

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 10 DECEMBER 1931

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Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. C. Taylor, *Windsor*) took the chair at 2.30 p.m.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Mr. SPEAKER announced the receipt of messages from His Excellency the Governor, conveying His Excellency's assent to the following Bills:

- Income Tax Act* Amendment Bill;
- Government Loan Bill;
- Vagrants, Gaming, and Other Offences Bill.

QUESTIONS.

RAILWAY EMPLOYEES' INSURANCE POLICIES.

Mr. DASH (*Mundingburra*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

"What number of employees sacrificed insurance policies on the introduction of the railway superannuation scheme?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. Godfrey Morgan, *Murilla*) replied—

"The information is not available, but I would draw the hon. member's attention to the fact that section 22 of 'The Railway Superannuation Act of 1930' provides, inter alia, as follows:—

Any contributor who has before the operation of this Act effected a policy of insurance on his life may, with the consent of the insurance or assurance company concerned and of the board, assign such policy (if free from any

mortgage or encumbrance) to the board with a request that the board shall continue the payments of the premiums to the company in respect of such policy.

It is a matter entirely for the employees themselves whether they desire to continue both forms of insurance or not, but if they desire to do so, the above-mentioned section of the Superannuation Act makes it easy for them, and that was my object in framing the Act that way.

"I may say that thirteen or fourteen have already taken advantage of that section of the Act."

HOURS AND WAGES OF RAILWAY EMPLOYEES IN NORTHERN DIVISION.

Mr. DASH (*Mundingburra*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

"What were the average, fortnightly, (a) hours worked, and (b) average wages paid per employee as drivers, firemen, cleaners, shunters, and porters at Mareeba, Cairns, Innisfail, Townsville, Ayr, Charters Towers, Hughenden, Cloncurry, and Bowen from 1st January to 30th April, 1931?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. Godfrey Morgan, *Murilla*) replied—

"The information for the period mentioned by the hon. member is not readily available, and the expense of compiling it is not considered justifiable, but sub-joined is a statement showing the average wages paid for the year ended 30th June, 1931:—

Depot.	Drivers.	Firemen.	Cleaners.	Guards.	Shunters.	Porters.	Labourers.	Tradesmen.
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Brisbane	261	171	250	220	220	187	190	264
Gympie	263	200	176	245	220	188	193	264
Toowoomba	256	202	157	243	221	192	199	264
Warwick	223	204	153	194	218	193	195	241
Roma	277	224	198	276	244	207	213	269
Maryborough	230	175	178	204	210	188	193	242
Bundaberg	232	190	192	234	205	179	206	236
Rockhampton	244	205	192	217	228	198	201	242
Emerald	285	237	207	240	261	210	218	287
Mackay	266	214	175	232	237	206	197	249
Townsville	306	241	190	239	232	214	205	250
Cairns	310	233	200	271	224	226	309	250
Bowen	272	205	200	232	236	232	228	304
Charters Towers	317	207	195	287	251	231	223	307
Hughenden	336	293	230	326	276	263	257	337
Cloncurry	320	279	258	296	261	273	257	305

"It will be observed from the above figures that the average wage in the majority of cases is in excess of the basic wage."

EXPENDITURE ON OUTDOOR RELIEF RATIONS IN METROPOLITAN SUBURBAN AREAS AND COUNTRY DISTRICTS, 1929-1931.

Mr. BRASSINGTON (*Balonne*) asked the Secretary for Labour and Industry—

"1. What was the number of (a) residents, and (b) amount of expenditure

incurred for outdoor relief rations for each of the financial years 1929-30 and 1930-31 at the following places, namely:—Hemmant, Morningside, Newmarket, Nundah, Oxley, Pinkenba, Sandgate, Windsor, and Wynnum?"

"2. What was the number of (a) residents, and (b) travellers, granted relief rations in country districts during each of the financial years 1929-30 and 1930-31?"

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY (Hon. H. E. Sizer, *Sandgate*) replied—

“1.—

Place.	No. of Issues to Residents. 1929-30.	No. of Issues to Residents. 1930-31.	Expenditure.	
			1929-30.	1930-31.
Hemmant	263	298	£ 855 15 4	£ 834 17 1
Morningside	1,432	1,891	3,958 10 5	5,157 4 3
Newmarket	731	1,260	1,847 19 4	3,396 12 7
Nundah	1,030	1,840	3,653 0 6	5,792 18 8
Oxley	271	284	957 11 9	790 14 10
Pinknba.. .. .	264	406	799 11 0	1,146 12 3
Sandgate	469	950	1,634 6 3	2,673 15 7
Windsor	1,073	1,608	3,038 17 9	3,984 15 0
Wynnum	1,376	2,369	4,153 10 1	7,004 9 10

“2. (a) Number of issues to residents—1929-30, 9,431; 1930-31, 25,237; (b) Number of issues to travellers—1929-30, 76,834; 1930-31, 124,844.”

INDEBTEDNESS OF GIROFLA MINING SYNDICATE TO GOVERNMENT.

Mr. PEASE (*Herbert*) asked the Secretary for Mines—

“On the 26th November I asked him, ‘In view of his reply re the indebtedness at the 30th June, 1931, of £2,466 by the Girofla Mining Syndicate to the Government,’ as follows:—

‘Proportionate deductions according to grade of ore are made from the proceeds of ore supplied to the smelters by the Girofla syndicate,’

what has been the total amount of such deduction from the 1st July, 1931, to date?—

“The Minister replied—‘The information is being obtained.’

“Will he now supply the information?”

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. E. A. Atherton, *Chillagoe*) replied—

“There have been no deductions since 1st July, 1931, to date. No ore has been supplied by the syndicate during that period.”

COMPENSATION CLAIMS UNDER WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACTS AWAITING HEARING.

Mr. PEASE (*Herbert*) asked the Treasurer—

“1. How many cases are waiting to be heard and determined by industrial magistrates in connection with compensation claims under the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Acts?

“2. What is the average waiting period that the applicants referred to in (1) have sustained since indicating their desire to have their claims determined in the manner in question?

“3. What is the departmental practice in re arrangements for magistrates in the Brisbane area to be available for taking such cases?

“4. Will he, in collaboration with the Attorney-General, have inquiry made to ensure—(a) That the cases awaiting to be determined are expedited as much as possible; and (b) that arrangements are made to avoid any possible undue delays in hearing such cases in the future?”

The TREASURER (Hon. W. H. Barnes, *Wynnum*) replied—

“1. Thirteen.

“2. Four months.

“3. The Industrial Magistrates Court has set aside Friday in each week for hearing these cases, and the cases are dealt with as the business of the court permits. It is not possible for either the Treasury or the State Insurance Office to make arrangements for the conduct of the business of the court.

“4. (a) and (b) I shall be pleased to do so.”

COST OF QUESTIONS ASKED BY THE HON. MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON.

Mr. DUNLOP (*Rockhampton*) asked the Premier—

“1. Seeing yesterday in answering the questions asked by the hon. member for Murrumba he stated that I had asked about seventy questions during this session, taking up a space of about fifty pages, and that he was unable to state the total cost, but that the furnishing of a reply to one question cost approximately £500 in officials' salaries, why did he not, in justice to me, state that such question related to the total amount of expenses paid to each Cabinet Minister during the last ten years as far as the last Government was concerned, and what amount of expenses was paid to each Minister of the present Government up to the 30th June last?

“2. Seeing that I asked such question on the 19th August last and same was not answered till 23th October last—say, approximately two and a-half months—and allowing for a clerk even on a salary of £300 a year working continuously getting the information out, the cost would only come to £62 10s., will he inform this House how he arrived at his ridiculous cost of £500.

“3. Is it not a fact that similar information was got out for members previously, and could not the particulars have been continued on from the date such information was got out?

“4. How does he reconcile the cost of £500 to answer this one question of mine, seeing that the circulation and cost of ‘Hansard’ for the year 1930-31, as furnished by the Chief Reporter in July last when submitting his annual report (which includes the salaries of reporters,

typists, and the messenger), only came to £7,973 14s. 5d.?

"5. Did not each of the Ministers concerned render vouchers; and, if so, should not the information have been easily obtained? If the vouchers were not available, does he not think the time has arrived for some system to be introduced into the different departments concerned?"

The PREMIER (Hon. A. E. Moore, *Aubigny*) replied—

"1. Because I knew hon. members would know which question was referred to.

"2. To compile the information, it was necessary to have the accounts of each department examined by audit inspectors, whose salaries range from £355 to £600. The figure given was approximate, and I cannot admit that it is ridiculous.

"3 and 4. Not for some of the years in question, and not in the same form for the others. For the former years, the whole of the vouchers of each department had to be examined; for the latter, the particular vouchers relating to Ministers' expenses had to be re-examined. This entailed an immense amount of work for several officers.

"5. Yes; vouchers are rendered for all Government expenditure. All departments were instructed by the Auditor-General last month to keep details of Ministerial travelling expenses in the form shown in the reply to the hon. member's question."

POLICE TRANSFERS AT BUNDABERG IN 1924.

Mr. DUNLOP (*Rockhampton*) asked the Home Secretary—

"1. How many departmental police transfers took place at Bundaberg in 1924 in all grades?

"2. What were the names of those transferred, their occupation, and the date each was transferred?"

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. C. Peterson, *Normanby*) replied—

"1. Four (4).

"2. Richard Wilson, constable, 'Police Gazette,' 8th March, 1924; Colin McConachy, constable, 'Police Gazette,' 19th April, 1924; Michael O'Dowd, constable, 31st May, 1924; and Bertie Baxter, constable, 'Police Gazette,' 12th July, 1924."

FEES PAID TO PHARMACY BOARD EXAMINERS.

Mr. KIRWAN (*Brisbane*) asked the Home Secretary—

"What were the names of the eight examiners who recently conducted the final examination of the Pharmacy Board held in November last, and what was the amount, if any, paid in fees to each examiner?"

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. C. Peterson, *Normanby*) replied—

"J. L. Neilson, £12 12s.; R. C. Rutter, £12 12s.; J. C. Minnis, £12 12s.; J. Lunn, £12 12s.; A. B. Chater, £12 12s.; John Richardson, £12 12s.; J. P. Davies, £12 12s.; and F. C. Bennett, £5 5s."

POWER OF INDUSTRIAL COURT TO GRANT HOLIDAYS TO SHOP ASSISTANTS.

Mr. NIMMO (*Oxley*) asked the Secretary for Labour and Industry—

"Has the Industrial Court power to grant one week's holiday to all shop assistants should they make application?"

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY (Hon. H. E. Sizer, *Sandgate*) replied—

"Yes. There can be no possible doubt on this matter, as the judge has definitely ruled on more than one occasion that the court has power to grant annual leave should it think fit in connection with any such application made before the court. In the printing industry case ('Gazette,' 1st December, 1930) and the Water Supply and Sewerage Department professional officers' case ('Gazette,' 14th February, 1931) the judge clearly states that the court has full discretion to grant or refuse annual leave."

CROWN FEES PAID TO BARRISTERS AND SOLICITORS.

Mr. DASH (*Mundingburra*): I desire to ask the Attorney-General whether he has an answer to the following questions, which I addressed to him on 2nd September:—

"1. What was the amount of fees paid on behalf of the Crown during the last financial year to barristers and solicitors, including the Hon. the Attorney-General?

"2. (a) For what cases or services and (b) to whom were the fees paid, and (c) what amount in this respect was paid to each barrister (including the Attorney-General) or solicitor so concerned?"

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. N. F. Macgroarty, *South Brisbane*) replied—

"1 and 2. I lay on the table of the House a return giving the information asked for."

FEES PAID TO MEMBERS OF PHARMACY BOARD, 1918-1930.

Mr. KIRWAN (*Brisbane*): I desire to ask the Home Secretary if he has an answer to the following questions, which I addressed to him on 11th November last:—

"1. What was the amount paid to each member of the Pharmacy Board for each of the years 1918 to 1930, inclusive—(a) As board member fees for attendance at meetings; and (b) as examiners' fees?

"2. Were members of the Pharmacy Board paid prior to the year 1918 for attendance at meetings?

"3. Is there statutory authority for the payment of members of the under-mentioned boards for attendance at meetings under the following Acts:— (a) Medical Act; (b) Dental Act; (c) Opticians' Act; and (d) Nurses and Masseurs' Act?

"4. What amount, if any, has been paid to the chairman and each member of these boards—(a) Per meeting; and (b) the maximum amount payable for any period of twelve months to the chairman and each member?"

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. C. Peterson, *Normanby*) replied—

“1. (a) and (b) Payment of fees to members of the Pharmacy Board for attendances at meetings of the board was instituted in 1924 under the presi-

dency of Mr. R. C. Park, who on his own initiative authorised such payments, and later in the following year secured endorsement of his action by the board. Examiners' fees have always been paid. The particulars required are as stated hereunder:—

Name.	Year.	Fee Attendance at Meetings.		Examiner's Fee.		
		£	s. d.	£	s. d.	
R. C. Park	1918	..	..	1	16 0
	1919	..	..	..	..
	1920	..	..	4	14 6
	1921	..	..	3	3 0
	1922	..	..	3	3 0
	1923	..	..	..	..
	1924	9	9 0	12	12 0	
	1925	9	9 0	6	6 0	
	1926	9	9 0	9	9 0	
	A. B. Chater	1918	1	16 0
1919		..	..	2	2 0
1920		..	..	4	14 6
1921		..	..	6	6 0
1922		..	..	15	15 0
1923		..	..	6	6 0
1924		10	10 0	15	15 0	
1925		11	11 0	6	6 0	
1926		12	12 0	12	12 0	
1927		9	9 0	12	12 0	
1928		13	13 0	15	15 0	
1929		13	13 0	12	12 0	
1930		14	14 0	12	12 0	
Alex. Forbes	1918	..	..	10	14 6
	1919	..	..	..	..
	1920	..	..	..	..
	1921	..	..	..	..
Late D. J. Clarke	1918	..	..	9	5 7
	1919	..	..	5	5 0
	1920	..	..	11	0 6
	1921	..	..	6	6 0
	1922	..	..	12	12 0
	1923	..	..	3	3 0
J. C. Minnis	1918	..	..	2	19 8
	1919	..	..	..	..
	1920	..	..	4	11 6
	1921	..	..	9	9 0
	1922	..	..	15	15 0
	1923	..	..	18	18 0
	1924	10	10 0	12	12 0	
	1925	12	12 0	15	15 0	
	1926	7	7 0	15	15 0	
	1927	11	11 0	18	18 0	
	1928	10	10 0	18	18 0	
	1929	9	9 0	18	18 0	
	1930	14	14 0	31	10 0	
R. Lenehan	1918	..	..	8	2 0
	1919	..	..	8	8 0
	1920	..	..	11	0 6
	1921	..	..	12	12 0
	1922	..	..	..	..
H. I. C. Dent	1918	..	..	9	5 7
	1919	..	..	8	8 0
	1920	..	..	11	0 6
	1921	..	..	12	12 0
	1922	..	..	15	15 0
	1923	..	..	..	..
John Lunn	1923	..	..	22	1 0
	1924	10	10 0	15	15 0	
	1925	7	7 0	12	12 0	
	1926	10	10 0	15	15 0	
	1927	12	12 0	22	1 0	
	1928	12	12 0	22	1 0	
	1929	13	13 0	28	7 0	
	1930	6	6 0	18	18 0	
	John Richardson	1922	6	6 0
		1923	15	15 0
1924		11	11 0	25	4 0	
1925		13	13 0	22	1 0	
1926		12	12 0	22	1 0	
1927		12	12 0	28	7 0	
1928		12	12 0	22	1 0	
1929		13	13 0	22	1 0	
1930		13	13 0	31	10 0	

Name.	Year.	Fee Attendance at Meetings.		Examiner's Fee.
		£	s. d.	£ s. d.
Late W. F. S. Fox	1918	..	..	1 3 8
	1919	..	..	5 5 0
	1920	..	..	4 14 6
	1921	..	..	6 6 0
	1922	..	..	6 6 0
	1923	..	..	12 12 0
	1924	10 10 0		18 18 0
	1925	6 6 0		12 12 0
Late W. R. Colledge	1924	..	..	11 11 0
	1925	..	..	14 14 0
	1926	..	..	6 6 0
	1927	..	..	11 11 0
	1928	..	..	6 6 0
S. P. Clark	1925	3 3 0		9 9 0
	1926	13 13 0		28 7 0
	1927	12 12 0		22 1 0
	1928	12 12 0		22 1 0
	1929	7 7 0		18 18 0
	1930	..	..	3 3 0
T. J. P. Connolly	1927	12 12 0		12 12 0
	1928	13 13 0		18 18 0
	1929	12 12 0		22 1 0
J. L. Neilson	1928	3 3 0		..
	1929	13 13 0		25 4 0
	1930	14 14 0		28 7 0
J. P. Davies	1930	13 13 0		25 4 0

"2. The records do not show that members of the Pharmacy Board were paid prior to the year 1918 for attendance at meetings.

"3. (a) Yes; (b) yes; (c) no; and (d) no.

"4.—

Board.	(a) Per Meeting.	(b) The Maximum Amount Payable for any period of Twelve Months to the Chairman and Each Member.
Medical Board	President, £3 3s. Other Members, £2 2s. each	No maximum fixed; twelve general meetings are held annually, and occasional special meetings
Dental Board	£1 1s.	£15 15s. for any Member
Board of Optical Registration ..	Nil	Nil
Nurses and Masseurs Registration Board	Chairman, £2 2s. Other Members, £1 1s. each	Payment made up to twelve meetings annually; fees are not paid for any meetings in excess of twelve."

DENTAL ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. C. Peterson, *Normanby*): I beg to 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 Dental Acts, 1902 and 1916,' in certain particulars."

Question put and passed.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

(*Mr. Roberts, East Toowoomba, in the chair.*)

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. C. Peterson, *Normanby*) [2.46]: I beg to move—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend 'The Dental Acts, 1902 and 1916,' in certain particulars."

There are three main features provided for in this Bill. The first relates to the regis-

tration of dentists holding overseas qualifications; the second is in relation to the misconduct of dentists, including advertising and branch surgeries; and the third is in relation to the application of the funds of the board.

The present Act permits dentists registered in the United Kingdom to be registered under our Dental Act, and to practise in Queensland without further qualification. In 1921 a Dental Act was passed in England, under which dozens of employees of dentists and other persons were registered as dentists in England without passing any qualifying examination. Owing to the economic depression, many of those registered dentists have migrated from the United Kingdom. Some have migrated to Australia; and, on arrival in this State, are, on application, automatically registered under our Act to practise dentistry. The position is a very unfair one to our students and dentists already registered in this State. Every person who has been

[*Hon. J. C. Peterson.*]

registered as a dentist in Queensland since 1902 has first passed educational tests, and, in addition, has served four years in a dental college at heavy expense to his parents and passed examinations. During the past two years, mainly owing to the depression on the other side of the world, a large number of dentists have come to Australia, and notably to Queensland. They have sought registration, and, under the present law, have obtained registration. They have thereby secured a most unfair advantage over our own students. Seeing that England has no reciprocal agreement with Queensland in regard to the dental profession, it is unfair to place this disability on our own people. Hon. members will realise from the outset that the position is a very unfair one; and I am sure will support the proposal propounded in the Bill.

Mr. KIRWAN: How many dentists overseas have taken advantage of our Dental Acts?

The HOME SECRETARY: I have no information as to the exact number, but there has been a large number. This Bill provides that after October, 1932, any dentists coming to Queensland must have passed a qualifying examination before being registered.

Mr. O'KEEFE: It is a pity that does not apply to all professions and trades.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member is bringing up another argument which I cannot deal with at this stage; but he will realise that we are going a little bit his way.

Mr. BULCOCK: Have we reciprocity with England?

The HOME SECRETARY: No.

Mr. BEDFORD: When did we have it in anything?

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member is now on his pet subject, but I propose to deal with this Bill.

The second portion of the Bill defines what constitutes misconduct by members of the dental profession, and includes provisions dealing with advertising and branch surgeries. I have already dealt with the first matter. The term "misconduct" will include what is known as habitual drunkenness; and a dentist who is known to be a habitual drunkard will be deemed to be contravening the professional laws of the Dental Association.

Similarly in the case of a dentist who is a drug addict, or one who makes use of any title or description other than one granted by some body recognised by the Dental Board. Certain bodies issue diplomas which entitle the holder to affix certain letters to his name. Some who have gained doubtful honours have used a title to which, it is claimed, they have no right; consequently the Dental Board is asking that it shall have the opportunity of reviewing these honours with the object of seeing whether they are honest and true to label.

The next matter is in reference to branch surgeries. The Dental Board, as well as numerous members of the dental profession, has taken exception to branches of dental surgeries being placed all over Queensland, although owned by a principal residing in Brisbane. The board wanted to go a long way in order to curtail that practice, but

the Government could not see their way to agree to that. The Bill contains a clause which, whilst not precluding the establishment of branch dental surgeries, will insist that, in addition to the name of the firm owning the surgery, the name of the manager of the branch surgery shall also be exhibited. It cannot be said that any great hardship will be inflicted by that provision.

Mr. BULCOCK: Has he to be a qualified man?

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes.

The most contentious matter in the Bill relates to advertising. The Dental Board considers that advertising on the part of dentists is very unprofessional.

Mr. KIRWAN: What next?

The HOME SECRETARY: I shall deal with both sides of the question. The board considers that advertising reduces the status of the dental profession, and enables fraud to be practised upon the public. It has been claimed that the public have been duped to a large extent in that way. On the other hand, the representatives of that section of dentists which advertises say that, on account of the large turnover, they are able to give the public just as good service at a great deal lower cost.

Mr. KIRWAN: I thought your Government believed in private enterprise.

The HOME SECRETARY: The question of private enterprise does not enter into the matter. The advertising dentists maintain that, if they are wiped out, the public will have to pay higher prices. Whilst it has been proved to the department that cases of deception have occurred through advertising by dentists, in fairness to the advertising dentists I want to say that many of them give a guarantee with their advertisements, and, as reputable firms, they have to stand up to that guarantee. The members of the dental profession contend that it lowers their status, and they ask to be placed on the same footing as doctors and other professional men.

Mr. POLLOCK: They are only teeth-makers.

The HOME SECRETARY: They must have a good knowledge of anatomy, as they have to attend to what is known as "bleeders," and to see that such persons do not contract blood-poisoning. Seeing that there is a good deal of argument on both sides, it is proposed in the Bill to give the board power to make by-laws subject to the Governor in Council, and which will have to be ratified by Parliament afterwards.

Mr. KIRWAN: That is the end of the advertising dentists.

