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Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 18 MAY 1865

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, 18 *May*, 1865.

Registration of Electors, 1°.

REGISTRATION OF ELECTORS.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Sir, the Bill which I am now about to invite the House to read a second time, to amend the law relating to the registration of electors of members to serve in the Legislative Assembly, contains but few alterations in the present system of registration. It is designed to check certain glaring faults in the mode of voting prescribed by law, rather than to introduce any new scheme for the exercise of the franchise. It will not be necessary that I should address the House at any great length, in order to explain the purport of the Bill; more especially as it is a Bill which from its nature will require the fullest consideration in committee. I will simply observe, and it must be the concurrent opinion of every honorable member, as well as of every person in the community who pays attention to the subject, that a considerable amount of apathy exists in the different constituencies with regard to the several rights conferred upon electors by the Constitution Act. Owing to the existence of this apathy, it not unfrequently happens that persons are deprived of the privilege they possess, because they do not know how to exercise it. The Government are frequently called upon to remedy shortcomings which arise in the working of the present law; and during the present session, certain circumstances have been forced upon them, which render it necessary that this subject should be considered by the House. It is found that there is no great disposition on the part of the colonists, throughout the different districts, to exercise their political rights, and this is no doubt attributable to the satisfaction they feel in the proceedings of the Government. They have no desire to take any steps to alter the present state of things. But, while a great many are thus content to remain inactive, and to leave things as they are, others, forming a minority, who are desirous of introducing new schemes and working great changes in our electoral law, often, in their endeavor to secure certain objects, act in a manner which is contrary to law and equity; and it is desirable that no inadequate powers should be given to such persons in the exercise of their political rights. I may remind the House that in one electorate alone, upwards of one thousand claims and objections were sent in by one person, the whole of which had to be summarily objected to, because they were not only informal, but unfounded in fact. The names objected to were those of persons who were fully qualified to vote, and the others were not on the roll. In putting these matters right, considerable expense and inconvenience was incurred; and not only was that the case, but when costs were awarded by the Court of Revision, in consequence of the frivolity of the objections, the person who advanced those objections became insolvent; and as no costs could be obtained from him, the parties had to pay themselves. That does not appear to be a state of matters which should be allowed to continue. Then, again, it is stated in the press of Maryborough, and it has not been contradicted, that one-half the names on the roll for that electorate are duplicates or triplicates. Under the existing law, no special provision being made to prevent the repetition of one name several times, the fraudulent representation of an elector is very liable to occur, and it is therefore necessary that some action should be taken in this House to remedy the defect. The clauses of the Bill are framed in as practicable a spirit as possible; and, I believe, will most of them meet with the concurrence of the House. The first clause provides that a public officer shall come forward and undertake the duty, which is at present performed by a private individual, viz., to inquire whether the qualification professed by any person has any foundation in fact. I have proposed in this clause, that if there be any doubt on the part of the bench of magistrates as to the qualification specified by any person, they shall "cause the clerk of petty sessions to require from the person represented to possess such qualification satisfactory proof thereof, and shall direct the said clerk what proof to require, and in default of such proof being received before the day fixed by law for making objections, shall cause the clerk of petty sessions to object to such person in the manner required by law." Of course it is not supposed that the name of any such person will be summarily expunged from the list in that court, or that their action shall be final. They have simply to ascertain whether such a person really possesses the qualification he puts forward; because if he is dead, or absent from the colony, or disqualified to vote, it is manifestly unjust to electors who are duly qualified, to allow his name to remain on the roll. I have lately read a criticism upon this measure, in which it is stated that the name of such a person will at once be expunged from the list; but that is not the case. The inquiry is merely a preliminary one, and the

