hotel accommodation from its intimate concern for developing the tourist trade. I wonder whether the Minister will give serious consideration, in making any further appointment to the commission, to choosing someone who is closely associated with developing the tourist trade. It may be that the person directing provision for tourists in this State, or some other person within the State administration who is really seized of the importance of the tourist trade of this State.

Let us see the position clearly. It has been said from time to time that our rich natural resources will attract tourists from the rest of the world. I wish to point out that it is the cost of travelling to Australia that prevents large numbers of tourists from coming here. It is too far for those people to come. From America, where the bulk of the world tourists originate, they will go to Cuba, South America, Bermuda and Honolulu—thousands of them—because the transport costs are not heavy. The cost of transport to Australia is a much bigger problem. I doubt whether we shall ever command quite the same flow that the other places attract.

But when we do find people who are prepared to come all the way from America to sample the beautiful tourist resorts we have—and they have to spend many hundreds of pounds on transport costs—we cannot hope to hold them with indifferent tourist hotel accommodation. There may be wisdom then in considering any changes in the constitution of the Licensing Commission and deliberately putting one member on it who will be well versed in the problem of developing our tourist trade—and it is a rich source of wealth if handled properly—and in that way we shall ensure that the hotels on their part will fit into the comprehensive requirements of handling tourist development in this State.

I understand the principles of the Bill are likely to command the complete acceptance of every member on this side. I am heartened to hear from the lips of the Minister his own observation showing his concern with the problem of drunkenness and how it may be better handled. I believe that our magistrates have been over-reluctant to employ the clear power the legislation has given to them to commit repeated offenders to curative institutions. The Minister has observed some of the success in the homes for drunken people. You have no doubt, even if they cannot claim to command 100 per cent. of cures, that they help a number of cases.

Mr. Devries: How about Alcoholics Anonymous? They do good work.

Mr. HILEY: I have heard excellent reports of these people. I do not think you could hope to parade any one of those features as the complete cure-all for the problem of alcohol. Alcoholics Anonymous will help certain people materially and so will the Government's own curative establishments, such as the one at Marburg. What we need is both. To say we will only use

one and not the other would be a mistake. The approach at Marburg is largely a physical one, and that of Alcoholics Anonymous is more of a spiritual and mental approach. People vary tremendously. The means that will be the right cure for one man would be unworkable with another. I believe that if the Government can so arrange things that they make more use of their own institution at Marburg and if they explore the possibility of making greater use of Alcoholics Anonymous, we shall be able to feel that a genuine effort is being made. From what the Minister has said I believe he will make it.

Hon. W. POWER (Baroona—Attorney-General) (12.19 p.m.): I understand that Mr. Justice Maxwell from New South Wales is going overseas, but I do not think there is any necessity for any visit overseas by me or one of the departmental officers in order to deal with this matter. I hope to be able to get a copy of the report submitted by Mr. Justice Maxwell. We should thereby save the expense of sending any member of the commission or, say, a Minister overseas.

Here I must make it quite clear that I do not want it to go out to the public that I believe the people of Queensland are excessive drinkers. On the contrary, I believe the people of Queensland are very moderate drinkers, and I have brought forward evidence to support that belief. Of the six States, the consumption of liquor in Queensland per head of population is lower than that of any other State in Australia, and I will repeat these figures of liquor consumption per head of population in gallons—

Queensland	13.4
New South Wales	16.35
Victoria	20.66
South Australia	20.05
West Australia	27.44
Tasmania	18.07

Mr. Decker: Do not overlook the fact you told us that the breweries could not meet the demand.

Mr. POWER: That applies all over Australia.

Mr. Decker: That does not make it any better.

Mr. POWER: I hope the hon. member is not implying that the people of Queensland drink more liquor than those in any of the other States.

Mr. Decker: It would be about the same.

Mr. POWER: No, it would not be about the same. That is an attack upon the Queensland people and I repeat that the people of Queensland drink less liquor and spirits than those of any of the other States in the Commonwealth. I do not wish to be misunderstood—I want to make that quite clear—but I am concerned about the unfortunate few who have become habitual drunkards. We endeavour to do something to correct the position by rehabilitating them and making them good citizens.

In reply to the suggestion that we should appoint an officer to improve the hotels, for the information of the leader of the Liberal Party I would point out that we have given directions to all the licensees of temporary bars in Queensland that they must erect modern hotels to meet the requirements of the people. After having made a survey we have directed hotels in every part of the State to bring their accommodation up to the level necessary to meet the requirements of the people. When I say "we," of course, I mean the commission.

As to the suggestion made by the Opposition that an officer of the Tourist Bureau should be placed on the Licensing Commission I would point out that after the hotels have been graded we notify the Tourist Bureau of the grading, and thus the Tourist Bureau is able to select accommodation for tourists. Here I might mention that my experience of a tourist bureau is not altogether a very happy one. Some time ago, as Minister in charge of immigration, I had to visit Canberra to attend a migration conference there. I took my wife and daughter-in-law with me as company. After visiting Canberra we decided to travel to Melbourne. I was travelling by car—I am not a very good plane traveller, I do not like plane travelling. Arrangements were made through the tourist bureau to book our accommodation. We were booked into a hotel at Bairnsdale. It was a very poor hotel, but I was not very much concerned about that. When my daughter-in-law entered her room she found a man's clothes hanging there, also his shaving outfit. I drew the attention of the proprietor to it and I might say that she was not very helpful. However, the clothes and the shaving gear were taken out, but later, my daughter-in-law, when turning down the bed, found a man's pyjamas under the pillow. My daughter-in-law had been put into a room that some man was occupying. The sheets on the bed had not been changed. However, they were eventually changed. A bed was made up on the veranda.

When we went down to dinner that night they had on the table what they called mixed meat and bubble and squeak. We give it to our prisoners in Boggo Road and they enjoy it very much. After having a look at this specimen, however, my stomach began to turn a little. I admit that it is not all that it might be, because of a number of major operations, but I had to leave the table. I could not eat the meal that was put before me. I said to my wife, "We will not wait for breakfast." We had paid a deposit of 10s. or £1 on the room, and I said to the lady, "We are leaving before breakfast. What is the charge?" I think the three of us were charged something like two guineas for the worst accommodation one could find anywhere. I made a very strong protest about what was done. I was not even booked in at the same hotel as the tourists at that place, because I saw the Ansett bus at another hotel. If that is the way the bureau is treating the people of Australia, I am not happy about it. I do not want any more than

what is good enough for the average decent citizen. What is good enough for them is good enough for me.

Mr. Hiley: But surely that will not last? Will you not admit that with proper handling there is a relationship between the two?

Mr. POWER: Yes. We have it now in that, as I have stated already, we grade our hotels in Queensland. We give the Tourist Bureau a list of the first-grade and second-grade hotels, and so on. It is the bureau's responsibility then to look after the tourists and to recommend that they go to the appropriate hotels. Hon. members can rest assured that the proposed additions and alterations in connection with the Licensing Commission will be in the interests of the people of this State.

Mr. JESSON (Hinchinbrook) (12.27 p.m.): I should like to say a few words on this very important matter.

Mr. Decker: Are you going to condemn the Tourist Bureau?