The HOME SECRETARY: I do not say that it is, as I do not know what the Governor in Council may do in that direction. Parliament will have the final say in the passing of those regulations.

The third matter has reference to the funds of the board. The board is asking for power to utilise for educational purposes the large accumulation of funds that it has. The board is in treaty with the university with the object of having a dental chair created in order to raise the status of dentistry and have dental students trained on most up-to-date lines. The funds do not belong to the State, and the board desires power to utilise the funds for the advancement of dental surgery.

Hon. J. C. Peterson.]

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*) [2.56]: The outline of the Bill given by the Minister has been fairly full; but I suggest that he should not proceed with the second reading of the Bill until hon. members generally have had an opportunity of studying the clauses in conjunction with the principal Act. It can be laid down definitely that the care of the teeth is of tremendous public importance. Teeth are the source of many of the troubles that affect us at the present time; and there can be no doubt that there has been a great advance in dental surgery in recent years, which has promoted the health of those who have been able to take advantage of the highly specialised skill that is now available; so that a Bill of this kind is of more than passing public importance.

The Minister has dealt with the matter from the point of view of those engaged in the profession. Of course, they must be considered; but I want to discuss the Bill from the point of view of the general public, who have need to be cared for, and who have to pay for any services that may be rendered to them. According to the Minister, the Bill refers to the general powers of the board; and, while I am in favour of any scheme that will give the people of Queensland the advantage of the highest skill, I am not in favour of any proposal that may have the effect of creating a close corporation with a view to maintaining prices and creating exclusive conditions in any profession. The health of the individual who requires attention to his teeth is of supreme importance; and it is from that point of view that I am regarding the question.

There can be no doubt that, from the point of view of a patient, faulty dental work creates not only a great deal of misery but profoundly affects the health of people. Take, for example, the old practice of destroying the nerve of a tooth and then covering it with a gold crown. That means that there is dead matter in the living tissue of the body, which later gives rise in many cases to other troubles and affects the individual's digestion, and when that is the case it affects his temper and also his mentality. The care of the teeth right from childhood, and so long as a person lives, is of supreme public importance, and members of this party desire that the best possible skill shall be available to the public for the care of their teeth under conditions that will be fair and equitable to all.

There is, however, a matter that the Government might consider in regard to Bills of this character. While I believe that it is necessary in the public interest to have qualified men in all these professions, where a charter is given to a board, some power should be retained by the Governor in Council. I do not believe that it is a good thing to give a board final powers and authority, particularly when it is operating under a charter such as this Act and other Acts of a similar character give. I suggest that where a board is given arbitrary powers under an Act of Parliament, in the exercise of those powers there should be a right to appeal to the Minister or the Governor in Council. That would be a public safeguard. The Minister knows as well as I do how some people, when

[*Mr. Smith.*

given power, exercise it in their own interests; and it is very easy for them to assert that that is done in the public interests. A man can very sincerely believe that his private interests are also public interests, just the same as an individual thinks that his grievance becomes a national question. But where a board is given certain drastic powers and a semi-statutory body is set up and given powers of administration and power to issue regulations which deal with important services to the public, there should at all times be an appeal to the Minister, to the Governor in Council, or to some competent authority to ensure that justice is done. Take, for example, the Minister himself. I understand he is a carpenter by trade. Like myself, he has not engaged in his trade for a number of years, but he may desire to do so at some future date. When the Moore Government are hurled into oblivion at the first opportunity the people get, he may once more have to follow the calling of a carpenter. It is one of the most honourable callings that a man can follow; and one of which the Great Teacher was a master, and a very useful one from every point of view. If there were a carpenters' board controlling that industry, and it was given the opportunity of saying, "Inasmuch as you were not practising that trade at a given date, we will not allow you to enter it now unless you pass the examination which we stipulate."

The HOME SECRETARY: I won't require that. Unless I am a member of the union, I can't get a job.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: No one debars the hon. gentleman from becoming a member of a union—that is a complete answer to the Minister. As the Attorney-General will tell us, the legal position regarding preference to unionists is that a man shall be entitled to become a member of a union. That is the law on the matter, and cannot be argued against. The Minister must recognise that it would be grossly unfair for a professional board to tell us that, because we have not practised that trade or calling within the last twenty years, we shall be debarred if at some future date we desire to do so unless we submit to an examination, which sometimes the members of the examining board themselves could not pass. Hon. members must realise that that is the case, and it would be inequitable if it were so. The point I am making is that, where anybody is given statutory powers of administration under a statute which affects the public interests, there should be an appeal on all matters to the Governor in Council, so that a close corporation which might exploit the public may be controlled and the public interests preserved. Any further comment I desire to make on the Bill I shall make at a later stage, but I would suggest to the Minister that he should not proceed with the second reading of the Bill to-day.

Mr. BEDFORD (*Warrego*) [3.6]: When I first saw this Bill on the business-paper, I thought that it might be a proposal to white-wash the son of the Treasurer for the perfectly warranted adverse criticism against him for his discovery that there were teeth in America.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: That is rather cheap.

Mr. BEDFORD: Just as cheap as teeth ought to be, although it is little use having cheap teeth these days, because there will be nothing to chew until the present Government go out.

I was relieved to hear the explanation of the Bill by the Minister. There is no opposition to preventing semi-efficient people coming from England to practise here as toothsmiths, when they may previously have had only the job of an assistant to a dentist in England. There can be great objection to the attempt to prevent advertising. It is a notorious fact that the ideals of many professions, like the British Medical Association and the Dental Association, are based on the strictest materialism—that wiping out advertising will prevent the lowering of costs and enable them to charge more. There are plenty of cases where people have been charged £15, £20, and up to £30 for a full set of teeth, despite the fact that the State dental clinic is able to provide them at something like 10 per cent. of the amount. Seeing that the health of a human being under incompetent doctors and the health of a human being under incompetent dentists provides a rake-off to the undertaker—which is a tremendous rake-off, considering the conditions of the people who are left to pay—there should be some attempt made by this Bill to water down the proposition to prevent the advertising of cheaper work.

The Minister has stated that, in the case of misconduct, such as habitual drunkenness, a dentist can be removed from the job. That is perfectly right; but I have known cases where drunkenness or semi-drunkenness was no bar to successful dentistry. It is a fact that most of these laws are made for the effete people of the cities. Out in the electorate which I have the honour to represent, and will continue to represent until two days after death—Warrego—we have men of the great open spaces who are still men. It may interest hon. members to know that cities may exhaust citizens so much that by and by their natural forces will not be capable of expression. There was a case recently at Eromanga, the most inland town of Australia, 700 miles from the coast, and now I believe partially a seaport, although it is under fresh water. Into Eromanga some years ago there came a gentleman with a swollen jaw, arriving from Mount Margaret, still further in the West, with still further great and splendid men, who will continue to return me as their proper representative in this Chamber. Into Eromanga came this gentleman with the large jaw suffering untold horrors because locally there was not a dentist. Having arrived at Eromanga, he saw an amateur dentist, whose functions it is now proposed to suspend by the Bill by saying that such persons are habitual drunkards when they are only partial drunkards temporarily. After having had half a dozen rums, he got the patient to agree to the rough-and-ready surgery of the district. They first explained to him that the methods adopted would not hurt; and, after asking if they could give proof of that, they replied that at least the patient would not cry out. Then they took certain precautions against him making any noises such as Mr. Latham was making the other night in the Town Hall, when the Premier was given the bird. Four men, strong in arm and enthusiasm, each allotted themselves an

arm and a leg, while another man held the head of the patient.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Were you there?

Mr. BEDFORD: If I had been, I would have been a good umpire. The practitioner, who was the local blacksmith, then appeared from the forge bringing with him 2 lb. of forceps used for pulling shoes off horses. There was some rust on the forceps, but that apparently was used as a disinfectant. Putting the forceps into the mouth of the patient, with the other five men sitting on him, the practitioner, full of rum and enthusiasm, gave a big haul, and out came the tooth. Then said the patient, "You promised me it wouldn't hurt!" They said, "Did it hurt? At least you didn't make any complaint." He said, "How could I with five men sitting on me, and, whenever I opened my mouth to squeal, I swallowed 2 oz. of rust?" That is not possible in the effete centres of the State.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The laugh did not come in as anticipated.

Mr. BEDFORD: The hon. gentleman is naturally a laugh. The only time he ever looks like a human being is when he sings "Gor Save," which I understand he does even in the bath.

The Bill will be welcome. If it could only go as far as to extract the brains of the Secretary for Public Instruction and insert intelligence, as it would confer another benefit upon the community. The part of the Bill regarding advertising, which chiefly relates to cheap dentistry, will be welcome.

Mr. STOPFORD (*Mount Morgan*) [3.15]: Legislation dealing with professional callings of this nature requires careful consideration. Not knowing the principles of the Bill, I do not know where I stand; but I do know that preference to barristers has enabled the Attorney-General to occupy his present position, which, in my opinion, he has never been capable of filling, and which a brilliant man might never attain. The public require every protection we can give them in regard to professional callings; but care must always be exercised—as I found in my seven years' experience in the Home Office—not to allow a profession to become a menace to the public. I have known of cases where powers given to professions that we thought were carefully safeguarded have been abused.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Did you not introduce the Opticians Act?

Mr. STOPFORD: I certainly amended that Act. I found the opticians, as a whole, a fairly reasonable body of men; but, during my term of office, the dentists never proved themselves to be that. I have known of cases of undoubted hardship which have been inflicted as a result of the rulings of the Dental Board. I recognise that the dentists have a case for part of this Bill. During the war many men in Great Britain who were really dental mechanics were registered as dentists. Some thousands of these men would never otherwise have been anything more than mere dental mechanics. Local dentists require some measure of protection against being swamped by the immigration of these men. The dental profession should be open to every boy in this State, whether he be the son of a poor man or otherwise.

The PREMIER: So it is.

Mr. Stopford.]

Mr. STOPFORD: I have had requests, one particularly from Townsville, where the parents' income was limited, for a dental student to be articled to a local dentist, and, as is the case with the Pharmacy Board, to visit Brisbane to attend lectures only. There is no provision in this Bill for such cases. Why, because it is a matter of etiquette in the medical profession not to advertise, should dentists not advertise in open competition with each other? If the etiquette of the profession demands that Parliament should give it the power here asked for, we should lay down definitely what prices shall be charged by dentists. I do not believe it is right to prevent people from coming in in order to give certain dentists an opportunity to charge what they like, because the public must have some protection. That is why I trust the Bill will not be proceeded with until we have had an opportunity of perusing it carefully. I am sure the Opposition will assist in any direction which will make for the uplifting of the dental profession and for the protection of the general public.

Mr. BRUCE (*Kennedy*) [3.20]: The Home Secretary is to be congratulated on giving a fair amount of information concerning this Bill. There are two interesting discrepancies in connection with this and other legislation which has been introduced into this Parliament. In certain directions the Government have slavishly followed the advice of the press in regard to the legislation that shall be brought forward. The press daily exhort their subscribers to advertise, contending that advertising is the life of trade. Under this Bill one form of advertising will be cut out. One wonders whether Ministers consult each other with the object of bringing forward uniform legislation. In this case the Home Secretary has brought forward legislation giving protection—and I think that protection is justified so long as it is not overdone—to men who have qualified and have made dentistry their profession. On the other hand, however, the Secretary for Mines has denied protection to engine-drivers. For example, the hon. gentleman has permitted unqualified men to do the work for which engine-drivers have had to pass examinations in order to carry it out successfully. Either Ministers show that there is no co-ordination between them in the matter of uniform legislation or else they are prepared to protect those members of the community who are following a higher industry whilst giving no protection to persons employed in other industries.

The hon. member for Mount Morgan touched on a matter that should receive some consideration. We know that not only in the dental profession but in the nursing and other professions it is necessary for persons studying for those professions to come to Brisbane. I trust that the Minister will make some provision to obviate the necessity for persons living outside the metropolis being required to send such members of their family as are training for these professions to Brisbane, with all the expense incidental thereto. There should be some equality in that direction.

As the Leader of the Opposition has stated, it will be necessary to peruse this Bill to understand its contents. Anything which will promote the profession of dentistry and will safeguard the public will have the support of the Opposition.

[*Mr. Stopford.*]

Mr. HYNES (*Townsville*) [3.23]: It seems to me that the Government have shown discrimination between the protection given to what might be termed the aristocratic unions and the trade unions of the State.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: What do you call the aristocratic unions?

Mr. HYNES: The hon. gentleman's union, for example.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You are putting your own son into that.

Mr. HYNES: The son of every man in the community should be able to aspire to any profession. There has been a desire on the part of those in the dental profession to make the entrance examination a pretty tough one. At the present time I understand it is about the standard of the senior university examination; and there appears to be a desire to make it of a higher standard still. That will debar a lot of the sons and daughters of the workers from becoming members of the profession. The entrance to the profession should be made as easy as possible to every boy in the community who wishes to become a dentist, and he should have every reasonable opportunity of entering the profession. The Attorney-General is attempting to make a cheap jibe at me because I aspire to placing my son in the legal profession.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Not at all; but why belittle the profession?

Mr. HYNES: If there were more sons of Labour men in that profession, it might become a little more democratic. This Bill will tend to make a close corporation of the dental profession. If it is going to make it a monopoly for those already in the profession, I certainly do not feel like supporting the measure. Every consideration should be given to the public first. The association has evidently approached the Minister with a view to prohibiting the "reds" and less conservative people in the profession from getting away from the beaten track and advertising their goods at reduced prices. We notice that the Attorney-General himself indulges in a good deal of cheap advertising in his profession. After all, there is nothing wrong with advertising; and, if the Government, in the interests of certain conservative individuals in the profession, prohibit other people from advertising, they will be doing a grievous wrong to those people who are applying modern methods to their profession.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It is all right so long as they deliver the goods.

Mr. HYNES: If they do not deliver the goods, then they can be prosecuted under the existing law. I am quite satisfied that those dentists who have advertised their price lists in the press have been instrumental in considerably reducing the cost of this most essential service to the people. It is absolutely wrong to prohibit advertising at the instance of those who have no desire to advertise, and who it is logical to assume do not wish to advertise because they have nothing to advertise. I remarked yesterday that it is stupid for a person to criticise a Bill when he has not had the opportunity of reading it; and I do not intend to continue my criticism of this measure until I have had an opportunity of reading the Bill. I hope it will not be instrumental in putting a 6-foot fence around those who are already practising the profession of dentistry.

Mr. COOPER (*Bremer*) [3.28]: The Attorney-General should read that Australian book "Around the Boree Log," which refers to the struggle of a little Irish mother to do the best possible for one of her children. That is a very fine Australian sentiment.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I have followed that all my life.

Mr. COOPER: I believe this Bill has been inspired by certain things which have transpired in the State of Victoria. Somewhere about November, 1930, similar regulations were introduced in the Victorian Assembly, and Mr. Prendergast, the member for Footscray, read to the Assembly a letter from the Progressive Dental Association of Victoria, dated 24th November, and, amongst other things, it said that certain regulations were shortly to be introduced into the Assembly, covering the following:—

"1. A dentist shall not in connection with his practice of dental surgery or dentistry advertise—

(i.) The prices charged by him;

(ii.) His claim to personal pre-eminence in such practice or to the use therein of exclusive apparatus or special remedy.

"2. A dentist shall not solicit or canvass patients or business, or authorise or permit to be concerned in any such soliciting or canvassing, whether on his own behalf or on behalf of any other dentist or dentists."

Then Mr. Prendergast read to the Assembly certain charges of the State Dental Society of Victoria. The regulations were apparently promulgated to protect the State Dental Society of Victoria; and, to show the great discrepancy between the two, I will give the prices that were then in force in Victoria in the days when advertising was permitted. The prices of the Melbourne Industrial Clinic were—

FEES.			
DENTAL TREATMENT.		£	s. d.
Extractions (painless)—			
First tooth ... ..	...	0	0 9
Each extra tooth ... ..	...	0	0 6
Fillings (gold, 22-carat)—			
Single filling ... ..	...	0	10 0
Double filling ... ..	...	1	0 0
Amalgam ... ..	...	0	5 0
Porcelain ... ..	...	0	7 6
Nerve treatment ... ..	...	0	7 6
Artificial teeth—			
Upper or lower ... ..	...	2	6 6

The HOME SECRETARY: That was before federation.

Mr. COOPER: It was last year, 1930—not before federation. Then it gives several other prices. These are the prices for the same class of work charged by the State Dental Society—

"Consultation—(a) Straight out, 10s. 6d. to 105s.; (b) quotation (cleaning, charting, and advice), 10s. 6d. to 105s.

"Gold fillings or inlays—(a) simple, 25s. to £7 7s.; (b) compound—(i.) bicuspids, 31s. 6d. to £10 10s.; (ii.) molars, 42s. to £15 15s.

"Extractions—(a) Single tooth (local), 5s. to 63s.; (b) three-five teeth, 10s. 6d. to 105s."

and so on. But the best part of the charges of the State Dental Society of Victoria and the best part of their arrangements was the following:—

"Consultation with dentist, radiographer, or medical practitioner, 10s. 6d. to £5 5s.; (b) 'remodelling' (not to be encouraged, make new denture whenever possible) full upper or lower, 3½ to 10 guineas; (c) hygiene of mouth prior to extractions, 10s. 6d. to 5 guineas; (d) pulp capping, 10s. 6d. to £3 3s.; (e) discounts and annual quotes for families not to be given; (f) extractions prior to dentures should be charged for; (g) drop use of term 'temporary plate'; (h) broken appointments without sufficient notice to be charged for; (i) the aim should be to get minimum fee of 10s. 6d."

These are the regulations of the State Dental Society of Victoria, and, to combat the members of the Melbourne Industrial Clinic, they endeavoured to have regulations promulgated, which seem to me have had the same effect as will the Bill which is now being introduced. If the Minister can assure me that the Bill is not founded on the lines of the Melbourne regulations, I shall be pleased to hear it.

The HOME SECRETARY: I can assure you that the Governor in Council has the final say in the matter.

Mr. COOPER: So does the Governor in Council in Victoria have the final say in the matter of the regulations. It seems to me that it was a move on behalf of the Dental Society of Victoria to have its prices established as against the prices of the industrial clinic. I have no objection to professional men getting the full value for their work. I believe in a tradesman getting whatever he is entitled to for the services he performs, but I have never held that, because of professional standing and the scarcity of men in a particular walk of life, they should be entitled to charge whatever they think fit at their own sweet will. I believe in reasonableness in all things.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: People need not pay extortionate charges.

Mr. COOPER: Of course, people can go elsewhere; but, if certain prices are fixed and men are not allowed to let it be known what their prices are, how can people go elsewhere? The fullest publicity should be given. I earnestly hope that the Minister will not follow the precedent set by the State Dental Society of Victoria, when it got the ear of the Victorian Parliament, and was allowed to charge exorbitant prices for the work its members did.

Mr. POLLOCK (*Gregory*) [3.34]: I think one of the greatest demands in Queensland and Australia is for cheap teeth. Teeth vary in price; in fact, the same quality of teeth vary in price according to where they are made. You can go to one dentist, who is recognised as being an aristocrat in his profession, and you will pay 100 guineas for a set of teeth which you can get from another dentist for 60 guineas. You can go to another dentist who will make you a high-class set of teeth for 17 guineas which another dentist will make, exactly of the same quality, for 7 guineas. It is obvious that teeth should be procurable at a price which is within the reach

Mr. Pollock.]

of the general public. Consequently, if this measure proposes to do anything that will enable the public to get cheaper teeth, good quality teeth at a reasonable price, I think we ought all to support it. Perhaps we do not regard teeth as a necessary commodity, although they are necessary to everyone for the purpose of maintaining good health. We do not regard them as necessary commodities, and for that reason the Commissioner of Prices is not able to fix the prices of teeth.

The HOME SECRETARY: Mr. McCormack threatened to do that.

Mr. POLLOCK: It might have been a very good thing if he had. The Commissioner is not permitted to fix the prices of teeth, but in other directions we have fixation of prices. For instance, we tax barristers' costs so that they cannot overcharge. If we tax those costs, which are not so essential to the public, we could with equal advantage tax the charges of dentists. A few dentists would complain. Some dentists, who have spent four or five years of their life preparing for their profession, might argue that they should receive the same salary as the Governor of the State or the same salary as a doctor who has trained for seven years; but that does not alter the fact that these people are dealing in a necessary commodity. Teeth are necessary to everybody, and the crying need is for cheaper teeth. We have mass production of machinery; so why not mass deduction of teeth, or mass production within limits? Consider the case of a relief worker or a person out of work with very little money. How is he to know the price of teeth unless dentists are permitted to advertise? What is wrong with a dentist advertising that he is prepared to pull teeth at 1s. a time, or three for 2s. 6d.?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Nothing; but, when a dentist says that he will make a set of teeth for £1 1s., there is a lot wrong.

Mr. POLLOCK: If the teeth are good, there is nothing wrong with it.

Mr. COSTELLO: Would you buy a set for £1 1s.?

Mr. POLLOCK: I have not had any dealings with dentists, but I do know that a number of people have been able to buy sets at £3 3s., and they have been just as good as sets made by other dentists for £12 12s.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You will admit that the fee of £3 3s. is quite different from a fee of £1 1s.

Mr. POLLOCK: I am not admitting anything. I do not know what teeth are worth, and am not competent to form an opinion. Some dentists will tell you that it does not cost anything like 25s. for the material in a set of teeth; and some dentists will go so far as to say that the material is not worth more than 3s. or 4s. for the poorer quality of teeth. I admit that labour and time are a consideration; but it does not alter the fact that dentists can give cheap services to the public in removing teeth, in making teeth, and in filling teeth; and they should be permitted to advertise their wares. If they can give a cheaper service to the public, and if they can enable people who are not in good health because of lack of teeth or because they cannot afford to have them pulled, then this Parliament

should be the last body to object to that service being rendered.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Very often the teeth are useless after they are purchased.

Mr. POLLOCK: That is the funeral of the person who purchases them. If the Secretary for Public Instruction were "broke" and badly needed teeth to save his health, and could get a set for £1 1s., he would risk the guinea set. He would have to do so. That is all that advertising in dentistry means.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Could you get a set for £1 1s. anywhere in Brisbane?

Mr. POLLOCK: I do not say that you can. The price may be £2 2s. or £3 3s.; but, at all events, it is within the reach of many.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: There is no objection to reasonable advertising.