parties objected to will have an opportunity of proving, if they can do so, that they possess the necessary qualification. The second clause is framed to prevent the repetition of an elector's name several times on the same roll. Many persons seem to think that if they possess different qualifications to vote in one electorate, they strengthen their claim by repeating their names under each qualification, as leaseholder, householder, or in respect of salary or board and lodging. But a reference to the Electoral Act will show that a person's claim is not rendered safer because it is entered more than once in the list. When once he is on the roll, nothing can deprive him of his right to vote; but if one of his qualifications becomes void, he must take the trouble to enrol himself under another, if he possess one. The third clause provides that every person duly objected to shall be required to appear when required by the court, and to establish his qualification by satisfactory proof, or in default to be struck off the roll. The Electoral Act of 1858 placed objectors in a false position—they were called upon to prove a negative case. In the twenty-third section of the Act it is set forth that the presiding justice "shall retain on the list the names of all persons to whom no objection shall have been duly made and the names of every person objected to unless the party objecting shall appear by himself or by some one on his behalf in support of such objection and shall establish the same by satisfactory proof." That appears to me to be in most cases impossible. Supposing, for instance, I see the name of William Smith on the roll for Ipswich, as a freeholder or leaseholder in that district, it is impossible for me to say that he does or does not possess that qualification. This Bill casts the burden of proof of qualification upon the person objected to. But if the objection puts this person to the trouble of appearing without any sufficient grounds—if his objection is frivolous, he has to pay the costs. I think that is but right, because it is not in the power of any individual, except by an exhaustive process, to prove whether another person is properly on the roll or not. The fourth clause requires that the qualification shall be particularly described. At present a revision of the lists is next to impossible in all populous places, because there is no proper description of the persons whose names appear on the roll. The description of an elector as a leaseholder or householder in any electorate is too vague a term for purposes of identification. There is no undue severity in requiring a man to state the particulars of the qualification under which he claims to vote—where his property is situate, the number of the street, if he be a householder, where he boards and lodges, and so on—in fact, to give such particulars as will assist the law in identifying him. As the Act is at present framed, in a closely contested election, it is very easy to bring up a newly-arrived emigrant at the last moment and represent him as a farmer or leaseholder, and, in the absence of any proof of identity, it would be impossible to refuse him. The sixth clause sets forth that objectors shall deposit one pound for each name objected to. It embodies the same principle which is carried out in cases of petitions to this House, and is intended to secure the *bona fides* of the objecting parties. Here, when a petition is presented on the occasion of a contested election, it is necessary that the petitioner shall deposit £100 in the hands of the Speaker, and I think a guarantee of the same nature is quite as necessary with regard to voters. In the case I have cited, a man was put forward at the revision court, in a certain district, who lodged one thousand objections, but was not in a position to pay the costs awarded by the court, which amounted to at least £80. He took a very easy way of evading payment, by becoming insolvent. He did so at once, as I understand, and thus escaped all responsibility. Now, if that man had been required to lodge with the clerk of petty sessions one pound for every objection, such a state of things could never have occurred. I think it is not too much to require that this deposit shall be made; it being provided, that if the objection taken is valid, the money is to be returned. If it be proved to be frivolous, it is but right that the objector should forfeit it. The seventh clause contemplates the appointment of district court judges, a subject which has already been introduced into this House and is likely to be canvassed during the present session; it provides that—"Whenever the judge of any district court shall happen to be at any town or place within his district upon the day or days appointed for holding a revision court at such town or place he may take part in such revision court whether he be a justice of the peace or not and every such judge shall preside over any revision court in which he may take part." The presence of a judge of the district court will be a great advantage, because he will be able to lay down the law in a way which the magistrates are unable to do. I believe, sir, this Act, in its present state, is not altogether perfect. There are several things in it, which, I think, may be amended. But I think the principles upon which it is framed are such that the House will support me, and assist me, in maturing and perfecting it. I do not bring it forward as a measure dealing with any broad principle of electoral law—it is simply intended to improve the existing machinery for registration. It has been suggested to me by the honorable member for North Brisbane (Mr. Pugh), and other honorable members, that the Electoral Lists Abolition Act might, with advantage, be incorporated with this Act; and, I confess, I am inclined to think the two Acts consolidated might form a better working Act than this. I think, also, that a further pro-

vision might be introduced in committee—that an extension of time be afforded between the day of posting claims and objections and the day for making up the lists. I shall be very glad to receive any practical suggestions from honorable members; but I hope the Bill, as a whole, will be received, as it is nothing more than is necessary, under the present circumstances of the colony. I now, sir, beg to move that it be read a second time.