Mr. JESSON: No, I am going to condemn the hon. member because I think that any teetotaler who gets up and talks about the way liquor should be served is talking through the back of his neck.

I commend the hon. member for Coorparoo because he has been overseas, and there is nothing like travel to broaden one's mind. I can remember his talking in this Chamber on a previous occasion on an amendment to our liquor laws, and his views then were quite different from what they are today, and I commend him on the change.

The hon. member has suggested that someone should go overseas to see how liquor is drunk over there. I agree that one does not see a great deal of drunkenness in other countries, but, at the same time I do not say that there is a great deal of drunkenness in Australia. As a matter of fact, if one cares to walk about the city in the evening one cannot help being impressed by the fact that there are very few, if any, drunks to be seen. This has been so especially since hotel trading hours have been extended to 10 p.m.

I sympathise with the habitual drunkard because he does not drink for pleasure; he drinks because he has a disease that is just as bad or as painful as any other disease of the mind. For instance, some people cannot resist thieving. They pick up all sorts of things and carry them home and, like the bower bird, they put them in their rooms or houses and when the police raid them they are caught with perhaps hundreds of pounds worth of goods that are of no use whatever to them. Just as those people are suffering from a disease, so is the habitual drunkard. It is a disease that has caused a great deal of unhappiness in homes, and I join with other hon. members at this juncture in uttering words of praise of the people who are conducting Alcoholics Anonymous because they are doing excellent work for the unfortunates of the community, and they do it for nothing. What they do is done spontaneously, and I

know some of the people connected with the organisation. They might receive a phone call on behalf of some person and one of the members is sent out to that person's house to nurse him. He will give him a little drop to keep him going until the sting has left him and once the affected person is got safely on the right track the representative of Alcoholics Anonymous leaves. Hon. members would be astounded to know the people connected with this organisation; no publicity is given to it.

I made a speech in this Chamber some years ago on the tourist trade and I mentioned that if one travelled round the world one would see cafes, hotels and restaurants supplying liquor with meals. One could ask for a small or half bottle of port, sherry, or chablis and be supplied with it, and it is only right that one should be able to get it. I was challenged at that time by somebody who said that he was shocked on one occasion when he saw a woman lying drunk in the street. I said that instead of condemning the woman, he should have got a taxi and taken her home and not left her lying drunk in the street. If a person tries to modernise the habits of people, he is condemned.

I really think that the liquor question should be placed on a Commonwealth-wide basis and that the various State Governments should get together in conference and draw up a uniform set of hours for all the States. Look at the ridiculous position that exists at the Tweed and for a few miles over the border. As soon as the hotels close at 6 o'clock there is an exodus of cars across the border into Queensland—some travel only a matter of 50 yards—and their occupants can get a drink till 10 p.m. We speak of Australia as a Commonwealth or Federation but let us take the position of a man who comes to Brisbane from Sydney. He may walk into the Grand Central Hotel or the Belle Vue and ask for a schooner of beer. The barmaid nearly faints, because she does not know what a schooner means. And if that man asked for a middy, the barmaid would think that he was from a foreign country, instead of from another State in the Commonwealth. There should be uniformity in trading hours; and if the closing hour is 10 p.m. in New South Wales it should be 10 p.m. in Queensland and if it is 12 noon in Queensland—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Turner): Order! The Committee is not considering the question of trading hours.

Mr. JESSON: I think the Licensing Commission should have something to do with it. Furthermore, I suggest that there should be facilities for people to drink in the open, as in Italy and, particularly, France and in some parts of New South Wales, where in some places you can sit in the grounds of the hotel and have a drink in comfort. A person could buy eats and have them with a glass of beer. In other places where there are cafes, one person might be able to get a glass of soft drink and the husband could buy a beer or a glass of wine. In reputable cafes in Melbourne a person can order a bottle of wine with his meal. Where there are

unlicensed hotels at tourist places, it is a terrible thing to think that the traveller or tourist who is accustomed to having a glass of beer or a glass of wine with his meal has to get into his car, perhaps drive to a hotel 3 or 4 miles away, bring back a bottle, take it to his room and cart it in his hip pocket to the table when he is having a meal, open the bottle and look round him to see whether anybody is watching him drink the contents. That is just where breaches of our liquor laws begin. Although I know many people might say that we should not give greater facilities to people to drink, I think that the greater facility to drink the lesser the evil attaching to drink. If everything was done in the open there would be less drunkenness and if hotels had walls of glass so that people walking past could see what was happening inside there would be less trouble; it is when people get in these confined spaces perhaps without much ventilation that liquor affects them.

Mr. Muller: Would you sell it in grocer shops?

Mr. JESSON: If a man wants it, he will get it. After all, you can buy methylated spirits in chemist shops and many people are drinking methylated spirits today. Only recently a crime was committed after a methylated-spirits orgy, and every day of the week people go mad from drinking it. If you can buy methylated spirits in chemist shops, surely you should be able to buy good liquor that will not harm anyone when taken in moderation? No law will make a man do something that he does not want to do; for instance, you cannot devise a law that will stop a man from gambling. There is nothing wrong with these things as long as they are taken in moderation. Just because a few people abuse something, all those who like a glass of liquor now and again are penalised.

The hon. member for Sandgate had no right to enter into this debate at all, unless of course he intended to deal with the provisions of the Bill. He mentioned something about crime and drunkenness—

Mr. DECKER: I rise to a point of order. I did not even touch on the matter mentioned by the hon. member. I dealt with fire-escapes.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the Committee will appreciate the fact that I have allowed a tremendous amount of latitude in the debate on this Bill. I have found it very difficult to link with the Bill many of the matters that have been discussed by hon. members and I appeal to following speakers to confine themselves to the provisions contained in it.

Mr. JESSON: I do not think I have offended in that direction, Mr. Farrell. However, I commend the Government on the introduction of the Bill, and I hope that at a later date other amendments will be introduced to make the legislation more workable. I believe that a full-time chairman should be appointed to the Licensing Commission, because it has a good deal of work ahead of it in bringing hotels in this State up to date. Many of them are a good deal below standard

because of the building restrictions that were in force for so many years. It is rather unfortunate that it has been so long since building restrictions were imposed, because many hotel-owners who previously had money to spend on their hotel buildings have spent it unwisely and now have not enough to modernise them.

I congratulate the members of the Licensing Commission on the work they have done, and I think the retiring chairman deserves special commendation for what he has done during the past years, which have been very trying ones. I know that the commission would have liked to do many things to improve hotels, but its activities have been restricted by regulations. Its members have had to use a good deal of common sense and discretion and I congratulate them on the results they have achieved.

This Bill is a progressive step in our liquor laws and I am looking forward to the day when we can do something that will bring about a decrease in drunkenness and will give visitors to this State increased opportunities of obtaining liquor for their personal enjoyment.

Mr. MULLER (Fassifern) (12.39 p.m.): I appreciate what you said a few moments ago, Mr. Farrell, and I think it is very wise to allow a certain amount of latitude when we are discussing legislation of this kind. I have listened to a good deal of the debate that has taken place and in my opinion the amendments contained in this Bill are very necessary. I believe that the Minister intends to give the Licensing Commission great powers and I take it that is the purpose of the Bill. When we look at the achievements of the commission over the years I think we can say it has done a great deal.