Mr. POLLOCK: Some dentists will not agree as to what constitutes reasonable advertising. The Dental Board and a large number of dentists take the view that it is infra dig to advertise. With many dentists it is the same sort of crime as the discussion of professional secrets by doctors. They hold the view that these things should not be done. What is the reason behind it? They do not want their product cheapened. I do not blame them for that. That is their business. They are trying to protect their own interests; but this Parliament should not attempt to protect the interests of a few dentists at the expense of the general public. Its function is to protect the people, and enable them to get attention at prices that are within their reach. If the Bill does that, then it will be worth while. If it does not, then in many respects it will fail to meet a demand of the public.

Dr. KERWIN (*Merthyr*) [3.43]: I welcome the introduction of this Bill, which is really for the protection of the general public, and not altogether for the protection of dentists. What the dentists object to in regard to advertising is large advertisements appearing in our newspapers offering artificial sets of teeth for £1 1s. The unwary may believe that artificial teeth can be purchased for that money; but, when anyone visits the dentist who advertises in that way, he finds that the dentist professes to discover that the patient's mouth is of a different shape to the ordinary mouth, and that he cannot possibly supply the artificial teeth at that price. That is what is happening to-day. Nobody can secure a set of artificial teeth for £1 1s.

Mr. FOLEY: That happens with dentists who do not advertise.

Dr. KERWIN: It does not.

Mr. FOLEY: It does—I have been the victim.

Dr. KERWIN: This Bill is designed to prevent deception in this direction being practised on the people. There is no objection on the part of dentists to reasonable advertising.

Mr. POLLOCK: Why shouldn't a medical man advertise that he will undertake an operation for appendicitis for £3 3s.?

Dr. KERWIN: Very often a medical practitioner is compelled to operate for nothing, especially in these times. That happens more often than otherwise.

[Mr. Pollock.]

The hon. member for Gregory said something about mass production of artificial teeth. It is not the production of teeth, but the fitting of the teeth that matters. I remember one case in North Queensland, when an unfortunate woman went to a visiting dentist and bought a set of artificial teeth. He picked a set of teeth out of his bag, pushed them into her mouth, and said they were all right. That man went on his way with the patient's money, and she had the teeth, which caused her considerable pain and trouble. The whole object of the Bill is to protect the public from imposition.

It would be unfair for dentists registered overseas to come to Queensland and compete with local men who have been compelled to undergo both educational and professional examinations. Quite a number of these men are merely dental mechanics, who were registered as dentists during the war merely because of the fact that they had been employed in dental surgeries for a certain number of years. Under the present law we are bound to accept those men. That part of the Bill is designed to protect our own boys from importations of that description. When the Opposition peruse the Bill a little more thoroughly, they will see that it has very many good qualities, and I am sure they will accept it.

Mr. O'KEEFE (*Cairns*) [3.47]: The hon. member for Merthyr has argued that this Bill is for the protection of the public. His contention was that the Government should protect those who have qualified as dentists after having passed both educational and qualifying examinations. That argument should apply to all professions, as the hon. member for Kennedy illustrated in connection with engine-drivers.

When I was in Cairns, I was approached by dentists in regard to this matter. Almost every hon. member in this Chamber has had such representations made to him. There is not a single hon. member who does not desire to see the profession protected; but at the same time some protection should be given to the public in regard to the charges made by the profession.

One Cairns dentist brought under my notice samples of teeth which he had extracted from various patients. Some of these teeth had been gold-capped and gold-filled; and this dentist showed me defects in the work that were apparent to me as a layman. I think some provision should be made whereby the Government or the Dental Board may appoint an inspector to inspect dental work at any time. We know that a bad job can be done both by novices and by up-to-date dentists. In many cases the quality of the work depends on the person for whom the work is being done. I think it would be well for the Minister to see that the public are protected against all classes of dentists, and, perhaps, before the Bill goes through, the hon. gentleman will give some consideration to that matter. It might be advisable to suspend temporarily the registration of a dentist guilty of doing slipshod work.

Mr. FOLEY (*Leichhardt*) [3.50]: The Minister is to be congratulated on that portion of the Bill which relates to the protection of Queensland dentists. I would appeal to the hon. gentleman to give consideration also to the protection of the public from exploitation by the unscrupulous type

of dentist, many of whom adopt the attitude that as much money as possible should be extracted from a patient. Reasonable advertising would be one method of checking exploitation. It would enable a dentist, perhaps, not so well known as some of the old established dentists, to compete with those firms, and to prove to the public that his work is just as satisfactory and probably less costly. I know that I have been overcharged for dental work judging by comparison with the charges of other dentists. I think the Minister will find that the prime movers in the desire to prohibit advertising are the old established dentists who are intent on maintaining their volume of business irrespective of the fact that other dentists not so well known are as capable of doing the work. If the Minister will do something in the matter, it will ensure a much better deal for the public than they are getting at present.

Question—"That the resolution (*Mr. Peterson's motion*) be agreed to"—put and passed.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to a resolution.

Resolution agreed to.

FIRST READING.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. C. Peterson, *Normanby*) presented the Bill, and moved—

"That the Bill be now read a first time"

Question put and passed.

Second reading of the Bill made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

ROYAL NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL AND INDUSTRIAL ASSOCIATION OF QUEENSLAND BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

(*Mr. Roberts, East Toowoomba, in the chair.*)

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. A. Deacon, *Cunningham*) [3.55]: I beg to move—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to enable the Brisbane City Council to sell portions of land described in Certificate of Title No. 215621, and held by the said Council as a reserve for Public Park purposes, and for other consequential purposes."

This is a Bill to enable the Brisbane City Council to sell a small portion of Bowen Park, as described in the Bill, to the Royal National Agricultural and Industrial Association. When a similar Bill was introduced previously in this Assembly, there was a good deal of dispute as to whether the City Council should have the right to sell any further area of Bowen Park. To get over that objection, I arranged that all the parties concerned should meet on the ground, and, if possible, come to an agreement. That was done, and members of the Town Planners' Association, members of the Royal National Agricultural and Industrial Association, and members of the Brisbane City Council met on the ground; and they agreed that there could be no objection to the City Council selling the small area referred to to the Royal National Agricultural and

Hon. W. A. Deacon.]

Industrial Association. I do not think it necessary to say anything further on the subject, as I do not see how any hon. member can raise any objection.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: Are you trying to pass as a wit, or are you merely unsophisticated?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Leader of the Opposition will realise that all the objectors met on the ground and settled their differences.

Mr. HANLON: This Parliament previously decided that no more of this land should be sold.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: This Parliament did not.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*) [3.59]: I am entirely opposed to this Bill, as it means the disposal of the park lands of Brisbane; and any park lands situated in the more densely populated city area should be held for the people. A Bill of a similar character was introduced last year; and attached to that Bill was a provision that "with the approval of the Governor in Council further land might be sold at a later date." That provision was deliberately struck out by Parliament, which meant that the Governor in Council should not have authority to authorise the sale of any further portion of Bowen Park.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Was that before or after you took portion of Musgrave Park?

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: I am referring to what took place last year; and, in any case, there is no analogy between the two cases. The building of a school serves a very important national purpose; and particularly the building of a State school which gives the people of this State an opportunity for higher education is something that comes within the category of important national policy.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION interjected.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: If members on the Government side desire to make speeches, they may do so if they get on their feet; but I object to the continued asinine interjections of the Secretary for Public Instruction.

Mr. BUTLER: How many asinine interjections have we had from you?

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: The hon. member for Port Curtis never does anything else.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: I am entirely opposed to the sale of public lands owned by the State. I am also opposed to park lands being disposed of in this fashion. Bowen Park is one of the prettiest little open spaces in Brisbane.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: We are not touching that part.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: Mr. Roberts, do you think it proper that the Secretary for Labour and Industry and the Attorney-General should continue to interrupt me while I am speaking?

The CHAIRMAN: I would point out to the Leader of the Opposition that he is causing the interjections.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: After I have been interrupted. If you will not protect me from this running fire of interjections,

[*Hon. W. A. Deacon.*

Mr. Roberts, I will have to insult the interjectors.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: You should speak similarly to the Minister.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I regret that the hon. member is in the temper he is in.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: I regret the temper you are in.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I give the hon. member all the consideration he requires. This is not the first occasion he has taken exception to my attitude in the chair. I shall not allow him to continue in that way.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: I expect the protection of the Chair when I am addressing myself to the Chair.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member will get all the protection that is necessary.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: If you will permit me to proceed, Mr. Roberts, I am stating a case against the introduction of this Bill, which proposes to sell one of the public parks of the State. The Minister has said that the parties concerned have met on the ground and have come to certain decisions. Who were those people who made the agreement, and who gave them authority to agree? They certainly do not represent members on this side of the Chamber, and, even if the people who were there came to a unanimous agreement, that is no reason why I or other members on this side should agree to the Bill being carried in this Parliament. I repeat that last session a majority of this Parliament—I think it was unanimous—agreed that no further areas of this park should be sold. That was the aim and purpose of the amendment. I am opposed to the public lands of the State being sold in this way, and am entirely opposed to public parks being sold.

It may be said that there are other public parks in the immediate vicinity. Victoria Park has been cited; but that is being used as a golf course. Can anyone say that a golf course is a safe public park to which parents can take their children for picnics? I am entirely opposed to the Bill, and will oppose it at all its stages.

Mr. HANLON (*Ithaca*) [4.6]: I very much regret that this Bill has been introduced to provide for the sale of more park land. On a previous occasion the Minister introduced a Bill to enable the Brisbane City Council to sell a portion of this land; and in that Bill was a clause authorising the Governor in Council to sell any further portion, or the whole, of that land. This Parliament took strong exception to that; and so effective was the opposition in this Parliament that the Minister agreed to delete that clause. Speaking on the second reading of that Bill, as set out in "Hansard" for 1929 at page 2027, the Minister said—

"One clause in the Bill authorises the Governor in Council at any future time to authorise the sale of any further portion of the park by the City Council to the association. I understand from the hon. member for Kelvin Grove that it has been decided not to bother about that, so I will accept in Committee an amendment to delete that clause."

The hon. member for Kelvin Grove, in delivering his second reading speech on the Bill, said—

“I am pleased to think that the Minister has accepted my suggestion to delete clause 7 from the Bill.”

Later he said—

“I mean that the Minister has accepted my suggestion which I made to him at an earlier stage. I can assure the Minister that his action will be appreciated by the people living in the area surrounding this park, which is situated in the middle of a thickly populated district. The park is one of the beauty spots of Brisbane, and can be made use of by the residents and children living in that area. I congratulate the Minister on accepting my suggestion, which will give the people the right of this park which belongs to them.”

That park is the same beauty spot, and it belongs to the same people. The same people and the same children have a desire to use it. Why the changed attitude since 1929? The whole arrangement for the taking over of this land has been carried out in a manner which is not at all creditable either to the Royal National Association or to the Government. When the Royal National Association endeavoured to secure control of this park land in 1929, it entirely ignored the Brisbane City Council, and dealt with the Minister direct. The Bill was introduced into this Chamber; but the then mayor and the members of the Brisbane City Council had no knowledge of the proposed sale. I inquired from Alderman Warmington as to the land to be dealt with, because we did not know what land it was intended to sell. Alderman Warmington inquired from Lord Mayor Jolly, who promised to investigate the matter. He did not know, but he stated in the council chamber that probably the Bill was brought in to ratify some arrangement between the old Brisbane City Council and the Royal National Association. That was all the knowledge possessed by the Brisbane City Council at its meeting the day before the Minister introduced the Bill in Committee. The Government and the Royal National Association had entirely ignored the Brisbane City Council presumably because they knew that the then Lord Mayor was very hostile to any proposal to dispose of park lands. One thing that stands to his credit in Brisbane and it is that on every possible occasion he added to the park lands of Brisbane and prevented their dissipation as far as possible.

A different council exists to-day. Evidently the present Lord Mayor and his executive are amenable, and are quite agreeable to sell some of the park land, even although Parliament decided that no authority should be given to the Governor in Council to approve of further sales. Parliament was of the opinion that this little gem of a park should not be destroyed. There has been a new City Council elected since then. Plans have been discussed for ages with a view to taking over more park land, and the area proposed to be taken over now has been neglected for some time. The man in charge of the park has been mowing the grass up to a certain line and neglecting the rest. The ground has become overgrown with grass, and is now bumpy. Anyone viewing the part to be taken over

would conclude that it was not of much value for children as a playground. The grass is 2 feet long. It appears that the place has been deliberately neglected so that the transfer might take place; but before the arrangement was made this part of the park was every bit as attractive as the remaining part. It was all good park land and fit to be used by children. The arrangements that have been made can be viewed with suspicion.

The public have been treated in a very unfair and underhand manner by the Royal National Association, the Brisbane City Council, and the present Government. I strongly object to any further attempt being made to rob the people of any portion of that park. Sanitary conveniences are erected on portions of the park land which it is proposed to sell; and the area of the park is so small that these sanitary conveniences—and this is an important thing to remember—must be removed from the park altogether or placed in a position a few yards from the street. Furthermore, the rate-payers are not getting a fair deal, because, although the land is being sold, the expenses are so heavy that there will be little profit, if any, for the council. Viewed in this light, it would have been better for the Brisbane City Council to hand the land over to the Royal National Association, provided that body met the whole of the expenses in connection with the transfer. There is plenty of room for the Royal National Association to extend its activities if it seriously desires to do so. There is an area of land on which a speedway has been built, and a large area of land now used for car parking purposes adjacent to the property of the association. The objection to that being done is the fact that it would be expensive to get this area into condition; therefore, the association has arranged to take what I call the gem of the parks to utilise for its activities. Who can suggest that after various sideshows and hurdy-gurdies have been erected on this portion of the park it will ever again be fit for public use? No one can tell me that the Royal National Association will take any care to preserve the trees which are now growing on the land, some of which are beautiful. They will be destroyed, and it will be a crime to destroy any of those trees.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The association is not taking over any land upon which a tree is growing.

Mr. HANLON: I cannot agree with the Minister. They are taking over a beautiful little playing area which, apparently, by arrangement with the Royal National Association, the Brisbane City Council has neglected for some time past, because, since this swindle has been arranged between the association and the council, no work has been done upon it. I can show the Minister where grass is now growing 2 feet high on land that was once a beautiful playing area, but is now nothing but humps and bumps. That neglect has been allowed for the purpose of justifying the transfer.

We on this side of the Chamber are up against any more park lands being filched away from the people. What is the use of a park if it is going to be too small? When is this park thieving going to stop? The Minister told us in 1929 that it would be only a matter of time when the Royal National Association would take possession

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of the whole of Bowen Park. I would rather see the Royal National Association remove its grounds elsewhere than that this park should cease to exist. The park was established long before the association came into existence. There are trees in the park which are of priceless value. Although there is a good area of land in Victoria Park, a large portion has now been converted into a golf course. Thousands of people who visit the General Hospital on Wednesdays and Sundays to see the sick require some place wherein to place their children knowing that they will not be in danger. Where can they leave their children if this little park is closed? They cannot leave them playing about in the hospital wards.

Mr. MAXWELL: They can leave them in Bowen Park. You know you are wrong.

Mr. HANLON: I know that the hon. member for Toowong, as usual, is entirely wrong. He is trying to mislead the public if he suggests that the objective of the Royal National Association is not to get hold of that park, as the Minister suggested in 1929.

Mr. MAXWELL: Don't be silly!

Mr. HANLON: If any more of this park thieving goes on, the people visiting the sick in the General Hospital will have nowhere to leave their children except in the hospital wards or in the street. They can now leave them in this little park, which is securely fenced, and, on account of its open situation, is absolutely safe for the purpose. The view from the street prevents any possible interference with the children left playing there. The Government are committing a crime if they allow another acre to be taken from this park. We are in the minority on this side, and must submit to anything the Government do, but we shall register our protest against the action of the Government at every stage of the Bill.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*) [4.18]: I cannot allow the speech just made by the hon. member for Ithaca to go unchallenged, because it is one of the most misrepresenting speeches ever made in this Chamber. The hon. member knows that the whole of Bowen Park is not to be taken under this Bill.

Mr. HANLON: What I said was: "When is this stealing going to stop?"

Mr. MAXWELL: I desire to correct the misstatements made by the hon. member. The hon. member asks where the children of people who visit hospital patients will be put whilst their parents are visiting the hospital. Surely the hon. member knows that there is an area of 5 acres of land available for that purpose!

Mr. HANLON: You cannot justify park stealing.

Mr. MAXWELL: I know the position much better than the hon. member does, because I was associated with local government work for a considerable period, and appreciate the necessity for conserving the rights of the people. I resent the hon. member misrepresenting the position. The hon. member states that one portion of Victoria Park has been closed to the children because of its use as golf links. It is true that golf links have been established, but there are acres of land available stretching from opposite the museum right along to the

Girls' Grammar School on the one side, and from the hospital for a considerable distance on the other side. The Royal National Agricultural and Industrial Association is doing wonderful work for Queensland.

Mr. HANLON: It is doing a wonderful "steal."

Mr. MAXWELL: The hon. member is not justified in using language like that even in an attempt to bolster up his very weak case. He has dragged the hon. member for Kelvin Grove into the discussion, but there is no greater enthusiast in protecting the rights of the people than the hon. member for Kelvin Grove, who, I venture to suggest, will have a complete answer to the hon. member. I have a recollection of deputations from the various progress associations stating that no opposition was offered to this sale, but stipulating that any money received from the Royal National Agricultural and Industrial Association was to be ear-marked for park lands. I merely rose to contradict the statements made by the hon. member for Ithaca, and to express the view that we are getting down to a very low level when we have such misrepresentation as was indulged in by that hon. member.

Mr. HILL (*Kelvin Grove*) [4.23]: Being interested in Bowen Park, I am a little concerned about the sale of that portion which is to be taken over by the Royal National Agricultural and Industrial Association. The hon. member for Ithaca was wrong in conveying the impression that the whole of Bowen Park is being transferred. The small portion that is the subject of this Bill will not be missed from the park. It is a narrow strip—

Mr. HANLON: How many little portions have already gone?

Mr. HILL: I am just as much concerned as the hon. member for Ithaca. I am objecting to the sale of this land because I feel that eventually the National Association will have the whole of this property. I led a deputation to the Secretary for Public Lands on this matter. The Minister heard the objections of the members of the deputation, who were representatives of the Grand Council of Progress Associations of Brisbane, and the hon. gentleman was favourably impressed. Later in the afternoon the Minister received a deputation from the Royal National Agricultural and Industrial Association. Subsequently, a conference was arranged between the various interests, and a representative of the Town Planning Association was also present. The matter was discussed from all aspects, and I propose to read the following letter, which was sent by the Grand Council of Progress Associations of Brisbane to the Royal National Agricultural and Industrial Association:—

"THE GRAND COUNCIL OF PROGRESS ASSOCIATIONS OF BRISBANE.

"Brisbane,
"2nd November, 1931.

"The Secretary,

"The Royal National A. and I. Association of Queensland.

"Sale of Portion of Bowen Park.

"Dear Sir,—I am directed to say that this body, while maintaining its strong

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objection in principle to the alienation of park lands, regards the proposed sale of 2 acres 23 perches of Bowen Park to your association as a special case. It considers that the public interests will be best served by the utilisation of the land for exhibition of the national resources:

"Provided that provision be made, as far as it is possible, to prevent the sale of any further portion of Bowen Park, also that the proceeds of the sale shall be set aside from the revenues of the City Council, and shall be devoted solely to the purchase of park lands apart from ordinary park expenditure.

"It is the sincere wish of this body that the frontage to Bowen Bridge road will not be enclosed by an extension of the corrugated iron fence.

"I am also to express to your executive the appreciation of the courtesy extended to members of the deputation from Grand Council, who waited upon the Minister for Lands regarding this matter, when such members met in Bowen Park on 20th October.

"Yours faithfully,

"(Sgd.) CECIL E. SNARTT,

"Hon. Secretary."

Hon. members will see that the Government are not to blame for introducing this Bill, as the City Council is to blame for the sale of this area. I still object to the sale of this land, because for some years now the Royal National Agricultural and Industrial Association has been continually getting small slices of this park. The park is of great benefit to the people of Brisbane, and particularly to the children, who make good use of the park. I feel that the Minister will protect the interests of the people of Brisbane, and I hope that this will be the last portion of this park area that will be sold. The area that is to be sold is low-lying and is not of great value to the park; but the National Association should not be allowed to get any of the higher ground. I am against the principle of selling park lands. As regards Victoria Park, the people will not have the same freedom in regard to the use of that park as they always have had. I appeal to the Minister to see that no further area of Bowen Park is sold.

Mr. DUNLOP (*Rockhampton*) [4.28]: It is to be regretted that the hon. member for Kelvin Grove should take up the attitude he is adopting in connection with this Bill, seeing that he was instrumental in securing the deletion of clause 7 of the Bill that was introduced in 1929, which provided for the extension or operation of the Act. As ex-mayor of Rockhampton, I cannot do better than quote the remarks I made last year, as reported on page 1549 of "Hansard" for 1929. As one who has always been interested in city parks, I say it is a wise procedure not to dispose of our lung areas, as you cannot have too many of such spaces in a city. The population of Queensland is growing, and every citizen should strenuously oppose the sale of any land which is necessary as a lung space for the children. I said in the debate on the Bill in 1929—

"I rise to oppose this Bill in every shape and form. My experience in our own city of Rockhampton and elsewhere is that, if anyone in any city takes any

interest in the preservation of lung areas for parks and playgrounds for children, it is the council concerned. This park has existed for some years in this locality, and not one inch should be given away, because it will be too late to get any more land later on. Every city should hold on to any park lands which it has got. The trouble is that municipalities have not been far-seeing enough to earmark suitable areas in their respective localities for parks. I am not prepared to give approval to any agreement which would permit of the selling of an inch of the ground either now or in the future."

The Secretary for Public Lands said on the same occasion—

"There is no occasion for an amendment, as I intend to ask the Committee to vote against the clause. At the introduction of the Bill, the hon. member for Ithaca stated that there was collusion between the Government and the National Association in order to get part of Bowen Park.

"Mr. Pollock: You said that ultimately they would get the whole of it.

"The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I said that very probably they would ask to have it. I wish to state that the Bill was introduced at the request of the Brisbane City Council, with the proviso contained in clause 7. The Bill embodies an agreement between the City Council and the National Association, and they agreed to have this clause inserted because there have been negotiations for a further small area in order that the National Association may get an outlet into Bowen Bridge road."

We all realise that the Royal National Association has done wonderful service for Queensland; but it is necessary to preserve the lung areas for the benefit of future generations. That is of more importance than giving any further land to the Royal National Association. I am, therefore, surprised at the Minister being hoodwinked now, after doing what he did in 1929. I consider that the hon. member for Kelvin Grove should register his emphatic protest against this action by crossing the floor to show that he is acting in the interests of his own constituency.