Mr. BLAKENEY said he concurred in a great deal that had been said by the honorable Colonial Secretary; and he also agreed with him that the Bill required some additions. He was glad to hear the honorable gentleman state that he was anxious to render the measure as practicable as possible. With regard to the first clause, he thought it would be necessary to provide that some definite period be fixed, and publicly notified by the clerk of petty sessions, for receiving claims and objections to names on the list; that addition would render the clause perfect. Then, with regard to names appearing more than once on the roll, the honorable member was under a misapprehension as to the reasons for the names of voters appearing so often. It so happened that his own name, and that of the honorable member for North Brisbane (Mr. Pugh) appeared no less than three times on the electoral roll for North Brisbane. For instance, one qualification under which he (Mr. Blakeney) claimed to vote was that of a householder. When he ceased to be a householder, no objection being taken, his name was allowed to remain on the roll. He then became entitled to vote for a salary qualification, and subsequently he took chambers and was again qualified to vote. That was the reason his name had appeared so often. It certainly would be advisable to confine the voter to one entry of his name. With regard to the proposition that the court shall have the power to retain "that entry of his name to which is appended that qualification which comes first in order among the qualifications specified in section eleven of the Constitution Act," he was of opinion that the last entry should be retained, as that would give the qualification of which he was then in possession. It was but reasonable that, when necessary, a man should be required to attend the court, in order to prove his qualification. As to the fourth clause it was very much required. Upon comparing the printed rolls with the manuscript rolls for the country round Brisbane, he had found that about one-third of the names were described as electors for East Moreton; and it would be utterly impossible, in a district which extended a hundred miles in one direction and seventy in another, to identify a man who was described as having a freehold, a leasehold, or board and lodging in East Moreton. With regard to the sixth clause which provided for the payment of a deposit in case of each objection, he was inclined to think it would be a beneficial enactment. The honorable Colonial Secretary, however, was, he thought, somewhat in error in the instance he had cited. It was because the lists had to be posted on the day after the notices were received, when there was no time for the clerk to attend to them, that a great many names were not objected to; and not on account of the frivolous nature of the objections. The honorable Colonial Secretary had alluded to the probability that there would be one or two more judges appointed to the district courts. That appeared to him a strong reason why there should be a clause in the Act, requiring that in any district, where there was a district court, the judge should be required to attend to revise the lists. That was the practice in England and Ireland, and its effect would be to ensure impartiality and to prevent the exercise of any local jealousies which might exist. He could mention a case which came off but very recently, in which magistrates came miles around as local partisans to sit upon a bench which they rarely if ever attended. Supposing a metropolitan judge to be appointed, say for Brisbane and Ipswich, it would be no great hardship for him to revise the lists, and it would be very desirable that he should do so. There was another suggestion which might be received, viz., that members of the Legislative Council should in some way be prohibited from interfering in the revision courts: he believed that the members of the Legislative Assembly had not gone so far as to do so. He would suggest that the law should be enforced by a penalty of £20 or £50 for every violation. With reference to the other provisions in the Bill he had nothing to say, and he agreed with the honorable gentleman (Mr. Herbert) that, after a careful consideration in committee, it might be made a very useful measure. He would therefore vote for the second reading.

Mr. MILES gave his cordial support to the Bill. He desired, however, to point out what he considered to be one defect. He referred to the time appointed for holding the revision court. According to the present law, all claims and objections had to be sent in between the 28th February and the 18th March. That was a very short period, and frequently the clerks found it impossible to get through the work which devolved upon them. An extension of time, say from the 1st to the 30th March, would be a great improvement. The suggestion which had been made that the district court judges should revise the lists, might safely be adopted. He knew, from experience, that the magistrates were unable to give the requisite attention to this duty; and the consequence was, that the names of qualified voters were frequently excluded from the roll. He should vote for the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. FORBES said he was sorry that the Bill before the House had been introduced,