The Minister went on to say that the consumption of liquor had not increased to any great extent in this State over the years. I think his figures indicated an increase from 11.4 gallons a head of the adult population to about 13 gallons. That is a considerable increase. However, he went on to say that it was not as bad as some people imagined and that it was a great deal worse in the other States. Still, two wrongs do not make a right, and I should like to put the Minister right on one point that I think he missed. He told us that the consumption in Victoria was very much worse than here, that it was slightly more than 20 gallons a head of the adult population but do not forget that a good deal of the beer produced in Victoria is sold in Queensland.

Mr. Power: That does not affect the position. That is only a matter of production, not consumption.

Mr. MULLER: The Minister should give us both.

Mr. Power: I gave the consumption.

Mr. MULLER: The two do not quite link up. Remember too that the consumption in Queensland is well over 5,000,000 gallons, which is very high. I do not, however, want to discuss the matter from that

angle. It has been said that the proper thing to do is to look at it from the Australian viewpoint, but that too is outside the Bill. I am concerned about the point made by the Minister when he seemed to charge some of the responsibility against the Tourist Bureau, which is under the control of the Government.

Mr. POWER: I rise to a point of order. I did not charge any of the responsibility against the Tourist Bureau. The hon. member must not make a statement like that, because it is untrue.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member for Fassifern to accept the denial of the Minister.

Mr. MULLER: I accept his denial but I was not talking of liquor, I was talking about hotel accommodation. The Minister knew that I was coming to the point. If the hotels are to develop into beer houses and nothing more, you can wipe out the lot so far as I am concerned. When the Licensing Commission was established everyone was of the opinion that the purpose was to bring about better hotel accommodation in the State. It was understood that no longer would it tolerate the position that then obtained whereby hotels existed only for the sale of beer. You do not have to go out of the city to find hotels that are not fit to stay in. I am not directing my remarks particularly at the licensees but if you go into any country district, especially a grazing area, you will find that some of the hotels are not fit to stay in. I have moved about in the last few years and I have kept my eyes open and should I return to some of these places I shall camp on the road or do everything else, in preference to staying at the hotel.

Mr. Power: What is the name of the town?

Mr. MULLER: The hon. gentleman is again playing politics, and perhaps has the policeman in mind.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MULLER: I did not introduce that aspect of the matter; the Minister introduced it. I pointed out that the Licensing Commission was set up to get rid of this trouble. Whether the licensee is responsible for it or not I do not know but in some country areas he should have special consideration because his trade is not very big. You cannot expect to have hotel accommodation in country hotels that is equal to city accommodation, but you have a right to expect something better than is offered to you today. When you look at the furniture in some places you think, apart from its being unclean, that it came out of the ark. Is it any wonder that people will not stay at such hotels? If the commission is to achieve its object, it should see that some of these matters are attended to. The Minister talked about grading hotels, but if he did so and started with A, B, and C, some of these hotels would be graded about W.

I was asked by the Minister to cite a specific instance. Do you, Mr. Farrell, know a place called Capella? There was a place there only about eight months ago that was a galvanised-iron shack. Nevertheless, it kept operating. There was another licensed hotel there, and it carried on, in a way. For the life of me I cannot understand why a licensee should be permitted to carry on under conditions that obtain in those hotels. There was not a bed in the place and it was where accommodation was needed. Those conditions went on year after year, yet nothing was done. I was told recently that the place I refer to was closed down, but only after many complaints were made.

If we are going to encourage tourists to come to Queensland, we must provide accommodation for them. It would be very difficult for tourists to reach some of our inland towns, because of the conditions of the roads, particularly, nevertheless accommodation should be provided there for people who desire it. I am not going to accuse the commission, the policeman, or anyone else, but the matter should be looked into by the commission and the Minister. I have in mind a hotel in the country that is not allowed to compete with the railway refreshment rooms when a train arrives at the station, yet under its licence it is supposed to be kept open in prescribed hours.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! That subject cannot be discussed on this Bill.

Mr. MULLER: I am not discussing railways; I am referring now to the powers exercised by the Licensing Commission. After the commission issues a licence, the licensee should be protected; even if he is in competition with the railway refreshment rooms, or anyone else, he is entitled to some consideration.

These are matters which should be examined. If we complain about the poor accommodation offered at some hotels and direct all our criticism against the licensees, we may not be fair. If there is any weakness in the Act in that respect, it should be cured. If a licence is granted for a hotel when the trade will not permit the licensee to recoup the licence fee, we are not fair to the licensee.

It is our duty to see that the standard of country hotels is improved. I cannot understand why some are not better than they are. I refer particularly to hotels in grazing districts, particularly in those towns that are not as prosperous as they should be, nevertheless when a hotel does not maintain the standard that should be maintained, and nothing is done about it, although the commission is functioning, we are getting nowhere. I have been told by the commission, and I feel quite sure it is a fact, that it is endeavouring to see that the standard of these hotels is improved. Despite all its efforts over the years, we are forced to admit that little or no improvement has taken place in those places. I realise that in town where better business conditions are offering the licensee is able to make better

provision for the public. It is necessary to visit these places to see the conditions obtaining. If a traveller walks into one of these hotels he is entitled to comfortable accommodation. In the last few weeks I was in a hotel where not even a wash-basin was provided in my room. I could describe something much more serious than the Minister did. There should be closer co-operation between the Tourist Bureau and the commission; something must be done to attain improved hotel standards.

With other hon. members, I am concerned at the increase in the consumption of liquor but I realise that if a licensee was not licensed to sell liquor he would not be able to live in some of the places I have mentioned.

Hon. W. POWER (Baroona—Attorney-General) (12.50 p.m.): It is true that the conditions the hon. member for Fassifern mentioned have prevailed for a number of years. All I want was that the hon. member should give me the name of the police officer quietly outside and the area he referred to so that immediate investigations could be made into it. We have our own inspectors investigating every hotel in Queensland with a view to having them cleaned up and improving the conditions. Because of non-compliance with licensing conditions a number of hotels have been closed; and we will continue that policy.

Motion (Mr. Power) agreed to.

FIRST READING.

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

MARRIED WOMEN (RESTRAINT UPON ANTICIPATION) BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

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

Hon. W. POWER (Baroona—Attorney-General) (12.53 p.m.): I move—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the law relating to the capacity, property, and liabilities of married women, and the liabilities of husbands, and to render inoperative any restriction upon anticipation or alienation attached to the enjoyment of property by a woman.”

This Bill abolished restraint upon anticipation of property by married women. It effects consequential amendments of the Married Women's Property Acts, 1890 and 1897, the Settled Land Act of 1886, the Trustees and Executors' Act of 1897, and the Matrimonial Causes Jurisdiction Act of 1864.

Restraint upon anticipation is a survival from times preceding the Married Women's Property Act of 1890, when by the common law the husband was entitled to all of the wife's property. The husband had full control of and could deal as he thought fit with any property his wife had when they married, as well as property that came to her during the marriage.

To counter this power of the husband, the custom arose of vesting property in trustees upon trust for a married woman for her separate use. This custom was not wholly satisfactory because the husband could influence the wife to hand over the property to him. To guard against the husband's getting his hands on the wife's property in this way, a practice arose of providing in the trust instrument that the wife could not sell or mortgage her right to the trust income. In other words, the wife was prohibited from anticipating the future income by sale or mortgage. This prohibition is peculiar to a married woman holding property during her marriage. It is abolished by the Bill.