Mr. KIRWAN (*Brisbane*) [4.34]: In common with other hon. members, I would like to enter my protest against this Bill. It has been mentioned that when the Minister introduced the Bill in 1929, there was a proviso therein giving power to the Governor in Council to dispose of further areas of this land; and there was such a storm of protest that the hon. member for Kelvin Grove was compelled to rise in his place and move an amendment to omit this section, which the Minister accepted. Now we have an arrangement for which this Bill seeks to give the necessary authority, which will allow another portion of this park to be sold by the City Council to the Royal National Association.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: They are getting rid of it piecemeal.

Mr. KIRWAN: As one who has lived in Brisbane for many years, I know the history of this ground, which was originally known as the Acclimatisation Society's

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grounds. The late Mr. Bernays, the father of our respected Clerk of the Parliament, did very valuable work in connection with introducing into the State a large number of trees and plants from distant parts of the world. The work done by the society was of considerable benefit to the State, and the park was regarded as being amply justified on that account as well as from being used by the public as a park. The parks of our city are gradually being diverted to other purposes. For instance, a large portion of Victoria Park has been turned into a golf course. That park could be made one of the finest in any city of the Commonwealth, if properly laid out. If this Bill is put through, let us hope that some of the money obtained from this sale will be devoted to beautifying Victoria Park, which is practically in the same position now as it was when I came to the city forty-six years ago. In those days rubbish and nightsoil were deposited there. Very little has been done to improve it until recently in connection with the new golf course. I hope this will be the last slice taken from the old Acclimatisation Society's gardens, generally known as Bowen Park. I hope that, from the historic point of view, the Government will see to its preservation.

Question—"That the resolution (*Mr. Deacon's motion*) be agreed to"—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 30.

Mr. Blackley	Mr. Macgroarty
" Boyd	" Maher
" Brand	" Maxwell
" Butler	" Morgan
" Clayton	" Nimmo
" Costello	" Peterson
" Daniel	" Russell, H. M.
" Deacon	" Sizer
" Duffy	" Tedman
" Edwards	" Tozer
" Grimstone	" Walker, J. E.
" Hill	" Warren
" Kerr	
Dr. Kerwin	<i>Tellers:</i>
Mr. King	" Carter
Mrs. Longman	" Wienholt

NOES, 26.

Mr. Barber	Mr. Kirwan
" Bedford	" Mullan
" Bow	" O'Keefe
" Brassington	" Pease
" Bruce	" Pollock
" Bulcock	" Smith
" Cooper	" Stopford
" Dash	" Wellington
" Dunlop	" Wilson
" Foley	" Winstanley
" Hanlon	
" Hansou	<i>Tellers:</i>
" Hynes	" Conroy
" Jones, A. J.	" Jones, A.

PAIR.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Collins

Resolved in the affirmative.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to a resolution.

Resolution agreed to.

FIRST READING.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. A. Deacon, *Cunningham*) presented the Bill, and moved—

"That the Bill be now read a first time."

[*Mr. Kirwan.*

Question—"That the Bill be now read a first time" (*Mr. Deacon's motion*)—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 30.

Mr. Atherton	Mr. Maher
" Boyd	" Maxwell
" Brand	" Morgan
" Butler	" Nimmo
" Carter	" Peterson
" Clayton	" Russell, H. M.
" Costello	" Sizer
" Daniel	" Tedman
" Deacon	" Tozer
" Duffy	" Walker, J. E.
" Grimstone	" Warren
" Hill	" Wienholt
" Kerr	
" King	<i>Tellers:</i>
Mrs. Longman	" Blackley
Mr. Macgroarty	Dr. Kerwin

NOES, 26.

Mr. Barber	Mr. Kirwan
" Bedford	" Mullan
" Brassington	" O'Keefe
" Bruce	" Pease
" Bulcock	" Pollock
" Cooper	" Smith
" Dash	" Stopford
" Dunlop	" Wellington
" Foley	" Wilson
" Hanlon	" Winstanley
" Hansou	
" Hynes	<i>Tellers:</i>
" Jones, A. J.	" Bow
" Jones, A.	" Conroy

PAIR.

AYES.

NOES.

Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Collins
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Resolved in the affirmative.

Second reading of the Bill made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

STATE TRANSPORT CO-ORDINATION BILL.

SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*) [4.50]: In introducing this Bill the Secretary for Railways gave what was, in his opinion, a very full account of the principles underlying the measure. There can be no doubt about the importance of a Bill of this kind in the interests of the State generally. The Minister claimed that it is based on a desire to enable an economic survey of the State to be made so that there may be co-ordination among the various forms of transport, and that, as a result, duplication and unnecessary expense may be avoided.

So far as I could follow the Minister, the basis of the Bill is that Queensland cannot afford a number of different methods of transport, and that a competent authority ought to be appointed to decide what shall be done by the railways and what shall be done by other forms of transport. In dealing with that question, the hon. gentleman raised what is undoubtedly a very controversial matter. Since he became a Minister, the hon. gentleman has taken up the attitude that he will do everything possible to force the public to use the means of transport controlled by the State—namely, the railways. By legislation he has imposed penalties of various kinds; and it is generally recognised that under this Bill he will use the powers asked for in the Bill in the direction of making it unprofitable to use any other form of transport but the railways.

A Bill such as this should be given mature consideration by Parliament. My objection to it is largely based on the fact that it has been introduced without making a thorough survey of the problem in order to establish the facts of the case. With the general proposition that various forms of transport should be co-ordinated I am in entire accord. I take the view that the State, having spent millions of pounds in providing means of public transport, should not encourage a form of competition which depreciates the value of the State undertaking. In this matter the Minister indicates to the public generally that he has become a convert to the principle of State enterprise, or State collectivism. In the principles enunciated in his second reading speech and in the contents of this Bill, the hon. gentleman is postulating that nothing shall be permitted on the part of private enterprise which in any way depreciates the value of a State undertaking. In that way the hon. gentleman and the hon. members who support him in this Bill are avowing the principle of State enterprise and State collectivism.

Certain important facts must be borne in mind in a measure of this kind. There are undoubtedly railways in Queensland that would not be built under present transport conditions. Further, roads have been built by local authorities, and in some cases by the State, which have deprived the railways of revenue which they would otherwise have obtained, and the net result has been that the same people have provided the money for both means of transport.

It is well that the position should be faced in a proper manner, so that the people will be called upon to decide which form of transport they shall use.

In New Zealand certain branch lines suffered from the competition of motor transport, and the Government of the Dominion took up the attitude that they could not afford to maintain both services. The people in those areas were given the opportunity of deciding whether they intended to use road transport or whether they intended to use the State railways. It was pointed out to them that they could not have both, and many branch railway lines have been closed down and road transport used instead. It is rather a difficult position for a railway management to contemplate the existing fact that heavy traffic, which is not charged for at a high rate, is going to the railways and the higher-paid traffic is being carried on the roads. A good deal of economy could be effected by a survey of the position carried out in a proper and adequate manner. Mr. George Ramsay, vice-president of the Automobile Club of Victoria, at the annual conference of the Automobile Association held in Melbourne on 4th and 5th November, 1931, said—

“The two agencies which should be co-operating to bring about this desirable result”—

That is, the imperative need for utilising all available transport facilities in the most economic way—

“the rail and the road, are being driven apart by inequitable legislation, introduced in every State under the guise of ‘co-ordination of transport.’ Actually what is aimed at is to give the railways a monopoly of transport without regard to its reactionary effect on development.”

That is the difficulty we have in approaching a Bill of this kind. I take it that it is as futile to endeavour to prohibit motor transport to-day as it would be to attempt to prohibit the use of machinery and labour-saving devices in industry generally. Whether the Government like it or not, and whether this Parliament likes it or not, the people will demand cheap and effective methods of transport, and will use them wherever available; and it is merely attempting to shelve the position if we pass a Bill of this kind with the object of preventing the use of modern means of conveyance and forcing the people to use the railways.

If, on the other hand, the Bill is used in a proper manner, and co-ordination between road and rail transport is brought about, it will be a good thing. That position has been faced in many countries. In the United States of America and in Great Britain, where the railways are not owned by the State, the railway companies have endeavoured to enter into arrangements so that they can control both road and rail transport. Many of the railway companies in those countries arrange their time tables to work in with road transport in various directions, so that the railways will be used where most effective, and road transport used where it is most effective and economical. The time tables and method of control are so devised that the two work in together, preventing overlapping, duplication, and economic waste.

Take, for example, the metropolitan area of Brisbane! Roads have been built to Wynnum, Manly, and Sandgate. Those roads enable motor transport to be carried on an extensive scale. People can drive to those places in a very short space of time, and motor lorries convey there goods which were formerly conveyed by the railways. It has meant, however, that these additional facilities have increased the population of those districts. More houses have been built and people have been induced to live there. In addition to that, motor buses use those roads, and they are limited in the time in which they operate with a view to saving railway freights and to protecting the Railway Department; but there is no co-ordination in the time-tables of the respective services. There are buses running sometimes at the same period of the day as trains are running, and the time-tables of the buses which are fixed by the existing traffic authority, prohibit their running on some occasions even where no railway facility is provided. Under a proper system of co-ordination the railway time-table and the motor time-tables should be co-ordinated, so that the buses will be available when it is not profitable to run trains. They should not run at the same time, and the most economical facility should be afforded to the public. In that way a service would be provided that would be in the public interests, and waste such as I have described would be eliminated in its entirety.

This is a problem which has been dealt with by various States. The Minister has said that he approves of the Bill introduced by the Lang Government in New South Wales, which has for its purpose the driving of motor buses very largely off the streets in the interests of the railways and trams, which are run by the Railway Department.

In Victoria the Railway Commissioners endeavoured to enter into competition with road motor transport. It was freely said in

Mr. Smith.]

connection with traffic between Melbourne and Geelong that the Railway Department had put motors on the road to break it up in a short space of time. That is not the way to achieve co-ordination.

Mr. BRAND: It is different from that now in Victoria.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: I am speaking of the time when that road was built. It runs practically alongside the railway, and the motor competition must have made very serious inroads into railway revenue. The proper method of approaching the problem is that State or local authority money should not be spent in providing a duplicate service where one service only is required, and which is provided in an adequate fashion. That is the view I take of it, and it is the view which most people who approach the problem generally take. They claim in Victoria to have solved the difficulty to some extent by their Transport Act. Still the problem has not been tackled there with entire success.

Whether this Bill is based on proper lines or not remains to be seen. A couple of years ago, when dealing with railway deficits and speaking on the Financial Statement, I advocated an economic survey of the transport problem of the State on the basis that we could not continue to lose money on railway transport, the same people having to provide the funds for roads which were reducing the railway revenue. By that I meant that I approved of that being done on a proper scientific basis.

My objection to this Bill is based on the fact that it has been brought down by the Railway Department, and prepared by it with only one object in view. There is no scientific formula set out on which this Bill is based, and the Railway Department cannot claim that it is the result of any sound investigation. Can it be said that the transport authorities of this State have been in any way consulted in the matter? Have the Main Roads Commission and its officers been consulted in the preparation of this Bill? I am not aware whether that has been done, but they naturally, in common with the officers of the Railway Department, should be called into consultation in the framing of legislation of this kind. It must be recognised that, while motor transport has taken traffic away from the railways, it has also been the means of enabling development to take place in many parts of the State, in that way bringing in railway freights and fares which otherwise would not have been obtainable. The road system of the country should be used as feeders to the railways, and waste in various forms should be eliminated.

In South Africa they have endeavoured to cope with the problem in a sound and sensible way. I understand that their railway gauge is the same as ours, and that they have encountered transport problems due to motor competition in the same way that we have done. So recently as February, 1929, they appointed a royal commission to investigate the entire problem of transport within the State, particularly in relation to the State utility. The terms of reference to that commission were:—

“The whole problem of road motor competition and its bearing on road motor and railways services of the South

African railway administration, having regard—

(a) To the fact that the main transport system of the country is State-owned, in which vast sums of public money are invested, and

(b) To the country's needs for its economic development. All the measures, if any, which should be adopted for the better regulation, co-ordination, and control in the public interests.”

The commission consisted of six members, the personnel representing the following:—

One member representing the South African Federated Chamber of Industries;

One member representing the Association of Chambers of Commerce of South Africa;

One member representing the South African Agricultural Union;

Two members representing the South African railways and harbours' administration; and

One chairman.

I have certain excerpts from the report of the commission which I think have an important bearing on this Bill. The commission reported as follows:—

“After due consideration of the issues involved in the inquiry, we interpreted the terms of reference to the commission in their widest sense, and, in view of the fact that roads, road policy, and road transportation are so intimately associated and their relation so inextricably bound up with the problem under review, we deemed it necessary to take cognisance of those factors, and to view transportation generally in the light of services to the community and development of the country. In South Africa, a country sparsely populated in relation to area, where there is diversity of climate, extremes of topography, and different sectional and economic conditions and interests, hardly any other instrumentality has so served to preserve and maintain unity as its transportation system, the development of which is essential to the continued progress of the economic, social, and civic life.”

They interpreted the terms of reference in their widest sense. The South African Union is a country large in area, and confronted with many problems of transportation similar to those that exist in Australia. The commission points out that not only were the terms of reference sufficiently wide to deal with the situation, but it interpreted them in a manner that had complete relation to the preservation of public interests, having regard to all the factors concerned. On the subject of competition between the various modes of transport, the commission reported:—

“It is claimed that there is such an essential difference between the transportation service offered the public by the motor vehicle and that given by the railway and tramway systems that no real competition exists, but the facts show that a relatively small proportion of motor-vehicle operation is at present supplementary to, or an extension of, railway

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(and tramway) service, and that, apart from the road motor services operated by the railway administration in rural areas, it is seldom of a developmental nature. Several vendors of road motor transport stated in evidence that they were operating in competition with the railway and tramway services, and that their operations were diverting considerable traffic from the older forms of transport."

It will be noted that the Railway Department of South Africa has entered into road transportation by providing these facilities in some cases.

The same thing applies to New Zealand. In Wellington and elsewhere in the Dominion, the Railway Department has entered into active competition by providing motor transport facilities of its own, the idea being to keep the control of transport in the hands of the State. The report goes on to say—

"It was averred that the public had selected the motor omnibus as the preferable means of travel between points served by railways, even in cases where rail transport may be superior in comfort and speed and its tariffs lower. It is possible that the partiality for omnibus travel on the part of a section of the community, particularly in urban and suburban areas, will prove to be transitory and that further improved railway service will tend to reinstate rail travel in public favour. On the other hand, it is possible that the public, in deserting the railway, has definitely selected the type of transportation which it desires, or is best suited to its needs, in which regard there can be no question but that the frequent direct service provided by the motor omnibus, as well as the geographical configuration of some South African towns, has, and must continue to have, an important bearing on the choice exercised. The tendency in modern times is to extend residential areas in directions away from the railways and main roads, which areas can best be served by omnibus.

"Important as is the fact that the main transport system of the country is State-owned and that vast sums of public money have been invested therein, we cannot but feel that the paramount consideration is the country's needs for its economic development."

That summing up by the commission sets out the case very clearly, not only for the South African Union, but it epitomises our problem here. From our point of view, the term "paramount consideration" is the country's need for the purposes of economic development.

That is the attitude I take in considering a Bill of this kind. I am not satisfied that, in introducing a Bill of this kind, the Government have had that paramount consideration in mind; nor am I satisfied that the Bill is designed to protect those things to which I have alluded, or that it will have that effect when brought into operation. In many respects it is obvious that the Bill has been very largely framed from a railway standpoint, using that term in its narrow sense; and it may be described as an attempt by the Government to reach out for further power and control in connection with the

transport problems of the State. On frequent occasions both the Premier and the Secretary for Railways have definitely stated that it is their intention to force traffic off the roads to the railways. Provided that that is done in the public interests, and that proper service is provided and maintained, little objection can be taken to that point of view, having regard to the large amount that the State has invested in railways. But if that is done without regard to the need for the development of this country, and without regard to supplying the public with their necessary transport services, then it is unlikely that any good will result.

It should be realised by hon. members that the Minister is taking extraordinary powers unto himself under this Bill. The Bill sets up a Ministry of Transport, and, to disguise very largely the powers of that Ministry, various kinds of boards will be established. One central board, to which individuals representing certain interests will be appointed, will function in Brisbane, and advisory boards will function in other portions of the State; but a thorough perusal of the provisions of the Bill shows very clearly that this central board will have no definite power or authority. It is a board which may give advice to the Minister, who can decide whether he will accept it or not. In other words, it can be used as a very useful political foil by the Minister, who may desire to avoid responsibility, and place it on the board. If we are to have such a board, what is the use of persevering with it without vesting it with some authority? It may be argued that the final authority should rest with the Government. That always applies, and is part of the sovereignty of the State; but, if a board is going to be established to control in an economic fashion the transport facilities of this State, then power and authority should be vested in that board to enable it to do its job properly. It should not be merely a political foil for the Minister, who can thereafter claim to have acted on its advice when he considers it good political tactics so to do. So far from removing political control from forms of transport, this Bill will intensify and extend the political control not only of the railway services but of every other form of transport. The Bill will give the Minister complete authority over every method of transport, with the possible exception of the scooter and the perambulator.

Mr. DUNLOP: The Bill also gives the Minister a new title.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: The hon. gentleman has been credited with many titles, some of which will not bear repetition; but, quite apart from what the hon. gentleman may call himself, it is the capacity that is displayed in carrying out the duties with which we are concerned, in addition, of course, to the powers that are vested in the Minister.

Under this Bill the Minister will become a virtual dictator. He may grant or withhold licenses for various forms of transport. He may set out the terms and conditions under which motor transport shall carry on, or he may entirely forbid that form of transport. He may prescribe that in a certain area a dairyman must send his cream to the factory by rail, and that a butter factory will not be granted a license to

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collect the cream at the various farms. There is no conceivable form of authority over transport which is not given to the Minister. The board will exist only in an advisory capacity. It may investigate certain problems, just as a public service officer might investigate problems; but the official decision will rest with the Minister, in whom complete power is vested.

Objection may be taken to the personnel of the board and to the various interests proposed to be represented. That matter will be dealt with more fully at the Committee stage; but it may be stated here that there are interests in the community which will not be represented on the board. Furthermore, objection can be taken to the provision that the secretary of the board may also be a member of the board. The secretaryship of that board might be a very useful appointment for the secretary to the Secretary for Railways to hold; but it is scarcely in accord with the proper practice of control of such board. The secretary of a board should be the servant of the board, subject to its control and authority; and it is an objectionable feature that the secretary of the board may also be a member of the board.

Another clause deals with water transport, which is a subject that has been given some consideration by many authorities in this State. The Minister has stated publicly that it is not intended to operate clause 22 of the Bill. In other words, the hon. gentleman states that it is not proposed to control the activities of harbour boards or of matters at present controlled by such boards. The Minister may make such a statement by letter or in the press; but we can only go by what is contained in this Bill, which very definitely gives power over all forms of water transport. Under this Bill it would be possible to divert traffic from water to railway transport. Under clause 22 it would be competent, for example, to say that on the Johnstone River sugar shall not be taken from Goondi Mill to Cairns by means of barges. That has been the means of transport for many years. Under this Bill the Minister can order that that sugar shall be conveyed to Cairns by rail, and by no other form of transport. He could exercise that authority, and make it effective by providing for the licensing of such vessels and then refusing to grant the licenses. He could also close up certain ports and demand that the traffic that goes through those ports shall be conveyed by railway. If it is the intention of the Government either now or at some future date to operate in that fashion, then we should know it. It is here that the advisability of such a policy should be discussed and confirmed. As Leader of the Labour Party and speaking on behalf of my party, I take the view that each port in Queensland is entitled to the trade of its own hinterland, and that it is bad national policy to drag everything to one central port. We know what has happened in that regard in New South Wales, where everything has been controlled in such a fashion as to prevent the development of a number of ports along the New South Wales coast, and has forced all trade to be dragged to Sydney. One has only to look into the matter to realise the evil that has arisen in that and other States in that connection.

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One of the reasons why Queensland is in a better position than the other States is because of the distribution of its population, and the fact that a larger percentage of our people is engaged in primary production than is the case in other States. In Victoria, New South Wales, and South Australia, an undue proportion of the population resides in Melbourne, Sydney, and Adelaide, respectively; and that has to some extent been due to the policy devised by those States for using the railways in such a fashion that everything is dragged to one central port.

Clause 22 of the Bill quite definitely gives the Minister power to control harbours and rivers and conveyance and transport by water in those harbours and rivers.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: If that power is in the Bill, we are definitely going to provide that that will not be so.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: I am pleased to have that information from the Minister. It is what is in the measure that we are concerned with and what the people in the future will be concerned with, and not what the Minister or Parliament intended at the time.

The powers of government by regulation as prescribed in the Bill are very considerable. I shall deal with that matter when we come to the Committee stage. There are objections to giving extensive powers by regulation, because we consider that any power that should be exercised can adequately be put in the Bill itself.

The measure, however, is one that contains certain important principles against which no one can contend. I am in favour of giving the Bill a trial, within certain limitations, which I shall set out in Committee. It is necessary that economic waste and undue duplication should be reduced to a minimum. It is necessary that an economic survey of the means of transport within the State should be made; and, if this Bill accomplishes that object, then its introduction will be worth while. But there are certain dangers included within the scope of the Bill which I have considered it my duty to call attention to. It gives the Minister of Transport autocratic power over all means of conveyance within the State, and that power is not vested in any other authority. The exercise of those powers will be the subject of debate when we get into Committee; but it is as well for Parliament at this stage to know that, under the Bill, political control of the railways is extended indefinitely; and that political control is extended to other forms of transport in complete detail.

I do not propose to oppose the second reading of the Bill, but I would suggest to the Minister that very full consideration be given to it in Committee. The problem is too big a one to be put through in an ill digested or hurried fashion. Full consideration should be given to these principles, and every effort made to shape the various clauses in such a manner as to protect the public interests.

In conclusion I wish to say that, provided the interests of the public are served and that proper economic development of the country is the first consideration in regard to any means of transport, then the Bill will serve a good purpose. But there are

many dangerous principles contained in it which hon. members generally should seriously consider before they give their final assent to the Bill.

Mr. HANLON (*Ithaca*) [5.31]: I sympathise with the Minister in his job. There is no doubt that the contract he has to cope with in endeavouring to make the railways show a decent financial result is very difficult, and I am sure that everyone will sympathise with him in his difficult task. We can understand that it is natural that, in attempting to control transport matters in this State, he should be prejudiced a little in looking after the interests of the railways. Transport matters are of vital importance to this country. Inland transport in a country such as this, where there is practically no water transport, is of vital importance to our development. We have also to recognise that the interests of any particular form of transport cannot be placed above the interests of the country.