as he thought it would have been much better to have waited till another session to bring in a complete measure of electoral reform. He recollected when the colony of Victoria was in a similar position, and the Government had met the question in a very different way—they had brought in a measure which had called forth encomiums from the press of all the other colonies, and was looked to as the most perfect measure of electoral reform which had yet been passed. Still, as he felt inclined to support the measure, as a small instalment of the reform which was required, he would make one or two suggestions. He thought, in the first place, that the returning officer should also act as revising officer, receiving a special fee for that duty. As a rule, when officers were paid for their work, the work was well done, but not otherwise. He thought, also, that where a voter possessed several qualifications, they should be placed upon the roll, opposite his name, in one entry. That would simplify the matter, and would not interfere with the order of the roll; and, in all probability, one, at least, of those qualifications, would be sufficient. Again, he thought that, supposing an objection to be made against any person claiming to vote, it should be sufficient for that person to forward to the clerk of petty sessions, a written declaration in support of his claim, sworn to before a magistrate, without having personally to attend the revision court. If the declaration were false, he would be guilty of perjury, which could be easily detected. He was further of opinion that it should be incumbent upon the returning officer, who should be also revising officer, to produce the rolls used at the two previous elections; and if any person should be found who had not recorded his vote at those two elections, to strike his name off the roll. He maintained that the franchise was a trust committed to every colonist by the Legislature, and if he did not sufficiently appreciate it, it should be taken away from him. The returning officer would also be the proper person to decide upon the best polling places, and it should be provided that no polling places be proclaimed except where a certain number of persons resided within a radius of,—say twenty miles. There was another point to which he wished to call attention. It was usual at the revision courts for the magistrates to postpone the sitting of the court from day to day, and it might be advisable to make some regulation in that respect. Those were all the suggestions which he had to offer, and they might, perhaps, be worthy of consideration when the House went into committee upon the Bill.

Mr. PUGH said he could not concur in the regret expressed by the honorable member who had last spoken, that the Government had not waited for another year to introduce a more comprehensive measure, because recent circumstances afforded gave evidence that some immediate measure of reform in the system of registration was necessary. As far as he could judge of the Bill, it did not trench upon the political opinions of honorable members on either side of the House. It was absolutely necessary that the recurrence of certain recent proceedings should be avoided, and that object would be achieved by the Bill before the House. He was very glad to see it introduced, and he thought that, with a few alterations, and especially if it were made to embody the Electoral Lists Collection Abolition Act, it would prove a great advantage, and would have the effect of putting an end to the trouble and expense which the defects in the existing Act gave rise to. His honorable colleague (Mr. Blakeney) had explained to the honorable Colonial Secretary the misapprehension which that honorable gentleman had appeared to entertain—that electors fancied their claims were strengthened by the insertion of their names several times on the same roll under different qualifications. The repetition of names occurred in consequence of electors changing their qualifications and enrolling themselves afresh when such changes occurred. Under the Registration Act of 1860, the 14th day of February was the last day on which claims and objections could be sent in; the clerk of petty sessions was bound to have the lists ready the next morning. At Ipswich it had sometimes been a physical impossibility to do so, and the consequence was that a number of the claims sent in were of no value whatever. He thought an earlier day should be fixed for receiving claims, and a later day named for exhibiting the lists. It might not be possible in every case to have the lists widely circulated, but the clerks of petty sessions should, at any rate, have time to make them up correctly. Taking into consideration the increase of population, and the number of additional electoral districts, he thought the revision courts might be held more frequently—say twice a year. It frequently happened that persons who sent in their claims, and spelt their names correctly, when they came to poll their votes, found them so disguised on the lists that they did not know them themselves. He knew of certain persons whose names began with A who were entered under the H's, and they voted with the H's—he knew no less than three persons in this predicament. The honorable member for the Warrego (Mr. Forbes) had proposed that all electors who did not record their votes for two successive elections should be disfranchised. That would be a very great hardship to absentee freeholders, as the honorable member would find, if circumstances should render it necessary for him to visit Europe. He quite concurred in the suggestion that the returning officers should be compensated for their trouble, but he did not agree with the proposition that they should act in the capacity of revising officers. It was very

possible that a returning officer might take advantage of his position to secure the return of a friend, and if he were a Government officer he ought to be reprimanded for such interference. He would only say, in conclusion, that he trusted the honorable member would name as late a day as possible for the consideration of the Bill in committee, that he (Mr. Pugh) might let the amendments which he proposed to move be printed and circulated. He felt much pleasure in supporting the motion.