The object of the further amendments in the Bill is to place a married woman in exactly the same position as a single woman so far as relates to the ownership of property. The Married Women's Property Act of 1890 gave to a married woman the right to hold property as her separate property. The Bill goes a step further and provides that marriage does not effect in anyway whatsoever the right or status of a woman so far as it relates to her own property.

The principal object of the amendments of other Acts included in this Bill is to remove from the provisions of those Acts the qualifying word “separate” applied to a married woman's property. The Bill provides that a married woman is to be in exactly the same position as a single woman so far as ownership and dealing with property is concerned, liability in respect of wrongs, contracts and debts, capacity to sue and be sued, and the enforcement of judgments and orders.

Hitherto contractual obligations, debts or other obligations incurred by a married woman could only be enforced against her separate property. Under the Bill these matters, if enforceable against a single woman personally, will likewise be enforceable against a married woman personally.

Summed up, this Bill provides that marriage does not affect in any way the legal capacity of a wife as to the holding of property and conduct of affairs relating to property.

Mr. HILEY (Coorparoo) (12.57 p.m.): There is one problem that is exercising the minds of the womenfolk but I do not know whether the Minister has given thought to it. I should like to know whether there is included in the Bill anything affecting this very vexed question of a wife's savings out of the housekeeping allowance made to her by her husband. I understand the law has solemnly decided that where a husband makes an allowance to his wife to keep the house she holds that money as his agent and that although she makes the savings by running the home economically and by being a very frugal housewife, any savings she makes are still the property of the husband. I do not know whether this matter has come under the Minister's notice or whether he has given any thought to it, but I do know there are a great number of women who take the attitude that if they manage to keep the

home cheaply and to the husband's satisfaction and are able to accumulate small savings, those savings are theirs.

Mr. Devries: Was not that recently decided in England?

Mr. HILEY: I could not say. I am fairly sure the position I have outlined is right and I was wondering whether the Minister has given any thought to it.

Mr. F. E. Roberts: What are your views?

Mr. HILEY: I am inclined to think that within reason it would be a sensible thing to encourage a wife to save. After all, do not forget that the husband has the control of the running of his home in his own hands. If the husband makes a very liberal allowance to his wife and she runs a miserable home, if he is fat-headed enough to keep on paying her £10 a week when she is only spending £4 a week on the running of the home, the blood is on his own head. On the other hand, if she is not getting a fair allowance for housekeeping he can control it himself.

Mr. Power: If you are getting into deep water I am not going to get in with you.

Mr. HILEY: If the Minister studies the constitution of the average community he will find these weekly savings by the housewives are a very important matter.

Mr. F. E. Roberts: The question arises only when there has been a matrimonial dispute.

Mr. HILEY: I should like the Minister to make some observation about the problem. I do not want to pretend to the Committee that it does not present some difficulty. As I see it, there are two or three situations that can arise. Take first the case of the happy marriage where, on the death of the husband the problem whether the State should seek to charge death duties on the accumulated savings of the wife during the husband's lifetime as part of the husband's estate arises. I should say that immediately there is very good reason why the law should strain itself to look upon these genuine savings by the wife as her separate property and not seek in the slightest way to include them in the husband's estate when assessing duty.

Then we have the case of the unhappy marriage in which there is a separation, a divorce, or something like that, during the lifetime of both parties. I realise that there are instances in which the wrongdoing husband seeks to withdraw property from the wife or the wife who deserts wants to cling to the property that reached her through her husband. That is a sticky problem and these issues take a good deal of time to determine. Very often they are settled simply by force of possession in that the person in possession of the money spends it while the issue is being determined. No doubt many hon. members have met with a number of cases, just as I have, in which women in particular felt that they had a moral right to the small savings they were able to make out

of the husband's housekeeping allowance, and I should be glad if the Minister would make some observation touching that issue.

Hon. W. POWER (Baroona—Attorney-General) (2.18 p.m.): I fear that if I adopted the suggestion made by the hon. member I should not have a male friend left in this country. (Laughter.) This matter has been considered on more than one occasion by a number of Attorney-Generals, but I have not yet considered it. It is a matter that should receive some consideration, but at this stage I do not propose to touch it.

Motion (Mr. Power) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING.

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

SUCCESSION AND PROBATE DUTIES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

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

Hon. E. J. WALSH (Bundaberg—Treasurer) (2.23 p.m.): I move—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Succession and Probate Duties Acts, 1892 to 1952, in certain particulars.”

The principles of the Bill are very simple and are in accordance with promises made by the Government in recent times to examine the effect of the principal Act. It may be one of the surprises to members of the Opposition because I think they will gather from this Bill that the Government are prepared to at least provide for an exemption that will give some relief from this form of taxation.

An Opposition Member: Unusual?

Mr. WALSH: I do not think it very unusual. I think the Government's record indicates that they are willing to examine each question on its merits and deal with it accordingly. They have decided, as in other amendments giving certain relief, that it is right to amend this law, and hon. members will agree as I outline the principles of the Bill that it is consistent with the record of the Government in giving remissions where they can be justified. This, of course, might not be the last of the surprises we have for the Opposition. I do not want to introduce a controversial subject, I merely say that although the Government have difficult financial commitments, they are nevertheless willing to remit any form of taxation where necessary.

The proposed amendments to the Succession and Probate Duties Acts are these—

(1) To raise the amount of the total value of an estate not liable for probate, administration or succession duties from £500 to £1,500 where the deceased was

domiciled in the Commonwealth and the successor is the wife or the lineal issue of the deceased and the successor is domiciled in the Commonwealth.

Where the successor is domiciled outside the Commonwealth, the concession limiting the rate of duty to quarter rates will apply to estates not exceeding £1,500, this amount, of course, having been increased from the present limit of £500. Any estate in these two cases in excess of £1,500 will be liable to probate, administration or succession duty in accordance with the existing provisions and at the existing rates. I hope that is clear to hon. members.

(2) For concessional purposes, the term "lineal issue" is to be broadened to cover any natural child, legitimate or illegitimate, of the predecessor or any child legally adopted by the predecessor or his or her spouse conjointly.

(3) For the elimination of dual taxation in respect of persons dying domiciled in Queensland and leaving personal property situated outside this State but within the British Commonwealth of Nations on which death duties have been paid outside the State.

Hon. members will probably remember that this matter has been raised on both sides of the Chamber on several occasions. It has been examined recently, and the Government have decided that it would be in the best interests of all to adjust the position as it at present exists. Consequently, we are doing away with the dual taxation that has existed over the years.

Mr. Hiley: How will that work? Say the duty here was £100 and the portion in New South Wales attracted £10, you would pay the £10 in New South Wales and £90 here?

Mr. WALSH: You would deduct whatever the value of the estate might be in the other State.

Mr. Hiley: It is not the lesser of the two?

Mr. WALSH: No.

The other amendments provide—

(4) For the repeal of the present section dealing with reciprocity in respect of succession duty exemptions as between this State and the United Kingdom, or any other British possession. This section will be redundant when the new provision re dual taxation becomes law.