At present in Australia the Secretary for Railways in each State is endeavouring to tackle this problem. Each goes on endeavouring to patch up holes in railway revenue and to combat competition with the railways. It is the policy of every Railway Minister in the Commonwealth to handicap his competitors in every possible way. While it may be laudable to endeavour to kill such competitors with a view to saving losses on the railways, it is not the way in which this problem should be faced. We should have some definite policy of transport development.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Can you suggest any?

Mr. HANLON: I suggested some years ago that a thorough survey of the transport requirements of this country should be made, and expert opinion obtained as to the best method of developing transport, restricting any undesirable form of transport, and so on. I am in the same position as the Minister in regard to knowledge of this question. That is why I am saying that we should have a thorough survey of the transport problems of the State.

The trouble in regard to the transport problem in Australia is that there is no continuity of policy in any State. There is a change of policy with every change of Government. As transport is of such vital importance, this is a serious matter.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: How would you stop it?

Mr. HANLON: You can stop it by finding out what transport we require, what we can afford, and what effect it will have on the development of this country.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: With every change of Government there will be a change of view.

Mr. HANLON: I believe that the average political party, once it is convinced of a desirable policy in regard to transport development, will stick to it. Ministers may have different ideas; but, once we lay down a broad and general system of transport development in the State, succeeding Governments are not going to swing over too freely. There is no continuity of policy at present, and unquestionably transport matters should not be subject to change with every change of Government. At the present time, when Governments are likely to change with every appeal to the country, it is likely

that the transport policy may also change. If we thoroughly understood the requirements of the State and the effect that a proper method of transport will have on the development of the State, then the matter would not be subject to such changes.

There is just this aspect of the matter which I do not think has had sufficient thought either by the Minister or the Railway Department, and that is that in attempting, as the Minister is doing now, to save railway losses—and that is the sole object of the Bill—

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I do not agree with that. That is not the intention of the Bill at all.

Mr. HANLON: I cannot see that there is any other provision in the Bill—it is rather a Bill of possibilities. It provides for the appointment of a board with certain powers. We know that the Minister's obsession for the time being is to relieve the Railway Department of losses. I am inclined to think that that is what this Bill will deal with. But, before any attempt is made to relieve the Railway Department of losses, there are two aspects of the matter to be considered.

There is another phase of the matter that should receive very serious consideration, and that is the effect of a transport policy on the development and settlement of the country and upon its finances. Queensland is a very large State with no inland water communications, being dependent for development upon inland transport. The population is very scattered, and is not sufficient to justify the length of railway lines at present in existence. Railway construction and maintenance account for a considerable amount of the expenditure incurred with a view to developing and settling the State; but large sums have been expended upon harbours and rivers with the same object in view. Considerable sums have also been expended by way of subsidising industry with the object of assisting settlement in this State. Cheap railway freights have been provided; cheap land rentals have been provided for Crown tenants; and the mining industry has been subsidised, all with a view to developing the State. The people of the country pay huge sums annually for the subsidising of primary production purely with a view to encouraging settlement. We have subsidised sugar production, wheat production, butter production, cheese production, meat production, maize production, fruit production—in fact, all kinds of primary products. The cost of these subsidies on primary production must amount to an enormous sum. All this money comes out of the pockets of the people, and is justified by our desire to assist in the settlement and development of the country.

In considering a transport policy with the object of saving the annual loss on the railways of £1,000,000 or £1,500,000, we should consider whether or not we are going to undo the good work achieved by the expenditure of millions of pounds of public money in subsidising land settlement. What would happen if there was free and unrestricted development of transport in the State? If the motor transport system was allowed to operate with absolute freedom in its competition with the railway system, after paying road tax for the maintenance of the roads, there is no doubt that the most

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efficient and cheapest system would prevail. It would probably cost the State a huge sum in writing off railway capital, but it might be worth while. This is a point upon which we should receive enlightenment from a complete survey of our transport systems. We should consider whether it would not be better to regard the loss on an efficient railway service as part of the subsidy to the people engaged in the settlement and development of the country. We should know whither we are going.

The whole policy of transport in the State should not be altered by the accession of a series of laymen to the position of Secretary for Railways. One of the vital weaknesses of the Bill is that it does not provide for a complete survey of our transport requirements. It provides for the creation of a transport board, but the board has no authority to undertake a complete scientific survey of the transport requirements and the effect of any particular transport policy upon the development of the country. That is a vital weakness. The Minister may, in his discretion, direct the board to undertake such an investigation, but that is only a possibility.

It must also be remembered that the transport question is largely a matter of Federal concern. The Minister referred to the effect of motor transport upon the trade balance of this country; but the trade balance is a matter primarily and almost entirely in the hands of the Commonwealth, which is naturally interested in the transport problem from the point of view of importations. Motor cars, petrol-driven engines, oils, and petrol constitute a large proportion of the imports of this country. These are problems which should be dealt with by the Federal Government. The Federal Government are equally interested with the States in transport problems. Roads and railways are of vital importance to the Department of Defence. The construction of roads and railways is the only form of expenditure on defence that gives the public some return for the money spent. All other forms of expenditure for that purpose are a total loss to the people. The matter of a national transport policy could well be raised by the Minister at the next conference of Commonwealth and State Ministers. It is a matter in which the Federal Government should lend assistance. The sooner we know whether we are going to allow motor transport to develop, or restrict it to act as a feeder for existing railway lines or in the development of entirely new areas, the greater the stability that will exist in that industry. At the present time we have more railways than we require. Every new settlement demands the construction of a railway. A possible outcome of the problem might be a declaration by the Governments that no more railway construction will be undertaken, and that the development of entirely new areas will be left to motor transport. We should try motor transport out in that way. We must remember that motor transport is important to the defence of the country, and consideration of the question from that aspect is desirable. The varying policy of different Governments is one of the evils of this country in connection with motor transport; and the sooner we have some definite policy in that respect the better it will be for all concerned.

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Mr. DUNLOP (*Rockhampton*) [5.45]: Members representing the Central district have received telegraphic communication from the Chamber of Commerce, Rockhampton, and also from other public bodies there, strongly protesting against clause 22 of this Bill. They fear interference with existing arrangements. We submitted the representations to the Minister, who informed us that there was no such intention.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is not my intention to interfere with existing arrangements.

Mr. DUNLOP: It is to be regretted that one of the most important Bills which has been introduced is to be rushed through at the fag end of the session. I maintain that the Bill should not be passed hurriedly, and that it should receive more mature consideration than the Companies Bill did. It was a disgrace to Parliament to see how that Bill was rushed through.

I must thank the Minister for his thoughtfulness in furnishing me, as well as other hon. members, with a precis of the information respecting transport matters which he has been collecting for the past two years. After a perusal of this information, and after reading the Bill closely, I am afraid that his remarks were not in unison with either the Bill or that information. A "yes-no" policy has been adopted throughout, as I shall prove later.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I wanted to give you both sides of the question.

Mr. DUNLOP: It brought to my mind the statement by the hon. member for Warwick that the hon. gentleman is a most conciliatory Minister. I interjected at the time that I could not agree to that, because my opinion is that he is only conciliatory when your opinions agree with his. After reading the synopsis which was issued by the Minister, I am more than ever convinced that he wants to be regarded as a Mussolini or a dictator on transport matters.

Perhaps quite unintentionally, or perhaps intentionally to appease his egotism, the hon. gentleman has altered his own title under this Bill. If the Minister were sincere, he would move in the direction of taking all these things out of political control. As I have said previously, I have no objection to that being done in the case of the railways, provided the railway employees are given adequate representation. It appears to me from this Bill that the Minister desires to interfere with every local authority in Queensland, and judging by the powers which he proposes to take with regard to water transport particularly, it would appear that he desires to leave behind him a memento of his work in transport matters.

The Bill is much too important to be rushed through in this fashion. Such associations as the Royal Automobile Club of Queensland and kindred bodies should have been consulted.

A splendid case was put forward by the Leader of the Opposition, and the hon. members for Mundingburra and Mount Morgan also made valuable contributions to the debate. The hon. member for Mount Morgan appears to be interesting himself in my constituency; but, whilst I do not require his aid, I must congratulate him on the fair way in which he presented the case for Rockhampton.

Just to show the inconsistency of this Bill, I propose to quote from the first page of the Minister's synopsis, where this statement appears—

"Every State in the Commonwealth recognises the problem, in fact, as late as last February, at a conference of Premiers (when Queensland was represented by the Premier (Mr. Moore) and the Treasurer (Mr. Barnes) the following resolution was carried unanimously:—

'That in view of the fact that motor competition with the railway adds considerably to State deficits, thus preventing the balancing of budgets, the conference recommends—

(1) That each State Government should take action, if necessary, by legislation, to eliminate uneconomic road competition.

(2) That all transport services should be co-ordinated."

Contrast that with this statement appearing on page 4—

"With road and rail competition, it is within the power of the State to set up a regulating authority for the purpose of rationalising services. It cannot be conceded that motor transport is to be forbidden merely because it takes traffic from the railways, and, therefore, increases the railway deficit to be met out of the consolidated revenue."

The hon. member for Ipswich has taken strong exception to the powers that are proposed to be taken in the regulation-making clause of the Bill. I recollect the hon. member taking a similar stand when the Vagrants, Gaming, and Other Offences Bill was being considered. While I am a member of this Parliament I shall object to any Government taking these powers unto itself without allowing Parliament to have a say. This synopsis also says—

"Moreover the financial policy has often been decided on the grounds of political expediency, and it will be exceedingly difficult to remove transport from political control."

The present Minister has no intention of removing the railways from political control.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Can you tell me how it can be done? You are talking nonsense.

Mr. DUNLOP: Of course everybody talks nonsense except the Minister himself. The hon. gentleman is adamant in his statement that clause 22 will not interfere with harbour boards. The sidenote to the clause reads "Extension to waterways," and it gives the Minister power to control all harbour boards. Although the harbour boards have spent thousands of pounds in working up the trade of their own ports. I notice that Professor Brigden had furnished his report before this Bill was introduced. I asked one or two questions on this matter; and the replies I received would lead me to believe that the Minister has based his proposal to take the powers given under clause 22 on a stupid sentence in Professor Brigden's report. It is an insult to put such a sentence in his report as he has inserted in regard to Port Alma. Port Alma has more water in it and is easier for ships to get into and out than the port of Gladstone. That is a positive fact, and I can prove it by figures. Professor

Brigden does not know what he is talking about when he makes the stupid recommendation to abolish Port Alma. I would not be surprised if it were his ambition to have one port only, and that Brisbane. As an outcome of the deputation that waited on the Minister this afternoon, he now comes in and tells us that he will alter this clause.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I told you that a week ago.

Mr. DUNLOP: We are opposed to that clause, and the Brisbane Chamber of Commerce is also strongly opposed to it. The clause should be deleted. Under clause 17 the Minister takes unto himself powers in regard to harbour boards to interfere with wharves or other loading or unloading places. The Minister is like an octopus, and wants to put his tentacles round all transport facilities. He is trying to take all the powers of the local authorities, and he has not the courtesy to give them representation on the board. Clause 48 (k) gives the Minister power to deal with tramways, motor buses, and everything else. I will quote from the notes which the Minister has furnished to us to show that local authorities should be represented on the State transport board—

"Power is provided that it will first be necessary to obtain the approval of the board before any new tramways are constructed. The provisions of this Act may also be applied to water carriage if approved by the Governor in Council. This Act would not be of value unless provision is given to co-ordinate every known method of transport. There cannot be duplication of control and success. The board shall prepare a general report on co-ordination for the consideration of the Government, and also the relation of the Harbours and Rivers Department will be considered, and any other existing department which could be co-ordinated with advantage in reducing general costs of administration."

That paragraph shows that the Bill will interfere with local authorities and harbour boards. We all recognise that undue competition is not fair to any department. Take tramways, for instance.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Are you speaking against the Bill?

Mr. DUNLOP: I am just giving my views as to the powers which are proposed to be taken in various directions. In Rockhampton we have borrowed money for tramway construction, and have an indebtedness of about £37,000. Much of the financial burden is due to competition from motor and bus traffic. The people know that, whether they travel on motor buses or motor cars, they have to foot the bill for the tramways. It has to be remembered that tramways which go out into the different suburbs of a city increase the value of property, and encourage the building of residences. Whether we may like it or not, motor transport is here to stay. Quite recently a company made a proposal to the Rockhampton Council that the council should scrap its tramway system and institute motor bus traffic. I remember a deputation waiting on the Home Secretary a few months ago with regard to this proposal with a view to getting the control of the motor bus routes, and requesting that no undue competition should be allowed. Motor buses

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are of value to the community and will increase in number as time goes on; but, as I stated at the conference which was held on the matter, I, as a resident of Rockhampton, object to the scrapping of the tramway system there until it can be proved conclusively that a superior motor service can be substituted therefor, and that the employees on the trams will not be thrown on the scrapheap. Tramways are a public utility, like the railways. No Government can expect to get surpluses from these undertakings. These utilities serve the people and develop the country; and the Government should not worry if there is a deficit in regard to them. I do not agree with the Minister in thinking that this competition is responsible for the deficits on the railways. In years gone by the Railway Department did not cater properly for the traffic offering. One has only to compare the convenience of railway vehicles in this State with those provided in the other States to realise that. I admit that the present Government have brought about a considerable improvement in railway facilities; but there is room for further improvement. The Minister should see that the officials of his department co-operate to the utmost with a view to providing the public with every facility. He has very capable officers, and they are now on the lookout for traffic for the railways. I think it was the hon. member for Warwick who gently hinted to the Minister that his department should go out for traffic.

Part V. of the Bill contains very drastic powers, and there is no doubt the Minister intends to fasten the chains around every possible motor transport system on which he can lay his hands. I have examined that part of the Bill very carefully which contains that objectionable clause 22. One would have expected the Minister to enlarge upon these powers during his second reading speech, in view of the fact that chambers of commerce and other bodies are particularly concerned. The Minister preferred to sidetrack the matter.

There is one particularly good clause in the Bill dealing with licensing, and it is a pity that the principle could not be extended in other directions to prevent overlapping and unnecessary clerical work. In dealing with this matter the Minister, in the resume of the Bill submitted to hon. members, says this—

“It is proposed that ultimately one license should be issued to cover all fees, etc., for registration—heavy vehicle fee, traffic license, inspector of weights and measures certificate, and any fees to local authorities, etc.—and subsequently such moneys to be apportioned to the respective departments or local authorities.”

That is a very good provision. I believe the Traffic Bill that was to be introduced by the Home Secretary this session was to include many principles that are set out in this Bill. Probably that is why the Traffic Bill has been dropped. The local authorities have expended thousands of pounds in the construction and maintenance of roads. The scheme outlined in the Bill, which is similar to schemes that have been adopted in other parts of the world, is a splendid idea; but I hope that the proposed board will follow the maxim of “Live and let

live,” and that other modes of transport will, consistent with public interests, be allowed to secure their fair share of traffic.

The hon. member for Mundingburra quoted the opinions expressed by the Secretary for Railways in connection with main roads when he sat in Opposition; and I referred to one or two extracts from the Rockhampton “Bulletin.” Those views were diametrically opposed to those expressed by the Minister to-day. One can hardly imagine such a Simon Pure politician as the Minister taking such a double back somersault during such a short period in office. I warn the Minister that there must not be any undue interference with the activities of the various ports of the State. My centre and the other ports of Queensland will certainly see that their business facilities are not seriously interfered with. I am sure that all the ports in Queensland will see that their rights are not seriously interfered with, and that they are allowed to carry on in a legitimate manner. Harbours have been developed in every centre of this State; and I hope the Minister will see that the rights and privileges of the harbour boards in the Central district are not interfered with. The Minister rather amusingly stated in the précis which he has circulated—

“The men appointed will have a knowledge of local conditions, and thus disabuse the minds of parties interested throughout the State that the control is entirely in Brisbane, which is undesirable.”

I have pointed out every session that Brisbane is not Queensland, although there seems to be a desire that Brisbane should control every State activity. For years past Brisbane has received more than its fair share. It is comforting to hear the Minister support the principle of decentralisation, and I hope that each division will have representation on the transport advisory committees.

The idea of the Bill is a good one, but it is regrettable that it is being rushed through the House. I know that the Minister has been considering these transport matters for the last two years, but the local authorities have had but a very limited time in which to consider the provisions of the Bill.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Bill has been in your hands and in the hands of local authorities for the last three weeks.

MR. DUNLOP: The Minister has not taken the local authorities into his confidence in this legislation.

MR. SPEAKER: Order! I would draw the hon. member's attention to the fact that he has been repeating himself for the last seven or eight minutes.

MR. DUNLOP: I hope the Minister will give the board greater powers than he has proposed, and that the Transport Board will not be controlled by him.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. Godfrey Morgan, *Murilla*) [7.15], in reply: I desire to thank hon. members for the manner in which they have received the Bill. This is one of the most important Bills that has come before Parliament for a long time, although similar legislation is in existence in other States and other countries. Hon. members have been very fair in their criticism. Naturally it could not be expected that a Bill of this description

[*Mr. Dunlop.*]

should meet with the wholehearted approval of hon. members. Naturally, as hon. members represent different interests and different portions of the State, divergent views could only be expected, because it is the duty of those hon. members to look after the varying interests of their constituencies.

It is all nonsense for the hon. member for Rockhampton to say that this Bill is being rushed through. It has been in the hands of hon. members for three weeks, and local authorities have had plenty of time to consider it fully. It is not my duty to consult with outside bodies as to whether they approve or otherwise of the contents of a measure unless they desire to consult with me. It is their duty to analyse the Bill, and to arrange to have their views put before me on any matter which does not meet with their approval. Brisbane is not the only centre that is affected by the Bill; all portions of the State will be affected. Every hon. member has had an opportunity of speaking on the second reading stage; and, when we go into Committee on Tuesday, hon. members will have an opportunity of moving any amendments they desire, and their amendments will receive due consideration.

What I have already stated with regard to clause 22 is quite correct; and, if there is any doubt in the minds of hon. members, the matter will be made perfectly clear by amendment at the Committee stage.

This Bill is intended to co-ordinate all forms of transport. Waterways constitute one form of transport. Furthermore, the Home Secretary's Department deals with the control of traffic and other matters appertaining to transport. Under this Bill the two main departments concerned with transport—the Railway Department and the Department of Main Roads—will comprise, with other departments, the Department of Transport. Any matter appertaining to transport which is now under the control of other Ministers will be transferred to the Department of Transport after the passing of this Bill.

Mr. STOPFORD: What will be the position with regard to harbour boards?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: At the present time the control of harbour boards is vested in the Treasury Department; but it is intended to transfer that control to the Department of Transport. Under "The Navigation Acts, 1876 to 1896" we have all the power necessary to deal with waterways, if we desire to exercise that power. We do not want any more control, and we have no intention of interfering with the existing control, except to transfer that control from the Treasury Department to the Department of Transport.

Mr. STOPFORD: Which means the Railway Department, because you will have the last say.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No—the Minister of Transport.

Mr. STOPFORD: But you will still be Secretary for Railways.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Department of Main Roads is almost as important as the Railway Department, and other departments will be included in the Department of Transport. There can be no objection to the transfer of the control of waterways, which is now vested

in the Treasury Department, to the Department of Transport, because such a department should cater with all phases of transport. I ask hon. members to visualise a large departmental store, comprising grocery, ironmongery, drapery, and other departments. Each department controls its own affairs, but the co-ordination of the activities of each department is vested in an administrative authority. We have no desire to be faced with the position of saying that the Department of Transport does not deal with a particular form of transport.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: Do you intend to take control of traffic?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes, to some extent, although we do not intend to take that control out of the hands of the police. Although the control will be transferred in the manner I have suggested, it is not intended to interfere with the present port arrangements. To hear some hon. members, one would think that the Government was composed of lunatics.

Mr. STOPFORD: You tried to interfere with the Rockhampton railway rights before, and your game was blocked.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member is only talking like that because he has visions of becoming a candidate for the Rockhampton electorate. If the Mount Morgan seat was secure, the hon. member would not trouble his head about Rockhampton; but he sees in this an opportunity to indulge in a little bit of propaganda that may appeal to the Rockhampton people.

Mr. STOPFORD: I protested about the matter before.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What I did before I would endeavour to do again, because it is a right and proper thing to do, and I could do it without this Bill.

Mr. STOPFORD: No; the Cabinet would not let you.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There is no necessity to introduce this Bill to make the long haulage rates apply to all ports. If we are to carry a certain amount of goods 100 miles on the railway, it should not matter whether they are sent 100 miles west, 100 miles north, or 100 miles south, the freight should be the same, and there should be no discrimination. The whole of the money borrowed to build the various ports was loaned by the Government; and anything the Government did to injure the ports would only injure the finances of the Government. What would be the good of endeavouring to make the Budget balance so far as the railways are concerned if, in order to do that, I make a loss of £200,000 or £300,000 on the ports? No Government would be silly enough to do that.

Mr. STOPFORD: We are very pleased to hear you say it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: If the ports are not able to meet their liabilities, the people have to pay the piper. In some instances ports were made where ports never should have been made. Hundreds of thousands of pounds were spent in making one port, and it is a disgrace to the people who were responsible for the expenditure of that money. I suppose some of the Governments in the early days were responsible; and it shows the influence of vested interests. We have been told by every

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expert who has come to Australia from any other part of the world that that particular port should never have been made. What is the position to-day? It is insolvent, and cannot meet any portion of its interest.

Mr. DANIEL: The railways are insolvent.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes. Practically all the ports in Queensland, with the one exception, are meeting their liabilities. But this is the point I want to make: The Government have no intention to do anything with the ports, because, if we do injure the ports, it will only be robbing Peter to pay Paul. Unfortunately the whole of the money invested in the different ports in Queensland has been loaned by the Government, and we expect the different ports to pay interest and redemption.

Mr. DANIEL: A Government that you supported closed Broadmount.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes, and I have closed branch railways. If you make a bad debt, the question is whether you should not cut the loss altogether. I have closed down four railways since I became Minister.

Mr. STOPFORD: Where are they?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Principally in the North and Central North. It is more than likely that other railways will be closed down; and, just as railways which do not pay should be closed down, so some ports should be closed. It might be a good thing for Queensland to close certain ports.