Dr. CHALLINOR said he was very glad to see such a measure introduced into the House. He was glad also to perceive that it was incumbent upon persons who claimed to vote, to prove their qualifications. It had cost the town of Ipswich during the previous year upwards of £100 in payments to a person who was employed to go from house to house in order to ascertain the nature of the qualifications set forth. The suggestion that the several qualifications of an elector should be placed against his name in one entry was a very sensible one, and would put a stop to a good deal of improper personation at elections. With regard to a remark which had been made by an honorable member that magistrates, in a recent case, had come from miles round to sit on the bench at Ipswich, he could only say that, although he was not prepared to justify the decisions of that bench generally, he certainly was prepared to justify the decision they had come to on that occasion. The fact was, the matter fell to the ground simply because there was no legal proof whatever in support of the charge. There was no question that the existing system of registration required amendment. The Bill before the House would remedy the defects it contained, and put the franchise upon a proper footing. The honorable member for North Brisbane (Mr. Pugh) had instanced one case in which it would be a hardship for an elector to be struck off the roll because he had not recorded his vote at the two previous elections. It would be very hard in many cases. Some of the electors lived on stations, at a great distance from the polling places, and could not always get away. Besides which, as the honorable member for the Warrego knew, some of the squatters on the out stations did not care that their men should have their names on the roll, in case they should be induced to leave. It was very desirable that the lists should be revised more than once a-year; it should be done at least twice a-year; though, for his part, he should prefer it to be three times. The colony must not be dealt with in the same way as an old settled country. Emigrants were continually arriving, and many persons, if an annual revision took place, would be prevented from voting for a considerable period, a residence of six months only being required by the Act. He had great pleasure in supporting the principle of the Bill, and trusted it would be made a complete measure, such as would give satisfaction to honorable members on both sides of the House.

Mr. TAYLOR expressed his approval of the Bill as a whole, and his intention to vote for it. He wished, however, to bring under the notice of the House the fact that in the district represented by his honorable friend, Mr. Watts, and himself, there was only one police bench. The first clause of the Bill stated that the revision courts should be held at the usual places where the bench met. Now, if people in his district were to be dragged down to the usual sitting place of the police bench, half of them would suffer themselves to be struck off the roll. There was ouly one bench, which was at Goondiwindi, though he believed a bench had just been established at Leyburn. He thought the revision court might be held somewhere in the centre of the voting population. He liked the Bill very much, and thought most of the clauses were a great improvement on the present system, especially the sixth clause; and he approved of the provision that a deposit of £1 should be paid by objectors. Of course, if—as had lately been the case—one person made 180 objections, he would have to pay £180; but, nevertheless, he certainly approved of that portion of the Bill. He had been much astonished to hear one honorable member express a doubt of the purity of the bench of magistrates of Ipswich. That honorable member had called for returns every day for the purpose of impeaching the justice of that bench, and he had just stated that it was a packed bench on the occasion of holding the revision court. He had certainly understood the honorable member to say that the magistrates came for miles around to sit on that bench; but, for his own part, he thought the honorable member's party had been the gainers. He considered that the bench had been perfectly harmless in that instance. It was not a packed bench in the case of Mr. R. J. Smith, for he presumed that was the case to which the honorable member alluded; if it had been, that gentleman would have been convicted and fined, or perhaps imprisoned. He agreed with the honorable member for the Warrego, that if an elector did not exercise his right of voting he should lose it. He did not think it right to have hundreds of names on the roll—names of men who took no trouble to exercise their right. He believed if any member of the House failed to sit for twelve months he lost his seat; and if a member of the Upper House absented himself for two years, he forfeited his place; and he thought if a man did not exercise his right of voting, he deserved to lose it. As far as the returning officers were concerned, undoubtedly they ought to be paid for their trouble. All the servants and clerks were paid, and they received nothing themselves. He should be willing to give them about fifty guineas for their trouble at each election.

He agreed with the honorable member, Mr. Pugh, that the names were often incorrectly copied on the rolls. As that honorable member had spoken of H's, he (Mr. Taylor) would also speak of H's. He had seen one person's name upon the roll, and the 'h' had been, unfortunately, left out. The name ought to have been 'Pugh,' but the final 'h' had been omitted, and the name stood in the roll as 'Pug.' (A laugh.) The honorable member for Ipswich (Dr. Challinor) had not only done all he could to injure the squatters, but had actually accused them of preventing the names of their men being placed on the roll. That was not the case. They were anxious to put their men on the roll, knowing them to be true and independent men. For his own part, he placed all the names of his men on the roll when he could legally do so, and he made them go to the poll. In his opinion every man should exercise his right to vote, and he denied that any squatter would attempt to influence his servants in their votes. They might do so in the Warrego, perhaps, but not in civilised parts of the colony. The honorable member for Ipswich wished the roll to be revised three or four times per year. He would ask the honorable member to look at the expense that would be incurred by doing so. Once a year was quite often enough for the roll to be revised. He thought the Bill before the House would prevent a great deal of the injustice which was permitted by the present Act, and he should vote that it be read a second time.