(5) That the amending provisions will operate in respect of estates of persons dying on or after the date of the passing of the Act.

There have been moves in other States in respect of taxation levied by way of succession and probate duties. For example, in a recent publication issued by the Taxpayers' Association, I read that Tasmania was increasing its rates, and I believe that the New South Wales Government too are doing something in that respect. This Government have not decided to increase the rates, but this phase of taxation will obviously have

to receive consideration when taxing powers are returned to the various States. It may be that the Commonwealth will want to vacate many of the minor fields of taxation, if they can be classed as such—not that that will help the States very much. If the Commonwealth Government insist on their priority rights under uniform-taxation legislation, I do not think that their getting out of the fields of land tax, probate and succession duty, and entertainment tax will be of very much assistance to the States.

I do not propose to deal at any great length at this stage with the matter that I am now going to raise. It deals with something mentioned by the hon. member for Norman. I do not know where he obtained his advice on inscribed stock, but I should be surprised if any of his colleagues in the Opposition would sustain the view he recently put forward. It certainly was a very interesting point, but I do not think there are any grounds for the interpretation placed on the section by the hon. member.

Hon. members opposite should agree with the principles of the Bill. At least, there is nothing in it to raise their ire.

Mr. Luckins: It is very welcome news.

Mr. WALSH: I did say earlier in the session that despite all the talk by hon. members opposite that the policy of the Government was one of excessive taxation there might be a few surprises in this respect. We are always willing to examine all cases relating to the burden of taxation and to see whether it can be lifted from the shoulders of people who can ill afford to pay it. When the Leader of the Opposition was addressing the Chamber recently, I interjected to say that we might even make some remissions in taxation, whereupon the hon. gentleman described my remark as a pious hope. His view in that regard must now fade away. As the session goes on there will be more and more evidence of the Government's desire to extend relief under these various headings from time to time.

I think that the hon. member for Sherwood, the hon. member for Toowong, and the hon. member for Coorparoo, who because of their calling, take a very keen interest in all phases of taxation will agree that politics does not come into the question and that the present financial position is a problem for all Governments. Nevertheless that should not debar us from examining taxation legislation to see where relief can be given. When we have regard to the money values of today we must acknowledge at once that the present exemption of estates up to £500 is not in accordance with the trend, and that the exemption now proposed is more in keeping with the value of the depreciated £1.

I am sure that the Bill will be welcomed by hon. members opposite, and in any event it will give them an opportunity of going a little further in the consideration of these principles.

Mr. HILEY (Coorparoo) (2.33 p.m.): I am sure that every hon. member will thank the Treasurer for bringing in this measure

at the present time. He took the trouble to point out that there were certain principles governing the application of taxation that were quite apart from the outlook of any political party or any narrow political view. In levying a tax we must first of all determine whether the tax is worth while and whether the cost of collecting it will justify the amount collected, which may be small. It does not make sense to go on collecting a lot of trifling amounts from a whole host of tiny estates and on that test the alteration in the exemption must be held to be entirely satisfactory and proper. If we are to err, we should err on the side of generosity and I think the Treasurer is quite right in pointing out that having regard to the depreciation in money values the exemption of £500 need not have been increased to £1,500 and I should have said that if the amount had been fixed at £1,250 few hon. members in the Chamber would have quarrelled with it. By fixing the exemption of £1,500 the Treasurer is plainly entitled to say that he is introducing a generous measure, and that is the way I describe my reaction to that figure.

The other point I would make is that the greatest care must be exercised by every Government, when imposing taxation, to see that it falls on the shoulders of the people best able to bear it. Those are the greatest guiding principles in taxation—avoiding taxes which are always dear to a Minister, and avoiding placing a tax on those least able to bear it. On the second test, by raising the exemption to £1,500 and still leaving the estate above that level liable to taxation, the Treasurer is again following the correct principle and consequently it meets with my favour.

I am not quite clear—and I hope therefore the Minister will therefore elaborate on it, what he has said—as to what is the effect on the State when it reaches £1,500. He said that after that the scale rates apply. I hope there will be no alteration in the percentages in the scale. I want the Minister to tell the Committee whether if an estate is valued at £1,750 the £250, that is, the excess over £1,500, is the starting point, or whether once an estate passes the exemption the whole of it will come into the taxation field. If the Minister makes that explanation, he will help us to better understand the precise meaning of the Bill.

On the sad tale of taxes there is the old saying that what you wait for longest is the most pleasant. Pakistanis have a proverb that the fruit that ripens most slowly is the sweetest. On that test the Treasurer has given the Committee a very sweet piece of fruit today. We have waited and waited, and there has been promise after promise that it would come but it is only now that he is bringing to the Committee what I gather is complete fulfilment of what the Government have promised. On the outline he gave the Committee, it will meet the problem of the imposition of double duties. Not all the formulas made to deal with double taxation give 100 per cent. relief, but if what the Minister told us works out as he indicated

no person will pay double tax because he has the misfortune to have estate in more than one State of the Commonwealth. He will not be faced with the additional costs involved in administering an estate spread over two States. That is merely a self-inflicted problem that the individual can control as he goes. It is quite wrong to suggest that the State should make further concessions because a man is faced with more legal costs because he happens to have estate in Queensland and New South Wales.

What the Minister proposes on the assessment of duty is an answer to a very vexed problem, and I will look with keen interest at the precise language employed in the Bill to see whether it lives up to the Minister's expectation. I am sure that the people, after having had their mouths wetted for this tender morsel, will enjoy it.

Mr. MUNRO (Toowong) (2.39 p.m.): I should like to join the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in expressing our appreciation of the introduction of this measure. It has not in any way come as a surprise to us. Actually I was rather surprised that the Treasurer did not bring it in about 12 months earlier seeing that I myself put forward a suggestion along the same general lines about two years ago. Indeed, the introduction of the Bill does indicate what a wonderful benefit the Government enjoy in having a constructive Opposition on this side of the Chamber. If we can look forward to further examples in which the Government carry out the very sound advice that we are able to give them it will be a factor in achieving good government in Queensland; that is what we want.

As far as the two main principles of the Bill are concerned—the increase in the amount of the statutory exemption and the elimination of double taxation as between the States—there is no doubt they are in the right direction. The only thing is, as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition said, that we shall require to examine the measure in perhaps some little detail when we see it to satisfy ourselves that in the granting of these concessions there has been a fair balance of equity between different classes of taxpayers. I make that suggestion because the justification for those main amendments lies in two reasons. The first one, as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition mentioned, is that it is not good business for any Government to spend a lot of money in collecting relatively small amounts from small taxpayers. That applies only to the class of smaller taxpayers and transactions. Apart from that, we do know that owing to the depreciation in the value of money the £1 is now worth only approximately 8s. compared with seven or eight years ago. As the Treasurer pointed out, the increase of the exemption from £500 to £1,500 is an entirely adequate adjustment to meet that new state of affairs so far as the exemption is concerned, but I should like to feel that that principle has been carried through so that it will have some relevance to the rate of duty applicable in all categories. That is a matter the Treasurer has not dealt with in

detail—possibly it is not proper at the present stage—and we shall be interested to have an opportunity later on of examining the Bill to see how it works out.