Mr. O'KEEFE: Do you intend under this Bill to deliver goods from the railway station to the merchant?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We do not intend to do that at all, but that is a matter that the board will report on. If the board decides that it will be a good thing to establish a motor service to deliver goods, I certainly would not agree to the Government owning their own motor trucks and buses, because the very moment we do that we are going to get into trouble. I would agree to making contracts with people who are prepared to deliver goods from the railway station to the consignee, but I would not agree to the Government owning motor cars and creating more public servants. If a motor truck belongs to the Government, it will get very short shrift; but, if a truck belongs to the man who works it, it will get a fair spin and will last three times as long as if it belonged to the Government. The board will be able to deal with matters of that sort, and will recommend whether it is wise to take delivery of goods at the warehouse, and also whether it is wise to deliver from the railway stations to the consignees. That may be feasible. The board will have power to go into these matters fully and report upon them. If it thinks it feasible and beneficial to do such things, it naturally will do them.

I understood that the Leader of the Opposition said that I was in perfect accord with the Bill introduced by Mr. Lang.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: I said you supported the principles of the Bill introduced by Mr. Lang.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is not correct. What I said was that several very prominent papers, including the Sydney "Bulletin," which were not Labour papers and by no means supported Mr.

Lang, said that one of the few good things he had done during his period of office was to introduce the Bill referred to. Mr. Lang's handling of transport facilities does not fit in with my idea at all; and this Bill is not framed in any way on the principles of Mr. Lang's Bill. Mr. Lang, unfortunately, goes to extremes in everything he undertakes. We do not intend to go to extremes; we believe in moderation. We believe there is some good in all forms of transport. The only object of this Bill is to try to amalgamate the different forms of transport so that the people of Queensland will be benefited.

Some people in the community appear to have come to the conclusion that, if the railways make a loss, I have only to put my hand in my pocket and pay the loss. (Laughter.) They think that, if the railways make a profit, I am going to put the profit into my banking account. I have an interest in the railways because I am a taxpayer. I have no interest in any other form of transport in this State. I have a few horses, which I use myself, as I am a producer; but I have no interest in any form of motor traction or transport. My principal interest is in the railways, in which I have a share the same as any other taxpayer of the State.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: It is your job now to look after the railways.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is my duty. I have been put into the position of Secretary for Railways, and I have to preserve and protect the people's property. The railways belong to the people; but, unfortunately, we find many of our public men are not prepared to make the fullest use of public property, as they should do. They are very careful with their own money. We find many public men who insist on getting good value when they are spending their own money; but, when they are handling public money, they will distribute it indiscriminately so that people will say that they are good fellows. They are good fellows at other people's expense. That is not my nature. My duty is to do for the public what I would do for myself—in fact, I am a little meaner with public money than I am with my own. The people have put me in the position of looking after £64,000,000 worth of public property; and it is my duty to protect that property, and not allow everybody who so desires to milk the good old State milch cow, whether it is a good thing for the State or not. It is my duty to protect the State milch cow.

Mr. DANIEL: But not to retard progress.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Certainly.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: It is your duty to conduct the railways for the welfare of the State.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Exactly. Take a man in a humble walk in life, who has been catching a tram or train to get to his work and he purchases a motor car. People might say that that man was making great progress. In twelve months or two years he has got neither a motor car nor a home; yet some people say that that man must be progressive, and is doing well because he gets a motor car. In two years the motor car may be the cause of his losing his home and everything he

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possesses. I know of scores of men in my own electorate who had little credits in the bank and were free from debt; but they wanted to be in the fashion like their neighbours, who, perhaps, could afford motor cars; so they bought cars, and from that day they began to go down hill financially, with the result that to-day they have neither got motor car nor the money.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: It is true progress when a man requires a car in his business in order to carry out his work more economically.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: If a man purchased a car, which would enable him to do more business, and he was able to show at the end of the period of the life of the car that he had not only paid interest on the money involved, but had put aside sufficient to buy another car, that would be sound progress. If, upon the completion of the life of that car, the owner had not sufficient money to replace it, would that be progress? It would not be progress.

Mr. DANIEL: It would be progress if the farmer could convey his goods more cheaply by motor truck than by railway.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I have some very illuminating figures here. The value of the imports of motor cars, chassis, bodices, parts, petroleum, rubber, and lubricating oils into Australia in 1928-29 almost equalled in value the whole of the butter production of the Commonwealth in that year. That means that it required the total butter production of Australia to meet the cost of those articles in that year; or in other words, it required the value of the production of poultry, eggs, milk, bacon and hams, to equal the cost of the importation of those goods in that year. In 1926-27 the value of motor cars, oil, and petrol imported into Australia was equal to the butter and milk production of Australia. Have the motor vehicles assisted to increase our butter production? They have not been responsible for an increase of 1 lb. in butter production since the day of the old horse and cart; nor has the motor vehicle increased milk production. I again thank hon. members for the way in which they have received the Bill.

Mr. HYNES: Can you not give us an assurance about clause 22?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I gave an assurance, but the hon. member was not here.

Mr. HYNES: I have been here all the time.

Question—"That the Bill be now read a second time"—put and passed.

Consideration of the Bill in Committee made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

STATE ENTERPRISES REPEAL AND
"THE UNDER SECRETARY,
DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR AND
INDUSTRY," CORPORATION BILL.

SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY (Hon. H. E. Sizer, *Sandgate*) [7.40]: As I said before, this Bill rings down the curtain on a very interesting, although expensive, experiment in Queensland in the form of Government trading.

If we look at it from the point of view of finance, it has been a tragedy; but, if we look at it from the point of view of education for the Governments and people of years to come, I believe something is to be gained in that direction. I am very doubtful if any future Government of Queensland will ever again embark upon such a policy. I can well remember the electioneering campaigns that were fought round this question. The bribe was held out, "If you want a State butcher shop in the area, then vote for the Labour candidate!"

Mr. HYNES: And, if they wanted cheap meat, to vote for the Labour candidate.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: That, too, was held out as an inducement. I have anticipated the contention of the hon. member for Townsville. I have prepared a list showing the meat prices that ruled during the days of State butcher shops and those that obtain to-day. The list does not show that the people have been detrimentally affected by the disposal of State butcher shops. State enterprises were merely a fantastic ideal introduced to tickle the ears of the people.

It was also said by the Government of the day that these enterprises would solve their problems. We all know how they solved their problems. State enterprises have placed a burden on the community which will take many years to wipe out. It was apparent before the present Government took office that the scheme of State enterprises had failed. It was obvious from the outset that they would fail. The Opposition of the day pointed out that, no matter how zealous the officers in charge of the State enterprises might be, or how keenly the policy was administered, the fact could not be gainsaid that no Government could effectively trade. It was a difficult matter for the Government of the day to enter into competition with ordinary business and at the same time keep their eye on the political barometer.

State enterprises were used as a means for assisting the political friends of the late Government. State enterprises conclusively proved the truth of the old adage that it is the function of a Government to govern and not trade. That is proved by the fact that, before the present Government took office, the late Government had already disposed of thirty-six of their State butcher shops, and quite a number of State cattle stations. I can readily understand why the late Government did not desire to make a complete somersault and admit their failure in toto. The policy adopted of gradually realising on these State enterprises was a practical admission of failure. When the present Government were before the electors, they made it a definite plank in their platform that, if returned to power, they would dispose of State enterprises to the best advantage to the community.

Mr. BEDFORD: Did you sell the State Government Insurance Office?

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: We said that we would retain the State Government Insurance Office because it was not a State enterprise in the same category as the butcher shops.

Mr. BEDFORD: That was because it showed a profit.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: There is a marked difference

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between the management of the State Government Insurance Office and selling a pound of chops over the counter of a butcher shop. Immediately we took office we reviewed the whole situation, and selected the most opportune time to liquidate these assets.

Mr. STOFFORD: You gave some of the enterprises away.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: I was quite prepared for that interjection; and I have information to give this House which will show that the late Government practically gave away some of the enterprises they sold. No one can question the fact that the present Government seized the most opportune time for the disposal of State enterprises. At the present time we would probably not receive 50 per cent. of the amount realised at the time of sale.

Mr. HYNES: You have not been paid for a lot of them.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: We entered into agreements for the sale of those enterprises. In selling for £55,000 State butcher shops, which were valued by the late Government at £30,000, we made a remarkably good liquidation. To-day the same assets would probably realise only £30,000. Again, we realised £510,454 on the State stations; and I venture the opinion that not more than 60 per cent. of that amount would be realised if they were sold to-day. The company that bought a group of stations for £250,000 would be quite prepared to sell them back to the Government to-day at a reduced price. The sale at that time was good business for the State; a better time could not have been selected in which to sell.

It has been alleged, rather nastily, that we have given those enterprises away to political friends. I call the attention of hon. members to the fact that the policy of the Government was that those enterprises should be sold by public auction or public tender, and that they were sold to the highest bidder or negotiator.

Mr. STOFFORD: That was because there was a debate in this House.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: No; the policy of the Government was announced in the press two or three weeks after I took over the control of the department. It was then stated that the Government would liquidate those assets, and that they would be sold by public auction or public tender. That statement was made long before the Government met Parliament. In reference to the allegation that we gave those enterprises to our friends, I desire to illustrate the position that was adopted when the late Government commenced to liquidate the State enterprises. Realising that their policy had failed, the Labour Government started to liquidate thirty-six butcher shops. I do not know whether they were sold by public auction or public tender, but I do know that in the following instances the book values and the amounts realised were:—

	Book value.	Sale price.
	£	£
State butcher shop—		
Roma ...	3,765	3,010
Winton ...	2,763	1,500
Emerald ...	2,785	2,000

Mr. STOFFORD: Compare your transactions also with the book value.

(Hon. H. E. Sizer.)

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: I shall do so. The figures show that the State butcher shops at Mackay and Bundaberg were sold for a price exceeding their book value. I am not suggesting anything in the matter, but I am merely pointing out how unfair it is for hon. members opposite to allege that we gave away the State enterprises to political friends. In any liquidation which took place I am sure the Commissioner for Trade and his staff have always watched the interests of the State. The present Commissioner for Trade has considerable experience in financial matters.

Mr. HYNES: Have the buyers paid the purchase price in all cases?

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: I can assure the hon. member that in every enterprise sold there has been no reduction of the capital payment. In a number of cases an extension of time has been granted, enabling the purchasers to make lighter payments at the present time. We have endeavoured to meet our clients in a reasonable way, and treat them in accordance with ordinary business ethics. A number of men who contracted in good faith to pay certain sums of money have found that, through economic circumstances, they cannot meet these payments in full, and relief has been given in the direction indicated. In no instance, however, has the capital indebtedness been reduced. I venture to say that any other person occupying my position would have done likewise in the circumstances.

Mr. BEDFORD: Any other person would not have sold the Babinda State hotel.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: No person can suggest that we gave away the State hotel at Babinda.

Mr. BEDFORD: Of course you did.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: I am afraid the gentleman who purchased it is in a fix now. The Government have agreed to reduce his payments and spread them over a longer period; but the original purchase price has not been reduced.

Mr. BEDFORD: You sold it in the first place to a man of straw.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: I do not know why the hon. member for Warrego should have an objection to the person who purchased it. All I can say is that that gentleman is honouring his obligations to the Government. He has paid us many thousands of pounds, and I have no reason to doubt but that he will maintain his obligations.

Mr. BEDFORD: Don't be foolish! I have no objection to him.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: The hon. member for Cairns, who knows the position, is quite fair, and he is not so concerned about getting a little political capital as is the hon. member for Warrego.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: I am not objecting to you giving extended time for payment. You have to do that or sell them up.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: That is quite true, but the hon. member for Townsville asked a question

as to whether the full purchase money was being paid, and I mention exactly what is being done.

Mr. HYNES: You are making an unfair comparison. You are comparing those we sold with those sold after you came into power. The whole of the purchase price was paid in regard to those sold by the Labour Government.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: I very much doubt it.

Mr. STOPFORD: What were the profits in the different shops? That has some bearing on the question.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: If that information will be of interest to the hon. member, I will get it for the Committee stage. The only reason I have given these comparative figures is to answer the argument that we gave the State enterprises away to our friends. Then it must be borne in mind that we get interest on the money which is outstanding. This is an advantage, as previously it was a dead loss, and, in addition, we are getting taxes where profits are being made, which previously we were not getting, and in some cases the local authorities are getting rates, which they did not get before. Under the circumstances it can be said that the liquidation was carried out at an opportune time and was carried out successfully so far as the present Government are concerned, and I can assure everyone concerned that there was no favouritism and that in every case the enterprises were sold to the highest bidder.

The sum total of the whole of this experiment has been a loss to the public of £1,768,462, and, before they are all wound up, it is certain that the final loss will be over £2,000,000. There are the losses in connection with State enterprises under the State Enterprises Act. There are other losses on other enterprises which swell that amount very considerably. We have gone through a phase of Queensland history in which this socialistic scheme was dangled before the people purely to secure votes; and to-day, in the hour of our greatest financial depression, we have to pay over £2,000,000 for that experiment. What would have been the value of that money to-day? We could have done much with that money.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: What would have been the amount of your deficit?

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: A portion of the deficit is for interest on that money; and it will be an obligation for years to come. It is very unfair for the Opposition, and particularly the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, to refer to the people who lend money to Governments as interest mongers, when these very people lent this money to the hon. member's Government to carry on these experiments. To say the least of it, it is very bad taste to abuse the people who lent them the money to make the experiment which has ended so disastrously, and for which the community have to pay year in and year out. All that money has to be added to the national debt of this State; and it will take many years to liquidate it. Every man, woman, and child in this State, for many years to come, will have to make their modest contribution to the revenue of the State to pay for this experiment. There may be some things upon which Govern-

ments may embark and end in financial disaster, but for which a case may be made out, because it may, for instance, be some project for bringing about closer settlement. There may be some argument in favour of an endeavour to develop the country; but there could be no argument in this case, when the scheme did not in any way create a new asset or produce new wealth. The late Government simply took over existing organisations, which at the time were paying; and the experiment ended in complete disaster to the community.

There is one thing which should be remembered in this debate, and that is, that the people have to pay for those losses.

Mr. HYNES: That applies to your deficits

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: A portion of those deficits is attributable to the losses on State enterprises. We have to honour the agreement with the people who lent the Labour Government the money which was spent in this unwise way. There is no objection to a loan policy if the money is invested in reproductive channels and it will pay interest and redemption; but there is distinct harm and eventually financial disaster in borrowing money at high rates and spending it in State enterprises which have to be liquidated and the debt passed on to the community with no assets to show for it. One of the tendencies in regard to State Governments in the past, irrespective of what party has been in power, has been to err in the same direction. Although the banks have been doing wonderful things for the community, one of the objections I had against them in the past was that they made it much too easy for Governments and individuals to get money. When times were booming, they lent money too easily. One of the troubles of Australia was that the people overseas made it easy for Governments to get money and put it into undertakings such as the State enterprises we have had in Queensland.

There was an argument used yesterday—I believe by the hon. member for Townsville—to the effect that, as a result of this policy of liquidating the State butcher shops, the community had been penalised so far as the cost of meat was concerned. He also inferred that, while these shops were in existence, they were carried on for the benefit of the community, and the prices of meat were always kept down. Let us see whether that was the case. It has not a very big bearing on this debate, I confess; but, as the inference is going to be drawn, it is just as well to state the facts. The hon. member said the State butcher shops always kept the prices of meat down. In May, 1923, the State butcher shop in Charleville applied for an increase in the price of meat, but no increase was granted. In January, 1926, the State butcher shop in Mackay, acting in conjunction with other butchers, applied for an increase in the price of beef and mutton, and the application was granted. In November, 1926, the State butcher shop, in conjunction with other butchers at Gladstone, applied for the right to increase the price of beef in that centre, and the price was increased. In February, 1927, the State butcher shop, in conjunction with other butchers at Maryborough, applied for the right to increase the prices of meat there, and the prices were increased.

Mr. BEDFORD: Increased from what to what?

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The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: The prices were increased; and they were increased because of the application by the State butcher shop acting in conjunction with other butchers. I do not say that they did anything wrong. They took the only businesslike course open to them; but that destroys the argument that prices were kept down because State butcher shops were in existence.

I have shown that these shops, acting in conjunction with private shops, applied for the right to increase their prices, and that that right was granted. It is ridiculous to say that the State butcher shops were responsible for keeping down prices. In January, 1926, the State butcher shop at Maryborough applied for the right to increase the price of beef and mutton by 1d. per lb. on the ground that the business for the previous six months had shown a loss of £525 4s. That action was quite all right. That was a business way of dealing with the matter; but it is merely a political

argument to say that the State butcher shops always kept down meat prices when, in fact, the same shops increased the prices.

I have prepared a statement based on the figures of the Commonwealth Statistician showing the retail prices of meat in Brisbane for certain quarters of 1925, 1929, and 1931. I should like to have those figures inserted in "Hansard" without being read, if the Leader of the Opposition offers no objection.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: I have no objection, provided you supply me with a copy after you have used the figures.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: I will do that.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is it the will of the House that the Minister be allowed to insert the table in "Hansard"?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: This is the table—

MEAT, BRISBANE—RULING RETAIL PRICES—COMMONWEALTH STATISTICIAN'S RETURNS.

Commodity.	1926.		1929.		1931.	
	March Quarter.		March Quarter.	June Quarter.	March Quarter.	September Quarter.
	d.		d.	d.	d.	d.
Beef, Sirloin	8-45		8-45	8-40	8-15	7-23
" Ribs	5-45		5-90	5-80	5-60	4-65
" Flank	4-71		3-70	3-70	4-06	3-00
" Shin	3-40		3-70	3-70	3-65	3-35
Steak, Rump	10-60		11-15	11-15	11-10	9-60
" Shoulder	5-10		5-70	5-65	5-70	4-85
" Stewing	4-75		4-70	4-65	4-45	3-90
Beef, Corned Roll	7-60		7-80	7-80	7-25	6-15
" Brisket, with bone	3-89		4-00	3-95	3-61	2-88
" Brisket, without bone	5-75		5-80	5-75	5-55	4-80
Mutton, Leg	9-15		8-15	8-20	5-95	5-50
" Shoulder	6-55		5-55	5-55	3-70	3-00
" Loin	9-20		8-05	8-20	5-50	4-80
" Neck	8-56		3-70	3-70	1-89	1-75
Chops, Loin	9-45		8-50	8-40	6-00	5-40
" Leg	9-45		8-55	8-45	6-15	5-55
" Neck	9-15		6-35	6-20	4-30	3-90
Pork, Leg	12-33		12-20	11-95	9-50	8-60

Note all round reductions in prices since June quarter, 1929—after State Butcheries closed in 1929.

The public have not been penalised since the sale of State butcher shops; in fact, the prices are lower to-day than they were during the existence of those shops.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: Because of the fall in price levels due to reduced wages.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: I could quote the figures further back; but the fact remains that the public have not been penalised in any shape or form by the sale of these State enterprises.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: You should take into consideration the wages level in the respective years.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: The Bill provides for the taking over of the officers of the State Trade Office.

I desire to make a statement in reference to the Commissioner for Trade. I have the greatest admiration for that officer; and it is very unfair that a newspaper like "Smith's Weekly" should make the assertion that he

has been in the receipt of a certain allowance in connection with the work of State enterprises, when, as a matter of fact, that statement is totally untrue. "Smith's Weekly" made the statement that the Commissioner for Trade was in receipt of a certain annual allowance for discharging duties in connection with State enterprises which did not now exist. It is because I feel that an injustice has been done to the Commissioner that I am making this statement to the House. An allowance of £250 per annum was paid to the Commissioner for discharging duties in connection with the State enterprises; but that amount has not been paid since 1928-29. For the year 1929-30 the allowance was reduced to £200, and, as from 1st July last, it was further reduced to £150. The amount actually paid to the Commissioner last year, with the salary reductions, was £120, whilst the automatic increase of £50 to which he was entitled to as Under Secretary of the Department of Labour and Industry was withheld; therefore, instead of receiving this alleged allowance of £250, he was considerably worse off

[Hon. H. E. Sizer.

than formerly. I regret that such an injustice should be done the Commissioner at a time when much important work is being discharged in the liquidation of the State enterprises.

There is still much remaining to be done in looking after the interests of the State. Last year we collected £124,442 13s. 7d. under the realisation scheme. In the same period we also had control of the Hamilton cold stores, which exhibited a profit of £1,200, while the profit on the State fish markets was £1,036. In view of these facts, it is unfair that a conscientious public officer should be maligned and belittled by a newspaper on wrong statements. As every hon. member knows, a public servant so attacked cannot reply.

Another provision in the Bill provides for the admission into the public service of the officials formerly engaged in the office of the Commissioner for Trade, who are now officers of the Department of Labour and Industry. When the Bill is in Committee, I intend to move an amendment to reduce the period of seven years' employment to five years. That is to provide for one officer. As the interest in State enterprises began to wane, the officers were absorbed in the Department of Labour and Industry. At the time of their appointment they all came under the State Enterprises Act, and were, therefore, not public servants in the strict sense of the term, although for many years they have been officers of the Department of Labour and Industry, and are still engaged in the work of liquidating State enterprises which have been realised upon. It would be grossly unfair to those men and women who have given ten or twelve years' service in the office to deprive them of the opportunity of continuing to carry out their duties, which they are doing most efficiently. This action will, I am sure, be regarded by the Leader of the Opposition as reasonable, and will not be opposed.

MR. W. FORGAN SMITH: So long as you are treating them all alike.

THE SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: I can assure the hon. gentleman that every employee in the head office will come under the provisions of this Bill, and that they will continue to hold the positions they are now holding. The accountant, chief clerk, and secretary are still filling the same offices as they have been doing for the past ten or twelve years.

The hon. member for Gregory could not understand the necessity for the repeal of "The State Enterprises Act of 1918" in order to dissolve the corporation of the Commissioner for Trade and to constitute a new corporation in view of the fact that Mr. Austin would still be carrying on as a new corporation. The reason is that the Government, in accordance with their policy, feel that that Act should be taken off the statute-book. If after the tragic experience of State enterprises any subsequent Government decides to re-embark on these undertakings, it will be within their province to do so; but they will have to pass a Bill through Parliament, and be subjected to the criticism of Parliament and of the public for so doing. If this Bill did not repeal the existing Act, a subsequent Government could carry on the State Trade Department, quite unknown to the public and without the necessity for a special Act of Parliament.