Mr. CRIBB said the repetition of names on the rolls was unquestionably a mistake in the working of the system. As the law stood at present, the name of an elector must remain as it was entered on the roll, which was not the case under the previous Electoral Act. With regard to the revision of lists and the recommendation that the revision court should sit more than once a year, he was quite satisfied with the present arrangement in that respect. There might not be another election for three or four years, and there was no use in incurring unnecessary trouble and expense. He did not concur in the propriety of striking a man's name off the roll because he did not happen to vote for two successive elections. It was, in fact, impossible to do so, because it would always be in his power to claim his privilege as long as he possessed the qualification required by law. Upon the whole he was well satisfied with the Bill; and he believed that, if the principles it embodied were honestly carried out, and if the Bill which had been brought in for repealing the collection of electoral lists were amalgamated with it, it would prove a great boon to the country.

Mr. GROOM said it was his intention to vote for the second reading of the Bill. He had one objection to it, in which he had been anticipated by the honorable member for Western Downs (Mr. Taylor). He thought that, unless the revision court were held in some central portion of the district, a great deal of inconvenience would arise. He would also suggest to the honorable member at the head of the Government the propriety of making some provision for printing the electoral rolls. In most cases the printing had been done at the discretion of the returning officer, at a local printing office, and frequently at that person's expense. Some provision should be made for this duty; it would have the effect of doing away with the objections raised by the honorable member for North Brisbane (Mr. Pugh) and others as to the incorrect spelling which occurred in the lists. There were one or two other minor objections, which, however, he would reserve until the Bill was in committee.

Mr. DOUGLAS: Sir, I presume the Government do not intend to grapple with this measure in the manner which was portended last year. There was much in the measure introduced last session, but not carried, which commended itself to the House; and it had this advantage, that it dealt with the question as a whole. There were two or three very objectionable features, in consequence of which it did not receive the consideration which perhaps it merited. We are now favored with what cannot be considered a final piece of legislation. If this Bill is passed, we shall have three distinct measures before us from which to compile our electoral law—the old New South Wales Act, the Electoral Lists Collection Abolition Act, and then this Amended Registration Act, besides the Constitution Act, which of course bears upon the question. Now, sir, to have three laws to deal with mere matters of electoral detail, strikes me at the outset as very undesirable. I should have been glad if the Government had dealt with this question as a whole. I understood the honorable Colonial Secretary to say that he purposed amalgamating this law with the Act for abolishing the collection of electoral lists. But if there is to be any amalgamation let us amalgamate all the laws which bear upon electoral matters. If, however, it be necessary, and I admit the necessity, to remedy certain anomalies in the existing law, we must, I suppose, accept this measure, as one of those small yearly donations with which the Government are wont to favor the House. I will not go into the details of the Bill; they can be discussed in committee. There is, however, one point to which I shall direct attention—the provision which is contained in the sixth clause, which has received a considerable amount of laudation at the hands of honorable members. It may be desirable to secure some guarantee that the objections to names on the lists are made *bona fide;* but I must point out to the House that there are some cases in which this system would act very injuriously. In some constituencies—in the constituency which I

represent—it will be necessary to object to somewhere about 200 voters whose names are on the roll of the Port Curtis district, but who do not now belong to that electorate.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS: The magistrates will do that.

Mr. DOUGLAS: That will be giving the magistrates a very wide latitude. I have pointed out this as an objection which can be taken into consideration in committee, if it be a valid one. I merely wish to observe that I represent a district in which are some 200 electors who have no right to be on the roll—all of them being voters for the district of Rockhampton. I do not know that I have at present any further objections to advance. I can only repeat, that I should have been glad to have seen a Bill introduced which would have treated the subject as a whole. It is a question which there may still be time to consider, and which well merits our consideration. I trust the honorable member at the head of the Government will think over this suggestion, in an even frame of mind. I hope the Government will take heart of grace and deal with the question in a more comprehensive manner, in a manner worthy of them: and, if they do so, I am quite sure they will receive every support from honorable members on this side of the House.

The question was then put and passed.