The other point the Treasurer himself has indicated is that this may be regarded to some extent as an interim measure. I take it he is referring to the whole problem of taxation. I am glad to hear that. I think the Treasurer will agree when I say that when we take the full and wide problem of taxation in Australia, that is, including taxation of the Commonwealth and the States, we have not yet achieved a solution of it.

Mr. Walsh: You will agree that we cannot afford to give much away these times.

Mr. MUNRO: I quite agree with that—at the present time you cannot afford to give too much away, either in the relationship between the State and the taxpayer or in the relationship between the State and the requirements of other parts of Australia.

I do again take this opportunity to commend to the Treasurer the specific suggestions I put before him about a fortnight ago when speaking on the Budget. Even though the wheels of Government may revolve slowly I hope whoever may be the occupant of his position in 12 months or two years' time will be able to report that we really have made progress and found a complete solution of this very difficult problem of taxation powers and responsibilities of the States and the Commonwealth.

Mr. BURROWS (Port Curtis) (2.45 p.m.): I am sure the Treasurer's action in introducing this Bill will be exceedingly welcome. It will certainly be of benefit to widows whose husbands have left small estates. The average working man—and he comprises the very large section of the community—has done fairly well for himself if he has accumulated enough to own a home. Under the conditions that have existed for the past 20 or 30 years he could accumulate much more in his working life, but we have found that on his death, under the existing rates, it is not much of a home the value of which does not exceed, say, £1,500 today, which is of course a consequence of inflation. Now that the exemption is raised to £1,500 we know that the unfortunate widow to whom her husband leaves a home but no money will be in a much better position to retain possession of her home and not have to sell it to pay the various death duties and other charges that the estates of deceased persons attract.

My attention was drawn to this matter some six months ago. I brought under the notice of the Treasurer a very sad case and had the provisions that will apply under this Bill been the law and the increased exemption applied, this widow would not have been placed in a very embarrassing position.

The hon. member for Toowong contended that collecting relatively small amounts from a number of small taxpayers was uneconomic and certainly was not desirable. That is

quite correct and that is one of the strongest objections I take to the proposal to introduce another form of taxation to support our hospitals. I was in the company of the late William McCormack, a former Premier of Queensland, just prior to 1929 when the Government were in a rather similar position to the one they are in today, perhaps in a worse one. They were exploring every avenue for money.

Mr. Hiley: I thought you meant on the eve of defeat.

Mr. BURROWS: No, thank goodness, and when I say "Thank goodness," I am not thinking of myself but of the people of Queensland. (Laughter.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I do not intend to allow a general discussion on taxation.

Mr. BURROWS: Mr. McCormack had said he did agree with the principle of exemptions because the cost of collecting from small estates was not worth the labour involved. We all realise that a tax-gatherer is not a productive person. The Government are concerned to employ the smallest possible number of tax-gatherers. They are a burden on the community and as I said in another debate they should not be employed unnecessarily, although they may be very estimable persons in every other way. If we can reduce the number we shall be going in the right direction.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR (Clayfield) (2.50 p.m.): As the remarks of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition were interpreted as being in the nature of moving a vote of thanks and the hon. member for Toowong was taken as seconding that motion, I should very much like to support it.

There is nothing more gratifying to an hon. member of this Assembly than to find that representations he has made to Ministers have resulted in the granting of his request. It is some three years ago that a very esteemed and well-known member of the legal profession, who lives in my electorate, asked me to make representations to the then Treasurer, the hon. member for Rockhampton, in connection with the collection of succession duties where estate was left in both New South Wales and Queensland or in Victoria and Queensland. He felt that the tax as levied then on both estates was unfair when compared with the practice in the other States. The practice in the other States is to remit the taxation on the lesser amount. At that time I was promised by the hon. member for Rockhampton that legislation would be introduced to bring about the desired relief, and although it has taken just on three years, patience has been rewarded and I am very happy at being able to tell my esteemed friend that the Government have decided at last to act in the direction he desires. I am very pleased indeed to see this legislation brought before us.

Mr. LUCKINS (Norman) (2.53 p.m.): I should like to congratulate the Treasurer upon introducing this amendment. It will be very acceptable to the people of this State,

the taxpayers in particular, and I support those other hon. members who have spoken in favour of it, although I should like to tell the Treasurer that none of my colleagues on this side is associated with my remarks yesterday about inscribed stock.

I congratulate the Treasurer upon the move he is making today, but, after all, the increase in exemption really only conforms to the decrease in the value of the £. It is admitted that things today cost three times more than they did before the war, and I agree that the Treasurer is moving in the right direction. There are many points in the consideration of probate and successions duties, and I shall have them in mind when perusing the Bill.

At the present time the Commissioner has power to trace events back for 12 months in order to ascertain what has been happening in connection with an estate during that time, and he can assess duty on gifts made during that period and on sales that have taken place during that time. I should like to see that 12 months reduced to 6 months, because it is admitted that the officers of the department are so alert in these days that it is very difficult indeed for anyone to evade taxation. There are not many people in this State who are clever enough to evade such taxes as probate, succession and stamp duties.

I should like the Treasurer at this stage to give us some assurance that this exemption will be made retrospective to 1 July. I am sure he realises that the tax-gatherer is a very unpopular person but somebody has to have the job of Treasurer or tax-gatherer and I am sure that it is a difficult one, as he has to find a certain amount of money. In regard to inscribed stock—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! That matter does not come within the ambit of this Bill.

Mr. LUCKINS: Then I will not introduce the subject. The staff of the Stamp Duties Office do a wonderful job but it has for many years been short of expert personnel. I know that the amount of money collected is growing each year, but a limited amount is available for services in the department, and I should like the Treasurer to augment the staff in that office, so that probate and succession-duty matters may be got through it in quicker time than at present. I know that some estates are held up for long periods; I admit that there are difficult estates to deal with because the Commissioner is obliged to go into every avenue of value and income and expenditure to see that nothing escapes his keen eye. All this takes time, but in the interests of the beneficiaries it is desirable that probate and succession-duty matters shall be finalised as quickly as possible. I appreciate the shortage of expert staff to handle estate matters, and I hope the Treasurer will be able to build up the staff so that deceased estates particularly will be handled more quickly than in the past.

Mr. KEYATTA (Townsville) (2.58 p.m.): I compliment the Treasurer on the introduction of this Bill and say that it is long

overdue. When anomalies are brought to the notice of the Government at party meetings or by departmental heads or by hon. members of the House, the Government move with expedition to eliminate them. As for the remarks made by the hon. member for Norman, it is distressing and annoying that delays occur in the finalisation of estate matters, but this is a highly technical job, and very often the examination of an estate takes up quite a lot of time. These questions cannot be decided by any employee; trained men are required. It may be suggested that as the hon. member is retiring from politics he should offer his services to this Government department.

A man may save some money, and on his demise leave it to his widow. Duty is charged on his estate. In the course of time the widow dies and the money is left to a child or children. Again the Commonwealth and State come in for their shares of duty, and when the surviving child or children die the estate is again subjected to tax.

That is unfortunate. It reminds me of the game in which the gamekeeper takes his percentage every time the game is played. In the course of time all the money goes to the controlling unit, in this case the department. I realise that tax must be paid on these moneys, but why should it be levied time and time again with the result that eventually nothing is left?