The necessity for the constitution of a new corporation is apparent in view of the assets that are in course of liquidation. Someone has to liquidate those assets. No better person could be found than Mr. Austin, who has been associated with them in his capacity as Commissioner for Trade. The Bill is really making Mr. Austin the liquidator of what is in effect a defunct company. It is specially provided that the assets held by the new corporation shall be held for the purpose of liquidation only. The Government desire to emphasise that, for as long a period as possible, the people of Queensland shall not have another State Trade Department. We have done our duty as we conceive it, and in this Bill the definite line of policy of the Government is to wipe out the State enterprises and to liquidate them as speedily as possible.

I cannot imagine what attitude the Opposition will adopt in this measure. In view of the fact that they commenced to liquidate some of these enterprises before they relinquished office, I cannot imagine that any opposition will be forthcoming in that direction. Nor can any criticism be directed at the method of liquidation adopted. Furthermore, it is hardly likely that the Opposition will cavil at the action of the Government in protecting the officers of this department. Certainly, if hon. members opposite ever again assume the Treasury benches, they will require to pass a Bill through this Parliament before embarking on any State enterprise. They may be entitled to criticise the action of the Government in that direction; but in the light of actual history, I think that any attempt on their part to reinstitute State enterprises would spell their doom as a political party. They are in the position of Socialists who have carried out an elaborate experiment and have been convinced at first hand that Socialism is not practicable. After their abandonment of some of their State enterprises themselves, they will find it difficult to explain to this Committee and even to their own supporters the meaning of the plank in the Labour platform which refers to the socialisation of industry. I beg to move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

MR. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*) [8.24]: I have listened with more than usual interest to the speech of the Secretary for Labour and Industry. It is interesting to know that, while members of the Ministry generally are very shy and unobtrusive so far as public political meetings are concerned, yet they hope to have a certain amount of influence by making political speeches here to-night. The difference between hon. members opposite and members of this party is that members of this party can go on any platform in any part of Queensland and place their case before the public, while Ministers show a great reluctance in doing so.

The Secretary for Labour and Industry referred in his concluding remarks to what he called experiments in Socialism. He apparently does not understand—or, if he does, he ignores it—that there has been no real experiment in Socialism in Queensland as far as the enterprises under review are concerned. There is a vast difference between experiments in State collectivism and the principle enunciated by Socialists generally. In the only country in the world

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where Socialism has been tried it is having a very profound effect on the world's history at the present time. Whether they like it or not, every modern investigator realises that the experiment now being carried out in Russia is the most important and far-reaching economic drama that has been played in the world's history. To argue that State enterprises, whether they are successful or not, have any bearing on the case for Socialism indicates a complete lack of knowledge on the subject.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: Your own book called it "Socialism at Work."

Several hon. members interjected.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: While I am able to look after my own interests I would remind hon. members generally that, as Leader of the Opposition, I have a good deal more work to do than the average hon. member, whether he be a Minister or otherwise; and I would suggest that it is not playing the game to attempt to interfere in the making of a speech such as I am making at the present time. In any case, whether they desire it or not, I intend to deal with this Bill and reply to the Minister in my own way in the time at my disposal.

The State enterprises were an experiment in State collectivism. Whether they were successful or otherwise is no argument against the principle. Because recently a number of business firms in Queensland have gone into liquidation or compounded with their creditors, is that a valid argument against the system of capitalism or individualism? Would anyone argue against the company laws of Queensland because a large number of firms recently have not been able to pay their own way? To argue in that fashion is to argue contrary to the facts. The success or otherwise of capitalism or State collectivism is determined, first of all, on the basis on which they are established and the efficiency with which they are conducted. That is a test that can be applied to both; but their success or failure is no argument against the principle. The State enterprises of Queensland were established under the State Enterprises Act. This Bill proposes to repeal that Act so that in future any State undertaking that may be established will be subject to a special and new statute. I have no objection to that proposal, for the simple reason that any definite undertaking of an important character should have the protection of a statute. We have the Railways Act protecting the railway undertaking, and setting out its powers and functions. We have the Insurance Act and the Public Curator Act setting out the powers and duties of those authorities. It is a protection to the undertakings and a guarantee to the public that they are established under a given statute; and there is this further point that I wish to make, that, if at any time in the future I have control over the establishment of State undertakings, they will be established on a sound legislative basis, and will be given all the powers and authorities that are necessary or desirable in order that they may be carried on successfully.

At 8.30 p.m.,

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*), one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, relieved Mr. Speaker in the chair.

[*Mr. Smith.*

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: One of the difficulties inseparable from State enterprises is that, by their very nature, they assume a political character. For example, if the criticism which was levelled against State butcher shops was levelled against private butchers operating in the same way, the same undesirable result would have taken place, with this difference that an individual would have power to protect himself in the courts against libel. But it would be a very difficult thing indeed for a Commissioner for Trade, who was a public servant, to obtain a verdict in the courts when any libellous or untrue statement was made against him. The Minister referred to that to-night. During the existence of the State enterprises they were assailed in a political fashion; and, if the same propaganda were carried on against a private firm or undertaking, it would have tremendously damaging results on that private firm or undertaking. Consequently, in the establishment of any form of State undertaking in the future, it would be advisable that those who establish them should give them protection from unfair criticism in the way of propaganda that could be used against them in the carrying on of their duties and functions.

In the course of his remarks, the Minister referred to the sale of the State enterprises by his Government. I have never objected to the Government carrying out the policy for which they obtained a mandate. If they are returned to power, and definitely intimate that they are opposed to certain things, they have a perfect right to carry out their own policy; but my criticism of the Government in connection with the sale of those undertakings—or, if the Minister prefers his own term, the liquidation of those undertakings—is in regard to the methods they adopted in carrying them out. There is a vast difference between a forced sale and the sale of an enterprise as a going concern. The Premier visited Sydney very shortly after his accession to office, and at a dinner given by some of his admirers in the Hotel Australia, when dealing with the matter of State enterprises, he said, "The Government intend to get rid of them." A very fine method of obtaining a good sale for anything that you have got. I cannot imagine anyone who had a house, a horse, a car, or anything to sell, going round telling people, "I must get rid of this." If the Premier went round Brisbane saying that he must get rid of his house or something that he owned, the price quoted to him would be a very low price indeed.

The PREMIER: I did not say "must."

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: But on the other hand, if a seller says he is prepared to dispose of an undertaking provided he gets a fair price for it, that is an entirely different matter. I state definitely here to-night that the Government could have got considerably enhanced prices for a number of those enterprises if they had intimated in the beginning that they would not sell unless they obtained what they considered to be a fair value for the undertaking.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: I did make that statement.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: I want to be fair to the Minister. In the beginning the

view was that those enterprises were going to be sold at all costs; and it played into the Government's hands to sell them at as low a figure as possible, because by that means they were able to use that as propaganda against a line of activity to which they were at all times opposed.

Take, for example, the State cannery, which was sold for approximately £30,000.

Mr. DUFFY: Take the Babinda hotel.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: We drove a hard bargain there, no doubt. In connection with the State cannery, the stock and material on hand was valued by the department at over £20,000. The land, buildings, railway siding, and other assets were, therefore, sold for approximately £10,000. A few years ago the jam combine offered to purchase the State cannery for £50,000; and I am satisfied that, if the late Government had been prepared to sell, a higher figure could have been obtained. At that time the State cannery was the sole competitor on a large scale with the jam combine; and jam was being sold in Queensland at approximately 1d. per lb. less than it was being sold in other States. The jam combine would have been glad to purchase this undertaking, if only to close it down, so that it might obtain in Queensland the prices that were being obtained in other States. Had the Government indicated that, unless they obtained a fair price for the undertaking based on a fair valuation, they would continue to operate, a higher price would have been received.

The same thing holds good with quite a number of other State enterprises. The State joinery works at Ipswich road engaged in the manufacture of joinery, in plumbing work, and other requisites of the building trade. These works were closed down and the employees paid off. Then the Government proposed to sell the works. Naturally, they did not obtain a very high price, because they could obtain only scrap value for what they offered for sale. If the Government had said, "We are prepared to sell the undertaking as a going concern; but, if we do not get a fair price, we will continue to operate," a fair price would have been speedily forthcoming, and the Government would have obtained a higher price than was eventually realised.

THE SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: Why?

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: The people who desired to obtain control of this business would have quite readily paid the price asked, so that they might control the business themselves. It is a well-recognised practice in the sale of anything that, if you depreciate your own asset, you suffer the penalty yourself. During the whole time that hon. members opposite sat in opposition and later on when they became the Government, they carried on a form of propaganda which depreciated these assets in the public mind; and, when they attempted to sell them, they received a lesser price than would otherwise have been obtained.

Mr. KELSO: They received more than they would get to-day.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: The interjection is entirely irrelevant. I would have got 50 per cent. more for a house three years ago than I could get for it to-day. The difficulty to-day is to sell anything, particu-

larly for cash. You cannot compare the conditions of the present day with the conditions that obtained a few years ago. That is the objection that I have to certain figures quoted by the Minister in relation to the prices of meat ruling in 1925 and in 1929. The price level for cattle and sheep is entirely different to-day. Compare the prices ruling for sheep in 1925 and the prices that have ruled during recent months. That is one of the arguments that the Government are using in favour of the policy of extension of pastoral leases. To-day it is possible to get sheep for a mere song compared with the prices paid in 1926. Wages are considerably lower, and the cost of all materials used in the various undertakings is considerably lower to-day. If all factors are taken into consideration with a view to fixing a fair price—I believe in a fair price; I believe that things can be too cheap as well as too dear—the prices of meat and mutton should be cheaper to-day than they were in 1926, whether the meat is sold by private enterprise or by a State undertaking.

In dealing with this problem the Government very carefully omit to deal with other forms of State collectivism. Take the Commonwealth Bank as a case in point. Everything that has been said about State enterprises was said about the establishment of the Commonwealth Bank by the Commonwealth Labour Government of which Mr. Fisher was Prime Minister. I can remember the debate in the Federal Parliament, and the articles that appeared in the newspapers. We were told that, if the Government interfered with banking in any fashion whatsoever, disaster would overtake the Commonwealth. The Federal note issue was referred to contemptuously as "Fisher's Fiascos." Sir Joseph Cook, the then Leader of the Opposition in the House of Representatives, said that the people would soon be able to buy a barrow-load of those notes for a few shillings. The Commonwealth Bank has been a success from its very inception. During the war period it rendered service of the most extreme value to Australia.

Mr. KELSO: With the help of the associated banks.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: To-day it is the soundest financial institution in the Commonwealth.

THE SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: There is no political control exercised over the Commonwealth Bank.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: From 1912 up to 1924 the Commonwealth Bank was subject to the control of the Governor-General in Council. The Governor-General in Council appointed the late Sir Denison Miller as the first Governor of the bank.

Mr. KELSO: The Government never interfered with the bank.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: In 1924 the Bruce-Page Government amended the law, and established the Commonwealth Bank Board. They gave the bank increased functions; and to a large extent it became a trading bank associated with the private trading banks; but, as an example of a State enterprise, it stands supreme throughout the world to-day. Notwithstanding all the disasters that were predicted, and not taking into account the advantages, which cannot be calculated, to the Commonwealth

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by the stabilisation of finance on the crude and sordid basis of profit, its profits to date, including the note issue, amount to £27,000,000.

Will anyone say that the Queensland State Government Insurance Office is not a sound undertaking? Yet we know the opposition which the Labour Government met with when they established that State enterprise. You, Mr. Maxwell, were not in Parliament at that time. Your predecessor, Sir Edward Macartney, was then Leader of the Opposition. The Act which established this department was fought with unprecedented bitterness. Members of Parliament received telegrams from interested parties from all over the State asking them to oppose certain clauses. The most expert lawyers that could be obtained were selected by the Opposition to assist in drafting amendments and presenting a case against the Bill. Later on the Bill went to the Legislative Council, and was to some extent mutilated there. After a good deal of difficulty and negotiations, it was finally passed; but those opposed to it were not satisfied even then. Litigation was instituted in the Supreme Court. It was then taken to the High Court of Australia, and finally to the Privy Council. The Government of the day won; and the State Government Insurance Office was established with a monopoly of workers' compensation insurance business. Those hon. members who complain about the creation of that monopoly in this department do not appear to realise that that is the basis on which the success or otherwise of the State abattoir was founded. The present Government took no risks in that State enterprise. No one can compete with the State abattoir, which has power to charge the public such a price for its services as to make it impossible to show a trading loss. In addition to the State Government Insurance Office having a monopoly of workers' compensation business, it was successful when it entered the arena of fire insurance business, in reducing those premiums by from 25 per cent. to 33½ per cent. In order to compete successfully with the State Government Insurance Office all other insurance companies had to reduce their premiums. The then Insurance Commissioner, Mr. Goodwyn, estimated that the saving to insurers thereby approximated £200,000 per annum. Taking the period under review, namely fifteen years, that represented a saving to the public in premiums of £3,000,000, quite apart from any profits that the State Government Insurance Office made in that time. That department has justified its establishment, and has been of advantage to the State. Not only has it paid its way, but it has reduced the cost of insurance services to the public of Queensland.

The PREMIER: Rubbish!

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: The hon. gentleman is probably a good judge of that, because he is associated with so much of it from day to day; but he cannot answer my case merely by a bald statement of that nature.

The PREMIER: I can answer it by figures.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: No matter what may be said about this department, and no matter what the present Government may have done in the direction of undermining its influence in order to assist private

insurance companies, the State Government Insurance Office is a bulwark to the State and a standing monument to the enterprise of the Labour Government.

The PREMIER: The premiums are double what they were previously.

At 8.51 p.m.,

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: I can also cite the advantage accruing from the establishment of the Public Curator's Office. In many other directions also advantage has accrued to the general public from these undertakings. It is well to remember that, when the State butcher shops were in operation, the people of Queensland obtained their meat at a lower average price than has been the case since, and at a considerably lower price than in any other part of the Commonwealth. (Government dissent.) Every hon. member knows that immediately a State butcher shop was disposed of the price of meat in the area concerned increased considerably. (Government dissent.)

Reference has been made to the Mackay State butcher shops. They were established on a sound basis on a low capitalisation. Immediately it was known that it was intended to open State butcher shops there, the price of meat decreased by 1d. per lb.; and, by the time the shops were actually in operation, an all-round decrease of 2d. per lb. had taken place. The classic example occurred at Cairns. There, after it was announced that on a given date State butcher shops would operate in the district, the local butchers published a statement in the local press to this effect—

"Owing to the bountiful season that a beneficent Providence has bestowed upon us, on and after . . . we will be able to reduce the price of meat by 2d. per lb."

While they had a monopoly, these private establishments charged high prices, but immediately there was mention of a State butcher shop opening in the district, a reduction in the price of meat took place. Those are facts that are not generally disclosed. In reference to State collectivism generally, these enterprises suffered on the basis of the malicious political propaganda with which they were surrounded.

One important party in the State opposed them in every possible way. They were the subject of controversy from day to day throughout the State; and no business of any kind is likely to be a success if it is subject to political controversy. Members of Parliament would be put up to ask what price the State Butchery Department had offered for a given lot of sheep. Other questions would be asked about some other business undertaking of the department—all done with the desire to injure the State enterprise, and with a view to giving information to its competitors. What business could stand that? What business could stand all its trading transactions being published for its competitors to know? Every effort that could be made by a base and sordid party to undermine the State enterprises was made. Every expedient was used to destroy them. Men who were on the staff of the department were even approached with a view to giving information to their competitors and disclosing the business of the department. One of the inspectors of State stations that I found it necessary to

[Mr. Smith.

dismiss had been handing copies of the files of the department to political organisations while a servant of the State. All that kind of thing went on; and I say very definitely that if, in future, I have anything to do with the establishment of an enterprise based on State collectivism, I will have it established on a basis that will make it free from that form of activity which is calculated to undermine and destroy it.

Mr. COSTELLO: You will never touch them again.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: I never established any. The Minister knows that most of the undertakings—pretty well all of them—were established before I became a Minister.

THE SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: You were an enthusiastic supporter of them.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: I was a supporter of quite a number of things; and I am still a supporter of a number of ideals that are worth while. I believe as firmly in certain principles to-day as I did thirty years ago; but I realise that their establishment is a more difficult task than I thought in those days, but because of that I am not in any way discouraged. The Minister, in his desire to back up Mr. Latham, made a speech that probably will appear in extenso in to-morrow's newspapers. While he endeavoured to present a case against State enterprises, the indictment that I can present against the form of capitalism that rules the world to-day is a stronger indictment than anything that can be used against any policy for which the Labour Party stands. Take the condition of the world to-day. Banking, the control of finance, exchange, and credits generally are in the hands of private enterprise. If you could get really into the inside of things, you would find that very few persons indeed control the finance of the world to-day; and, according to their success or otherwise in the carrying out of their powers and authorities, so does the whole economic world react. The control of modern economic conditions every year is getting into fewer hands. The system of joint stock companies that has been built up enables a few people to control the capital of a large number of people; and the power that these individuals wield is out of all proportion to any power and authority that has ever been wielded by any democratic Government.

The hon. member for Nundah says those men are the brains of the community. They are the cream of society, the men in whose being everything else moves, lives, and has its being. Will the hon. member say that, because certain banks were in difficulties in Brisbane, that is an argument against the form of ownership of those banks? Will he say that, because two banks closed their doors in Brisbane and in Queensland generally, that would be a fair argument to use against private banking? He would probably say that the conditions which now obtain have brought about their failure. In the same way, the conditions that produced the failure of State enterprises would produce difficulties in regard to other enterprises.

Hon. members opposite talk of State stations. Have we not heard here for days during this session members of the Government justifying the granting of concessions to pastoralists, on the ground that these

people are almost down and out? If there is anything in their argument, then the losses that were made on State stations were common to industry generally, and had nothing to do with any question of policy.

To hark back to the argument used by the hon. member for Nundah that those in control of private enterprise are the intellectual cream of the world, we can only come to the conclusion that they have made a very sorry job of it. The system that they stand for breeds wars, loss, and every form of evil. We have the form of evil which operates in Australia to-day, where thousands of people are unemployed, and want, disorder, and stark famine are a spectre hovering over every household. In the United States of America, which is the classic example of modern capitalism, with all its efficiency in industry and the rationalisation of industry that hon. members opposite prate so often about, there are millions of people unemployed, and the number of those on the bread line is greater than it has ever been. We have President Hoover recommending a form of issue of credits to industry to save the nation from the difficulties that are about to overtake it; we have Germany on the verge of collapse; and France in little better condition. Great Britain is confronting the greatest crisis probably in its history. All those things have been brought about by this system of private enterprise—private ownership—capitalism that hon. members opposite prate so much about. No system can live unless it supplies the needs of the people that it is supposed to serve. Under modern conditions, inventive genius applied to industry and science to agricultural production proceeds apace; the world can produce in a few months more than the people of the world can consume; and, side by side with abundance of production, warehouses loaded with goods and with everything that is necessary for human wellbeing, we have the eternal paradox in every country in the world of thousands of people on the verge of starvation.

Mr. MAHER: Not in this country.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: That is the system for which hon. members opposite stand. It is the system they have lived to bring about and perpetuate. In the "Telegraph" this afternoon will be found the following statement:—

"London, 9th December.

"If my information is correct nothing can prevent a complete world breakdown within two months," said Sir George Paish, the noted economist, in a speech to-day. "America's situation is infinitely graver than Britain's, and the condition of France is exceedingly grave. We must call the nations together to consider the position."

"Reparations," continued Sir George, "should be abolished or reduced to such an extent that nobody will mind them. The inter-allied debts should be abolished, and the United States should forgive the £50,000,000 due to her every year from debts. The world's tariffs must come down. America's tariff policy deliberately drove the world into bankruptcy so far as she is concerned. Now Britain has introduced a tariff, preventing debtors from paying, and making world bankruptcy absolutely inevitable. Her policy is the greatest folly conceivable."

Mr. Smith.]

All those conditions obtain in the countries where conservatism and private enterprise have reached their very peak.

The United States of America is the world's greatest example of efficient capitalism, if such a thing can be described as efficient; yet that country is incapable of dealing with the situation. All the countries of the world are drifting onwards, ever onwards, towards collapse, despair, and everything it involves. They have no remedy at all. Micawber-like, they are waiting for something to turn up. Hon. members opposite have tried their remedy, with results that are well known. Every member of Parliament and every member of the community in Queensland knows that the conditions of the people in this country have deteriorated immensely since the present Government placed their hands on the affairs of State. Whatever the Minister or his supporters may say about State enterprises, the fact remains that during that period the people of Queensland were the best paid in the Commonwealth. They were better fed and better clothed than they ever were before, or have been since.

Mrs. LONGMAN: They are paying for it.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: The hon. member for Bulimba is one who voted to reduce the allowance for State children by 1s. per week. One can understand the dislike of members of the Government to hearing the facts. The facts of the situation are as I have set them out, and the responsibility rests with the Government Party and on the system for which they stand. It is up to them to justify the conditions that obtain under capitalism and under private enterprise. Those conditions are unemployment, starvation, lack of confidence, and lack of security for the great mass of the people of this State.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. DUNLOP (*Rockhampton*) [9.9]: I rose to speak on the initiatory stage of this Bill, but I was "gagged." I voted against the resolution, as a protest against being "gagged," and because the Minister did not make known the contents of the Bill. I voted with the Government on previous occasions for the sale of State stations and the abolition of other State enterprises. I offer no apology for that. I am satisfied that the Labour Government were sincere when they embarked on State enterprises as a State experiment. It is necessary to try a project before one can say definitely whether it will succeed or fail. The State Government Insurance Office and the Commonwealth Bank have proved wonderful institutions, and there is no suggestion that they should be abolished. I intend to support the second reading of this Bill. I rose particularly to explain why I voted against the introduction of the Bill, and why I now propose to vote for the second reading. I am satisfied that the Leader of the Opposition was quite sincere in the views that he has set forth and in his remarks concerning the experiment of State enterprises. All the great nations of the world are now facing financial collapse. Unlike others, I am quite satisfied that the Leader of the Opposition is quite sincere in his remarks, and that there is a lot of truth in the contentions he put forward. No matter how bitter my political opponents may be, I always believe in playing fair. I voted

[*Mr. Smith.*

against State enterprises in the first instance because I do not believe in the principle.

The annual report of the Commissioner for Trade upon the State Trade Department for the year ended 30th June, 1931, is practically self-explanatory. It shows the great losses which have accrued from the establishment of State enterprises. In the light of those facts, no sensible public man would stand for such a policy, and they were rightly abolished. I do not believe in disparaging remarks being made regarding political opponents, because there are times when a business man must speculate in order to accumulate. Sometimes such a policy comes off. The State Government Insurance Office has proved a great success, showing that, if the same business acumen had been displayed in the management of some of the other State enterprises, their failure might have been avoided.

Mr. BEDFORD (*Warrego*) [9.14]: The objection generally to this Bill is that it is the last effort of a Government animated by an insensate hatred of everything that their predecessors did, and who intend to get rid of all State enterprises, if at a loss then so much the better, for the sake of political propaganda. They closed the State butcher shops, although their result to 30th June last, as published in the annual report of the State Trade Department, was a profit of £20,437, without taking into consideration the indirect profit to the people represented by the lowering of the general cost of living.

The railway refreshment rooms profited to the extent of £135,752, and the Babinda State hotel, which has been thrown away, profited to the extent of £62,188.

In the case of the State joinery works it was shown in the report the year the present Government took office that there was a stock worth £35,000 which was sold at a loss because the Government insisted on going immediately out of the day-labour system in public works in favour of the contract system. Wherever it has been possible to give a black eye to the previous Government, caring not for the result on the finances of the country—it was done independent of every consideration—the present Government have gone out of their way to do so. The State joinery works, for instance, were offered for sale for nothing as part of the prospectus of the old, unlamented Renown Rubber Company. They were able to state, as part of the tremendous work this businesslike Government had done, that the fee-simple value of the land was £13,000, which, calculated at 5 per cent. per annum on the basis of twenty years' purchase, would be £650 a year rent, but they were content to let the Renown Rubber Company have it for £250. That great private enterprise could not cough up that £250 a year, which was £400 lower than the lowest possible consideration based on the true value.

Mr. TRUMAN: It would be very hard to get.

Mr. BEDFORD: You get next to nothing once you take away from a concern its legitimate use. For instance, it would be very hard to get any rental for Parliament House if the Government were to close Parliament House and hand over the control of the country to private enterprise, consisting of three or four people in Terrica House.

Once you take away the legitimate use of any concern, the natural earning result will be very little. There are two or three things that the people of Australia will never believe. Henry of Navarre said he could not get Europe to believe two things—one, that he was a sincere Catholic, and the other that Elizabeth of England was a virgin.

It would be utterly impossible for the Government to make anybody believe that, in getting rid of State enterprises, they have been actuated by any other than the meanest form of political propaganda. It would be utterly impossible to make anybody believe that they, who are so tremendously virtuous on paper are so vicious in action. The hon. member for Nundah is one of them—he is always lauding his tremendous virtue here, despite the fact that in a class of private enterprise in which he is engaged he insists that, on the amalgamation of the Queensland Deposit Bank, Limited, with the Brisbane Permanent Building and Banking Company, Limited, he shall get as a retiring director four years' director's fees while the retiring clerks get six months' wages.

Mr. KELSO: That is absolutely untrue.

Mr. BEDFORD: It is quite true.

Mr. KELSO: It is not.

Mr. BEDFORD: The mere fact that it was not reported at a recent meeting is only a proof that the press of this State will not give anybody outside the Government Party a fair deal.

Mr. KELSO: Mr. Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I insist on the hon. member for Warrego accepting my assurance that his statement is not correct.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member for Warrego must accept the statement of the hon. member for Nundah.

Mr. BEDFORD: I certainly accept the assurance, and retain my personal opinion.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. BEDFORD: I accept the assurance unreservedly.

What are these State enterprises? There are the railways, which no private enterprise will take on. Although it is a fact that that State enterprise is part of the working plant of a huge public estate, which the Government are trying to give away at any price in order to placate this most famished, fanatical Treasurer, there is still the fact that it does not pay any private enterprise to take on the work of the railways, which constitute a great development machinery of a large new country. Similarly, education will not pay private enterprise because it shows no book profit, and the people are prepared to leave it in public hands. So also with asylums and gaols. They are public enterprises, and, judging by a number of hon. members opposite, they are not quite as full—

Mr. MAHER: Do you mean the members or the asylums? (Laughter.)

Mr. BEDFORD: I mean the asylums. I do not propose to say anything which will bring me in conflict with the Chair, no matter what I may believe on the other point. (Laughter.)

Mr. MAHER: It was difficult to understand whether you meant that the members or the asylums were full.

Mr. BEDFORD: The asylums could not be full while the hon. member is at large.

In the case of war—the real cause of the present trouble—nobody ever attempts to leave it to private enterprise. In the beginning it was left to private enterprise, because nearly all the land of Britain and the various other countries, once feudal, was held on the understanding that the holders of it should provide so many soldiers for the general defence of the realm. By-and-bye, being secured in their holding of the land, these people put the defence of the realm upon the shoulders of people who did not have any land, so that the country then paid for its own defence, although in most cases it did not pay but allowed its soldiers to go to war without boots, and one might say without brains, otherwise they would not have gone. The scrapping of State enterprises has not gone so far as the State Government Insurance Office, although in intention it has been scrapped. Wherever it has been possible by new legislation, the present Government have wiped out any of the monopolies that we gave to the State Government Insurance Office. In respect of two or three Bills which have been introduced during the last fortnight I asked whether it would be obligatory with people having to insure to do so with the State Government Insurance Office. But here you have a brilliant lot of people running a business and saying in effect to the insurer, "We are running a store for the sale of insurance, but don't touch ours! Go to T. C. Beirne's or the Australian Mutual Provident Society!"

Mr. KELSO: The State Insurance Office is not a State enterprise.

Mr. BEDFORD: It is.

Mr. KELSO: It is a mutual life assurance company.

Mr. BEDFORD: It is a State enterprise. All the profits go to the State, which is the people. The Australian Mutual Provident Society cannot be called a mutual life assurance company, because it now goes in for industrial life assurance, which is a theft, and which is used to drag down the expense rate of the people who are running the higher class policies.

Mr. KELSO: The Australian Mutual Provident Society is the best example of mutual assurance in the world.

Mr. BEDFORD: If that is so, the hon. member is the best example of a retired bank director.

Mr. KELSO: You are getting personal.

Mr. BEDFORD: I hope to be. Supposing we take the instance of the insensate hatred of State enterprises of the present Government and regard the establishment by the Government of the abattoir—the taking of the old scrap-iron works that had been ten or twelve years out of commission and the recommissioning of those works—one naturally looks for graft. Not having a royal commission, one cannot be sure of tracking the graft to its source. That has been cut out just as it has been cut out in butterana, and so butterana may be left with butcherana. In this matter it is well to read a few

Mr. Bedford.]

remarks that appear in the worst paper in the world—the "Telegraph"—

"It is shown that the running of butcher shops, a fishery, a cannery, a produce agency, railway refreshment-rooms, a hotel at Babinda—"

Sacrificed!

"The cold stores at Hamilton—"

Sacrificed!

"and worst of all the cattle stations involve the taxpayers in this State in a loss of £1,763,462."

Let us regard the loss brought about by the misuse of such a State enterprise as the tariff. It is well known that the year preceding the year Mr. Bruce got into power, Paterson, Laing, and Bruce had a profit of £23,000. In the following six years Paterson, Laing, and Bruce made a total profit of £475,000. Then comes the time when Australia got rid of the Bruce-Page gang of drifters and wasters and sacked them.

Mr. KELSO: They raised the tariff.

Mr. BEDFORD: The Commonwealth Labour Government raised the tariff and saved Australia, and immediately Paterson, Laing, and Bruce's profits were turned into a loss of £144,000. One can naturally see why Mr. Bruce's proper position is to be left in England permanently as London buyer for his rag firm in Flinders lane.

Mr. KELSO: He will be Prime Minister again.

Mr. BEDFORD: Then you are going to scrap Lyons, the Labour rat? Once he has given a transfusion of blood to the dying cause he is going to be scrapped, and can go back to his proper place, which is wet-nursing his ten children—a private enterprise which nobody wishes to socialise. The position of State enterprise and private enterprise is shown generally in the position of the world. To-night the Secretary for Labour and Industry made a speech to bolster up his friends, Latham and Holy Joe Lyons and Bruce. There is one statement that the people of Australia will never believe. It is that the present Government were ever actuated by anything but mean political propaganda in disposing of State enterprises at any price.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY (Hon. H. E. Sizer, *Sandgate*) [8.27], in reply: The Leader of the Opposition accused me of making a political speech. I leave it to the House as to who made a political speech. It does seem that hon. members opposite are taking advantage of their position to make election speeches. There are some statements that I cannot allow to go unchallenged. First of all, I accept the hon. member's apology that he has not tried Socialism. The hon. member apologised and said that Socialism was not involved in State enterprises. He endeavoured to explain the difference between Socialism and State collectivism. There may be, but I say it was Socialism; and the best information in that regard is the book I have in my hand issued by the Government which the hon. gentleman supported and which established the State enterprises.

Mr. KELSO: What is it called?

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY—

"SOCIALISM AT WORK.

"Results of the Working of Various State Enterprises Established by the Queensland Government."

[*Mr. Bedford.*

On the fly-leaf are the words—

"How the Queensland Government succeeded in profitably establishing State ventures where the needs of the people called for State competition or State monopoly."

Some of the statements in that book are really remarkable. It is no use for the Leader of the Opposition saying that he has not tried Socialism in this State; it is absurd, and no one will believe him. His own party knows it; his own official documents show it. What is more, anyone can read from what he said throughout his speech that, if he becomes the Leader of a Government, he will re-establish the State enterprises. That is all the more reason why this Bill should be passed. He will establish them again on a different basis.

He referred to the Commonwealth Bank, but he failed to make the strong point that the strength of that bank is due to the fact that there is no political interference. He did not mention the fact that the New South Wales State savings bank, where there was political interference, was smashed. The same thing would happen to the Commonwealth Bank if hon. members opposite had control of it. The same thing would happen in this State if the hon. gentleman, by some misfortune, was returned to power at the head of the Government and again established these enterprises; there would be a further smash. It is quite clear from his speech that he intends to establish State enterprises again.

The Leader of the Opposition told us that capitalism had failed. We know that Socialism as set out in "Socialism at Work" failed, and we are burying it to-night. The records will not die—they will live on; but the sad part of them living on is that the women and children of this State have to pay. I much prefer to get money to find bread and work for the people to bolstering up the theory of collective socialism, or any other "ism," and then leaving the people to pay for it.

The hon. gentleman went round the world when speaking, but he did not tell us what solution he had to offer for the problem. He did not make one suggestion as to what he would do. Did he say that he would interfere with the Commonwealth Bank? Did he say that he would abolish capitalism? Did he attempt to abolish capitalism when he was in power? His party attempted, as set out in "Socialism at Work" to establish socialism, and we have to pay £2,000,000 as the result of it. Is that good business? Are the people of the State and the Commonwealth going to continue to follow a policy of that kind? Although we can see that the world is in turmoil, and that capitalism may have failed here and there, if one thing is more definite than another, it is that capitalism has succeeded. It may be dislocated; but socialism has failed wherever it has been tried and on every occasion.

Mr. HYNES: Where has it been tried?

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: The hon. member for Townsville will remember some of those enthusiastic Queenslanders who went overseas to Paraguay, and who after a time were very glad to see the Union Jack, so much despised by the hon. member for Warrego, coming to their rescue. That was a type of "New Australia" socialism, and it failed. The

only big experiment that so far has not failed is in Russia, and the hon. member mentioned it.

Mr. HYNES: It is not socialism in Russia! it is the negation of socialism.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: I believe that the hon. member for Bremer in one speech said that communism was a higher form of socialism. I candidly admit that the Australian Labour Party and hon. members opposite have no business in their socialisation of industry; it is only a myth. There is no room for any other policy between the policy of this Government and communism. Our friends opposite have tried to get in between, but there is no room for people in between. Hon. members opposite tried to get in between with their "Socialism at Work," and they failed. I know that they would again attempt to put into practice their policy with regard to State enterprises if they were able to do so; and that is the reason why this Bill has been introduced.

The Leader of the Opposition showed himself a dreamer in the speech that he made. He said that he had had these ideals for thirty years, but he was beginning to realise that they were more difficult to put into practice than he thought. What is the good of having ideals if they only lead people to penury and want? Yet some people say, "We still believe in the ideas, but they cannot be carried into effect." The day has come when practical things must be done. We do not want to be chasing rainbows and shadows. We do not want to chase a bag of gold imaged low on the horizon. We must follow only those ideals that can be put into practice. That is where we differ from hon. members opposite.

The Leader of the Opposition said that the State enterprises had failed because of propaganda or political action on the part of the Nationalist Party. It has to be admitted that Governments cannot trade. That applies to every Government; and no one knows it better than the Leader of the Opposition. The mere fact that the Labour Party retains power by the votes of the people introduces a political aspect into Government trading which is disastrous. The State enterprises did not fail because of Nationalist Party propaganda; they failed because of internal dissension, mismanagement, and inefficiency within the Labour Party. The people who worked for the State felt that the State was fair game; and that view is encouraged by the propaganda of hon. members opposite with a view to securing votes. The people who vote for them expect to have those promises honoured; and in carrying out those promises business ethics go by the board, politics come in, and the business is ruined.

The Commonwealth Bank has been a success because the political aspect has not obtruded itself. I should not like to forecast the result if an impecunious Federal Treasurer had power to control the note issue. The Leader of the Opposition referred to the fact that the Note Issue Department of the Commonwealth Bank had not been a menace to that bank; but that is due to the fact that it is free from political control. As sure as night follows day, disaster would immediately follow the exercise of political interference with our currency in the same way as disaster inevitably followed

in Germany and other countries where the currency was manipulated and inflated. Currency manipulation or note inflation leads to high prices, which mean low monetary values, and a country is ruined, and disaster and the greatest disorder reigns. That would reign here as it reigned elsewhere immediately political control was exercised in connection with the currency. I cannot refrain from again drawing attention to the glaring example of the Savings Bank of New South Wales. The Leader of the Opposition made an excellent political speech, but he failed to explain away many facts. He said that we sacrificed the State enterprises, and that, if we had held on, we could have obtained better prices. He also stated that the lower prices prevailing to-day are due to the general depression. Is it not obvious that, if we had held on to the State enterprises, we would not have received one-quarter the price that was received, and in the interim we would have lost large sums of money?

He referred to the State cannery, but he failed to mention the fact that a regulation was issued prescribing the type of cans that were to be used. The regulation prohibited the sale of jam in certain containers, and this assisted the industry to a considerable extent. I am not saying anything against that. The cannery could not have carried on profitably if that regulation had not been issued. There is no analogy between the liquidation of a State enterprise and a private concern. If an individual loses his money or suffers through bad management, then it is the individual alone who suffers; but, if the Government lose money in a State enterprise, then the workers and the people of the State who have no voice in the management of State enterprises must make up the difference. In dealing with the objects of State enterprises, the little red book, "Socialism at Work," contains this interesting little tit bit, which I really must read—

"By retaining for the State the profit previously accruing to private enterprise add to the revenue, and render taxation and borrowing increasingly unnecessary."

That is really delightful. That is one of the choicest paragraphs a politician could read. The profit is a loss of £2,000,000! The fact remains that, instead of State enterprises rendering taxation unnecessary, taxation has doubled and trebled in consequence of the actions of the Government who put such a policy into effect in adding £56,000,000 to the public debt. That is an achievement of "Socialism at Work"! If we are to have similar results in the future from a similar policy, then our taxation will be increased to 20s. in the £1, and the position will be absolute ruin. State enterprises really deserve a decent burial. One cannot be joyful at a funeral; but we shall have good reason to rejoice at the passage of this Bill.

There is very little more for me to say. This little book, "Socialism at Work," speaks for itself. The Leader of the Opposition put forward a special apology for its failure. I accept his apology. I hope that he and his friends will have benefited from the practical results of their experiments; and, even if their past experiment has meant a loss of £2,000,000—a fairly expensive experiment to the State—I trust that

Hon. H. E. Sizer.]

it will have the effect of preventing the community from being involved in any similar experiment in the future.

Question—"That the Bill be now read a second time"—put and passed.

COMMITTEE.

(*Mr. Maxwell, Toowong, one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, in the chair.*)

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.

Clause 3—"Dissolution of corporate body of Commissioner for Trade and constitution of new corporate body under the name of 'The Under Secretary, Department of Labour and Industry'."—

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*) [9.45]: This clause occupies four pages of the Bill. I again protest against the method of drafting Bills containing these lengthy clauses. There are quite a number of different principles involved in this clause, some of which we may object to, and some of which we may approve of; yet we have no opportunity of dealing with any particular phase of it in the time allotted under the Standing Orders. The clause is subdivided into seven subclauses, one which contains ten paragraphs. That is quite improper. Hon. members are only allowed twenty-five minutes to speak on each clause in Committee. This method of drafting Bills is not conducive to the expedition of business in Committee because, if desired, hon. members cannot achieve their objective of obtaining a full and complete discussion on each principle. I do not mind the clause being framed in the way it is set out other than for the reason I have stated. I wish the Government joy in giving effect to any line of policy they desire, just as any succeeding Government may do.

THE SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY (Hon. H. E. Sizer, *Sandgate*) [9.48]: I appreciate the point raised by the Leader of the Opposition, and will endeavour to meet his wishes in that connection in future.

With a view to providing for the case I mentioned at an earlier stage of the proceedings, I beg to move the following amendment:—

"On page 5, line 35, omit the word—
'seven'

and insert in lieu thereof the word—
'five.'"

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*) [9.49]: This most important subclause reads—

"All officers and employees of the dissolved Corporation directly employed in the State Trade Office (by whomsoever appointed), and having held office for not less than seven years prior to the commencement of this Act, whether in the State Trade Office or any State enterprise under the repealed Act, and holding office or being employed at the commencement of this Act shall be deemed to have been appointed and employed as officers and/or employees under the new Corporation and to be officers and/or employees of the department of State called the Department of Labour and Industry; but, save as is next hereinafter provided, shall otherwise be subject to be dealt with as officers and/or employees of the public service under 'The Public Service Acts, 1922 to 1924.'"

[*Hon. H. E. Sizer.*

I take it that the persons concerned will continue to be employees of the new corporation included under the heading of "Department of Labour and Industry," and that they will be subject to all matters affecting officers of the public service, as, for example, a reduction under the Salaries Act. I do not construe the clause to mean that these persons will be brought within the scope of the Public Service Acts as public servants. If the Minister discusses this matter with the Commissioner for Trade, he will find that a number of the officers who were originally included in this department were public servants who, on transfer to the State Trade Department, retained all rights of seniority, etc., accruing to them under the Public Service Acts. Other employees were engaged in the various sub-departments, and were regarded as employees generally. I remember on one occasion a deputation asking that certain advantages of the public service award should be extended to these employees, who, by the way, were members of the Clerks' Union and were subject to the general clerical award. In some respects they had better conditions than public servants doing similar work, in as much as they received a higher rate of pay; but they asked that the best conditions in the public service award should be extended to them. My answer was that they were subject to the conditions of their employment, and that they could not pick the eyes out of both awards.

There are men who have been in the department for a number of years; but they are not covered by the Public Service Act. I do not remember the names of all of them; but there are a number of very valuable officers, who are deserving of every consideration because they do their work efficiently and faithfully. If it is the intention that the Public Service Act should apply in its entirety to these persons, then that fact should be made plain.

THE SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY (Hon. H. E. Sizer, *Sandgate*) [9.53]: I agree with the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition that the officers concerned are carrying on their work in an efficient manner. The amendment that I have moved is intended to cover the one case with which I dealt at the second reading stage. The person concerned had been in the service from 1917 to 1921; then he went out and came back again. He has actually had ten or eleven years' service altogether, but it is a question whether he would come within the seven years. By making it five years it brings everyone in.

Mr. HYNES: Why limit it to five years? Why not make it four?

THE SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: Because everyone has been there over five years. To meet the wishes of the Leader of the Opposition, I propose to insert after the word "as" on line 44 the words "and to be." That will make it perfectly clear.

Mr. STOPFORD (*Mount Morgan*) [9.57]: The point I wish to make is that the Minister is altering the status of officers in the State Trade Department, and now Mr. Austin will be a distinct department. Certain officers were brought in because they had a special knowledge that an ordinary public servant did not have to qualify for positions in the State Trade Department. Now they

are to be public servants, but they do not get any classification. What standing have they got? I do not want them to get an advantage over men in other departments who have passed the examination and who have served a lengthy period in the service.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY (Hon. H. E. Sizer, *Sandgate*) [9.59]: The positions will be classified.

Mr. STOPFORD: Will they become classified officers?

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: They are not classified now. Those officers comprise the Head Office Staff of the Department of Labour and Industry. Had these officers been subject to the Public Service Act there would have been no necessity to provide specially for them at this stage.

Mr. STOPFORD: They did not pass an examination when entering the public service?

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: Some of them did not; but that is an anomaly that is being corrected. The accountant of the department is dealing with the accounts, and has done so for thirteen years. He does all the accountancy in connection with the Department of Labour and Industry and all the labour exchanges. The Bill continues him in the Accountancy Department, where he has been for thirteen years, and it would not be fair to deprive him of his position. The same thing applies to the typists who have been there doing the work of the head office. We are bringing them under the Public Service Act, and they will get the classification they are entitled to in the department.

Mr. STOPFORD: I do not want to be personal, but will Mr. Kemp's position be affected?

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: He is not affected under this Bill at all, because he is not an officer under the State Enterprises Act. There are only thirteen officers affected.

Amendment (*Mr. Sizer*) agreed to.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY (Hon. H. E. Sizer, *Sandgate*) [10.3]: I beg to move the following amendment:—

“On page 5, line 44, after the word—
‘as,’

insert the words—
‘and to be.’”

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 3, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 4, schedule, and preamble, agreed to.

The House resumed.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with amendments.

THIRD READING.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY (Hon. H. E. Sizer, *Sandgate*): I beg to move—

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

Question put and passed.

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SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER (Hon. A. E. Moore, *Aubigny*): I beg to move—

“That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until Tuesday, 15th instant.”

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*) [10.5]: What is the reason for adjourning over the week end? There is no Bill of importance on the sheet, and the business is pretty well completed. If we sat to-morrow we could probably clean up the business, and allow hon. members to take part in the Federal elections. Do the Government not wish to take part in the Federal elections, and do they wish to prevent us from taking part; or is the adjournment over the week-end to enable the Premier to complete his plans about the Upper House?

The PREMIER (Hon. A. E. Moore, *Aubigny*) [10.6]: There are one or two small Bills still to come. We cannot complete the business by to-morrow night. The schools break up to-morrow, and a number of hon. members have engagements to fulfil at various schools.

Mr. POLLOCK: That is the only place at which your supporters can get a hearing, and we do not begrudge them that.

The PREMIER: The hon. member is quite wrong. I suggest that he should attend one or two of our meetings, when he might learn a little. He will find that things are quite all right.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at 10.7 p.m.