I compliment the Minister on moving along these lines and correcting an anomaly, and I trust that further anomalies will be corrected as they arise in the future. I know that everybody is under an obligation to pay his due to the State in the form of rates, taxes and succession duties, but why should money that has already been taxed under this legislation be taxed again and again? Probably there is some reason for it, but to me it does not seem to be common sense. It causes nothing but distress and hardship for the people concerned.

In conclusion, I again compliment the Minister on the very desirable move he has made in bringing forward this amendment.

Hon. E. J. WALSH (Bundaberg—Treasurer) (3.2 p.m.): I should like to reply to one or two matters that have been raised by hon. members. I appreciate, of course, that members wish to see the Bill in order to see its full implications.

I agree with some of the remarks that have been made to the effect that the collection of small amounts of taxation can eventually become very costly, but that in total a fairly considerable sum can be obtained by handling estates that in themselves return only a limited amount of money. That is true, of course, of all forms of taxation, but I think it will be agreed that the proposed exemption of £1,500 will to some extent alter the present position.

In reply to the hon. members for Coorparoo and Toowong, I think I made it quite clear that what is being done is to substitute £1,500 for £500. The rates will not be altered

in any way. Just as the incidence of tax applied to an estate of £500, so it will apply to an estate of £1,500. Once an estate exceeds £1,500, the full amount of tax is paid.

I do not know whether the hon. member for Coorparoo misunderstood me, or whether I misunderstood him. Obviously, as I said, we cannot afford to give too much away, and the estimate of the relief that will be afforded in this connection is something like £30,000.

The effect of the elimination of dual taxation is that if, for example, an estate was paying £5 on the Queensland portion and £20 on the portion outside Queensland, the amount to be remitted would be £5, not £20. Conversely, if the amount in respect of the estate in Queensland was £20 and that outside the State was £5, there would still be a remission of £5.

I am sure hon. members will agree that, on the whole, a remission of £30,000 taxation under this heading is a considerable benefit. I think the right thing has been done in lifting the exemption and the beneficiaries concerned should feel quite satisfied.

There is nothing more that I desire to say at this stage.

Motion (Mr. Walsh) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING.

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

EXPLOSIVES BILL.

SECOND READING.

Hon. E. J. WALSH (Bundaberg—Treasurer) (3.7 p.m.): I move—

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

I explained the principles of the Bill on the introductory stage. It brings the Explosives Act up to date. It has not been amended since 1906. In view of the change in circumstances over the years, a review of the Act has become necessary and it is being amended in accordance with the various practices that have come under the notice of the administration in the handling of explosives.

There is one phase of the matter that causes some concern and that is the relationship between the Commonwealth and the State in connection with naval vessels and other vessels under the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth that come into the port of Brisbane and other ports. It will be appreciated that in war-time it is essential that there should be some relaxation of the law as it applies in peace-time but I think it will be conceded that in peace-time these vessels and indeed all activities affecting State control of explosives should pay some regard to the State law. I think, for example, that hon. members will agree that it is a fairly sound

principle that the State law should be observed where any vessel comes into the port carrying a large quantity of explosives, even though it may be specifically under Commonwealth jurisdiction. I hope that as time goes on there will be a better understanding between the Commonwealth and the State in this phase of administration and that we shall be able to get together and work out something whereby the State law will be acknowledged in the carriage of explosives by certain naval vessels.

Hon. members will agree, too, that it is time some more rigid control was applied in these matters. Recently it was brought before my notice by way of a question in the House by a northern member that the Department of Harbours and Marine had refused permission to a vessel to carry passengers in a northern area. It was found on investigation by the Port Master that this vessel carried very large quantities of inflammable material, such as benzine and gelignite, without any regard to the passengers who were being carried. The Port Master had an inspection made and some adjustment has been made there. Hon. members will agree that where the department has taken any action to bring such things directly under control it has been fully justified.

Another matter I mentioned on the introduction of the measure was that transport carriers today were carrying large quantities of benzine, and other inflammable cargo between here and the south-eastern part of the State, and that some measure of control should be exercised there. It has come to the notice of the department that quantities of gelignite have been carried on motor transport in conjunction with benzine and inflammable oils.

Mr. Hiley: Is there no control of that matter at the moment?

Mr. WALSH: As a matter of fact, there has not been. That can be readily understood when we remember that the Act under which we are operating goes back as far as 1906 and that it was a very limited one of about 11 sections, although power was contained under it to make regulations.

As I pointed out on the initiation of this Bill in Committee, the right to sell explosives to children under 13 years of age existed under the old law. That is being repealed and this Bill provides that explosives shall not be sold to persons under 18 years of age.

The Bill has been in the hands of hon. members for a considerable time. Consequently they have been able to study and understand the amendments of the present Act contained in this consolidated measure.

Mr. NICKLIN (Landsborough—Leader of the Opposition) (3.13 p.m.): I agree entirely with the Treasurer that the introduction of this measure is essential, as the existing Explosive Act is very much out of date under modern conditions. One can

appreciate the reason for that, seeing it was introduced in 1906 and has not been amended since. Actually, the 1906 Act was only a small one of 11 short sections, but one of its main purposes was to give power to make regulations in reference to most of the matters now embodied in this Bill, namely, the control, storage and handling of the transport of explosives. It is far better, as we have always contended on this side, to deal with such matters as this by legislative action than by regulations. The present Bill is much more comprehensive than the existing Act. As has been stated, the original Act gave very large powers on the issuing of regulations and many of those issued under that Act have been written into this Bill. They provided for the importation of explosives, prohibiting or restricting the importation, manufacture, storage, transport, or sale, of explosives that are too dangerous for use.

That is a rather interesting provision in the old Act. No doubt that power could be used in the modern age to prevent the indiscriminate use of atom bombs on Guy Fawkes Day. (Laughter.) Another of the powers in the old Act is to regulate the carriage of explosives, another to impose penalties, and another to make regulations for such other purposes as the Minister deems expedient in the interests of public safety. This dragnet could be used to cover practically everything that is now included in the Bill.

Mr. Walsh: It will not prevent the explosions that occur here occasionally.

Mr. NICKLIN: I should not imagine so. I should imagine that no matter how much legislation we pass dealing with explosives we shall never be able to control the explosions that break out here from time to time. That is a reflection on the Chair, but we all realise that you do your best, Mr. Farrell, to control and limit those explosions.

As I said, it is preferable that the law should, as far as possible, be contained in the Bills that come before Parliament and not be left for gazettal as regulations.

When we examine the Bill, apart from machinery provisions, we find that the only real changes are—

1. The powers of inspectors are specified and enlarged.

It is right that the powers of inspectors should be specified in a Bill designed to control the use of dangerous substances, and that those powers should be fairly wide. We have had debates in regard to the powers of inspectors; no doubt the Attorney-General will remember the Bill he introduced to deal with persons erecting fortresses in the city of Brisbane, on which occasion we took keen exception to the powers he wrote into the Bill. I believe that the argument used on that occasion would not apply to this Explosives Bill because it is necessary in the interests of public safety that an inspector operating under this Bill should have the widest possible power to take immediate action if it is in the interests of public safety that he do so.

The next change is—

2. The maximum quantity of explosive that may be used for purposes of a chemical experiment is reduced from 5 lb. to 1 lb.

That seems quite reasonable.

Then we come to the next one—

3. The minimum age of a purchaser of explosives is increased from 13 to 18 years. One would imagine that when the original Act was passed it was rather strange that a person of such immature age was permitted to buy explosives, but on looking into this matter and thinking over it, I find that the definition of "explosives" includes fireworks. What is the position now if a youngster of 13 goes to buy fireworks, because under this Bill fireworks are explosives? There may be some trouble when we increase the age as we do; we might destroy Guy Fawkes completely and prevent the kiddies from having their bit of fun. I ask the Minister to look into that question. If the correct interpretation is that explosives include fireworks, it would not be wise—

Mr. Walsh: I am afraid you have not read the Bill; look at Clause 33.

Mr. NICKLIN: Yes. I notice that it is covered. That clause will get over the difficulty.

Mr. Walsh: I am sorry to do you out of your crackers. (Laughter).

Mr. NICKLIN: I entirely agree that the age of the persons purchasing explosives, particularly dangerous explosives, should be raised, as it has been, from 13 to 18 years.

I now come to a new principle written into the Bill: that if a person is found trespassing on any magazine or factory he may be forcibly removed. After all, that is a common-sense provision. If a person is found trespassing near a magazine for no good purpose he can be removed summarily without the need to take out a magistrate's order or anything of that kind. If he is acting dangerously he can be arrested without a warrant. The question of arrest without warrant has been examined from time to time in this House and in particular instances objected to very strenuously by the Opposition, but this is one instance in which we shall not offer any objection, because these are justifiable circumstances—a man acting dangerously and suspiciously in the vicinity of any great quantity of explosives.

Mr. Walsh: The power is limited too.

Mr. NICKLIN: The power is limited to a certain extent and it is limited to certain persons. I think that it will be used only in the interests of the safety of the community. A person who abused it would be liable to action for damages. Wilful acts and even careless acts connected with explosives are crimes or misdemeanours under the Criminal Code. There must be power to act promptly and adequately to remove such dangers, and we have no objection to the powers in this Bill. They are very wise and necessary under the circumstances.

The Treasurer mentioned the question of State and Commonwealth contracts in regard to the control and handling of explosives, and it is rather interesting to note that at the present time there is a Bill before the Federal House dealing with the same question as we are dealing with, the Explosives Bill of 1952. The purpose of the Commonwealth Bill is to enable the promulgation of regulations specifying the safety measures that must be observed when Commonwealth-owned explosives are being handled or transported by road, rail or sea, and the various measures to be taken to provide the necessary safety precautions. This Bill also provides for the establishment of inter-departmental committees to advise on all aspects of explosives and I suggest to the Treasurer that after this Bill goes through, in view of the action taken by the Commonwealth—the Commonwealth Bill actually legalises the regulations issued under the National Security Regulations during the war to deal with the transfer, carriage and handling of explosives—

Mr. Power: Did they bring in that Explosives Bill after the blow-up at Flinders?

Mr. NICKLIN: It was put through the House before that. The Commonwealth Bill refers specifically to the handling of Commonwealth-owned explosives which, after all, are munitions. Of course, not the same quantity of explosives and munitions is being moved about the countryside as during the war, but large quantities of explosives and munitions are being moved and it is necessary that there should be a close liaison between the Commonwealth and the State in this matter.

Mr. Walsh: The vessels we are worried about are merchant vessels.

Mr. NICKLIN: I appreciate that. I was about to point out to the Minister that the Commonwealth legislation gives power to the Minister to set up inter-departmental committees consisting of the heads of the various services.

No doubt there will be a Naval Committee, an Army Committee and an Air Force Committee. The Naval Committee will deal with the problem envisaged by the Treasurer. It is essential that adequate precaution be taken, because we all know of a number of terrible tragedies that have taken place as a result of the explosion of munitions. We all remember how the city of Halifax in Canada was virtually blown off the map through the explosion of a munitions ship, which set off other munitions ships, with the result that hundreds of lives were lost and hundreds of thousands of pounds' worth of damage done.

Mr. Jesson: I thought you were speaking of Halifax up near Ingham.

Mr. NICKLIN: The Halifax near Ingham is safe from explosives, but it is not safe from the hon. member.

The problem relating to State and Commonwealth conflict, mentioned by the Treasurer, can be resolved owing to the fact

that we in this State have brought our legislation up to date and the Commonwealth is taking similar steps. It should be possible to have liaison between the Commonwealth and State authorities to deal with the matter and I repeat that I believe that as a result of the passing of this Bill, together with the passing of the Commonwealth measure, the problem that we hope this legislation will overcome will be dealt with adequately.

Hon. E. J. WALSH (Bundaberg—Treasurer) (3.28 p.m.), in reply: I assure the Leader of the Opposition that on the passing of this legislation full consideration will be given to the question raised by him in connection with entertainments round about Guy Fawkes Day, Christmas Day, and so on. There will be no interference with the children. They will not be debarred in any way from buying their crackers. I think the Leader of the Opposition is happy now that he has seen in the Bill a provision that the fireworks bought by children from time to time are not to be covered.

The hon. gentleman referred to the need for close co-operation between the Commonwealth and State in connection with the carriage of explosives or any explosive matter on vessels for Commonwealth or war purposes outside Commonwealth vessels. There has been an understanding with the armed forces, but it has happened that where merchant ships are carrying large quantities of explosives to, say, Korea and similar places on behalf of the Commonwealth, that relationship has not been all that it should be. The Leader of the Opposition has suggested that now there is similar legislation before the Commonwealth Parliament covering these matters there is opportunity for better understanding in the future, and I agree with him. Everyone will agree that if there is that co-operation between the Commonwealth administration so far as the Navy and Army are concerned, there should be the same co-operation in connection with merchant vessels. No risks should be run simply because explosives are carried on private merchant vessels as cargo.

Mr. Nicklin: The Commonwealth legislation deals specifically with that.

Mr. WALSH: But the hon. gentleman will understand that the State is limited by the Constitution in matters under Commonwealth jurisdiction, but in this Bill we include the usual saving clause embodied in all legislation that touches matters under Commonwealth jurisdiction.

As to the other matters raised by the Leader of the Opposition I note that he commends the Bill; it has been accepted by the Opposition.

Motion (Mr. Walsh) agreed to.

COMMITTEE.

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

Clauses 1 to 5, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Clause 6—Saving of other Acts—

Hon. E. J. WALSH (Bundaberg—Treasurer) (3.33 p.m.): I move the following amendment:—

“On page 3, after line 56, insert the following new subclause—

‘(4.) Nothing in this Act shall prejudice or in any way interfere with the powers of inspection and the regulation of explosives in any mine within the meaning of the Mines Regulation Acts, 1910 to 1945, or the Coal Mining Acts, 1925 to 1952.’”

I think hon. members will appreciate the necessity for this amendment. It is to remove any fear that may exist that the Bill will take away any rights conferred by Act of Parliament relating to the control of mining operations.

Amendment (Mr. Walsh) agreed to.

Clause 6, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 7 to 50, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, with an amendment.

The House adjourned at 3.36 p.m.