

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 13 OCTOBER 1896

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

TUESDAY, 13 OCTOBER, 1896.

The SPEAKER took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

BILLS OF SALE ACT AMENDMENT
BILL.

ROYAL ASSENT.

The SPEAKER announced that he had received a message from His Excellency the Governor assenting to this Bill.

PRINTING COMMITTEE.

FIRST REPORT.

Mr. DAWSON, on behalf of the Speaker, as chairman, presented the first report of the committee, and moved that it be printed.

Question put and passed.

QUESTION.

MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE.

Mr. GLASSEY asked the Premier—

1. Has any person been appointed Minister for Agriculture in accordance with the Officials in Parliament Act passed in July last? If so, will the honourable

gentleman inform the House of the appointment, so as to enable members to obtain information as to what progress (if any) has been made in the Agricultural Department?

2. Has the Acting Minister for Agriculture (the Honourable A. J. Thynne) the power to make permanent official appointments to that department?

3. Is the Acting Minister for Agriculture going to assume the responsibility of the appointment of the official staff of that department? Or is that important duty not going to be entrusted to a Minister with a seat in this House, who will be answerable for such appointments to the representatives of the people?

4. Have any appointments yet been made? If so, when, and at what salary?

5. If any appointments have been made, is one of them a Brisbane architect named Corrie?

The PREMIER replied—

1. I refer the honourable member to the *Government Gazette*, dated 6th May last, Vol. LXV., No. 108, page 1057.

2. There is no such officer as "Acting Minister."

3. This question is to me unintelligible.

4. One appointment only has just been made "by the Governor in Council"—viz., Mr. Benson, at a salary of £600 per annum; which appointment will be notified in the next issue of the *Gazette*.

5. This question is, in my opinion, an abuse of the privilege accorded to honourable members of putting questions. The name of any private member of the community ought not to be introduced. The matter is covered by the answer to Question No. 4.

PETITION.

EXTENSION OF BOWEN RAILWAY.

Mr. JACKSON presented a petition from 266 residents of the Kennedy electorate, praying for the extension of the Bowen Railway to the Northern Railway.

Petition read and received.

CONTRACT FOR GOODS SHED, IPSWICH.

On the motion of Mr. GLASSEY, the following formal motion was agreed to:—

That there be laid on the Table of the House copies of all correspondence between the Railway Department and Mr. James Madden, relative to the contract for the erection of the new goods shed and offices at Ipswich.

SANDGATE RACECOURSE BILL.

APPOINTMENT OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

On the motion of Mr. LEAHY, the following formal motion was agreed to:—

1. That the Sandgate Racecourse Bill be referred for the consideration and report of a select committee.

2. That such committee have power to send for persons and papers, and leave to sit during any adjournment of the House; and that it consist of the following members:—Messrs. C. B. Fitzgerald, J. T. Bell, Thomas Bridges, A. L. Petrie, and the mover.

CHILDREN'S PROTECTION BILL.

THIRD READING.

On the motion of Mr. BELL, this Bill, this Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Council for their concurrence.

SHOPS AND FACTORIES LEGISLATION.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. McDONNELL: In accordance with notice, I rise to move the adjournment of the House.

The SPEAKER read a letter from Mr. McDonnell, intimating that in accordance with Standing Order No. 130 he intended to move the adjournment of the House on a definite matter of urgent public importance—namely, the necessity for introducing shops and factories legislation.

Not less than five members having risen in support of the motion.

Mr. McDONNELL said: I regret that I have to take this extreme step to bring this question before members of the House, but I am sure that it is of such vital importance to a large number of people in Queensland that my action

will need no apology and will be very fully vindicated. I may say that my action this day has been largely influenced by the events which have occurred in this city within the last few weeks, and I am sure that when hon. members are made aware of the abuses which exist in connection with factories and workshops, and the alarming increase of the pernicious and cruel system of sweating, some expressions of opinion will be given by hon. members which will induce the Government to take some action before this session is over to deal with the grievances in connection with that system. This is not the first time that an appeal has been made to this House for shops and factories legislation. Nearly six and a-half years ago a Bill was introduced by the late Hon. J. Macrossan, and I do not think that any words of mine can be more forcible than those he used in introducing that measure. After stating that previously he had not considered such a measure necessary in Queensland, he said—

"Since then we have introduced a tariff which will have, and has had to some extent, the effect of increasing the number of our factories and increasing the size of others already in existence. I think, therefore, there is a necessity for a Factories Act now, and probably that the necessity will increase as the number of our factories increases."

Further on he said—

"The principle of the Bill is chiefly the protection of women and children who are helpless and unable to protect themselves in any way. The grown-up men, to a very large extent, I consider, are pretty well able to protect themselves now-a-days. At any rate they do not want it to as great an extent as women and children do."

It was most remarkable that there was not one single member of this House who rose to oppose the Bill and I believe every hon. member who now occupies the Treasury benches supported it. One of the most ardent champions of the Bill was the present Home Secretary, and the only opposition he and others who were with him found to the Bill was that it did not go quite far enough. The hon. member in committee did all in his power to make that more drastic, and I will read part of his speech on the second reading as reported in *Hansard*, vol. lxi., page 167—

"The principle of factory legislation has been known in England for the last hundred years. It culminated in England quite recently in an Act passed in 1878, in which they have consolidated all the Factories Acts. I do not think that there is a British community in which there is not a Factories Act. The right of the State to control the industrial organisations is recognised in all communities. This Bill goes so far as to deal alone with women and children. Last year, in the Mines Regulation Bill, I went a little further. I consider the State has, in support of the moral and physical well-being of humanity, the right also to deal with men, and that is why I strongly urged in the Mines Regulation Bill the insertion of a clause to limit the hours of working in our gold-mines."

Unfortunately, before that Bill got through committee the Government were defeated, but still the prophecy of the hon. member who introduced it has become verified in Queensland to-day. Had that Bill, deficient as it was in some points, become law, I am sure that it would have prevented a great many grave abuses which have grown up since, and which are occurring every day in this colony. On the coalition Government coming into power a Royal Commission was appointed to inquire into the existing conditions under which work was done in factories and shops in this colony, but owing to the deficient power entrusted to it, as they were armed with no powers to compel the attendance of witnesses or to examine them upon oath, much valuable information was not received. Still a mass of information was gathered which showed that the seeds had then been sown; warnings were given that the conditions which existed in

other lands were taking root here, and both sides of the commission were agreed upon certain points. In explanation of this I may state that the commission was divided into two sections, one representing the manufacturers, and the other composed of those who represented the workers and the nominees of the Government. The points they agreed upon were:— That there was an urgent necessity to introduce a Shops and Factories Bill; that no child under twelve years should be employed in any shop or factory; that sanitary arrangements should be regulated by the State; that an inspection should be made of land boilers; and, fifth, that the compulsory clauses of the State Education Act should be enforced. That report was signed by Messrs. Chapman, Hunter, Kingsbury, Morrow, Salton, White, Thurlow, and the present Secretary for Public Instruction. Unfortunately, for some reason or other, the Government were dead to all appeals. After spending an enormous amount of money, after collecting a large amount of evidence, it was not until 1893 that this question was brought before the people. I had taken an interest in the question for years. I knew the dangers that were growing up, and I stated publicly in Brisbane the disgraceful conditions which were growing up in connection with the employment of women and children. The *Courier* then sent out a special reporter to inquire into those statements, and when I spoke in this House on the Address in Reply I quoted several powerful articles which appeared in the *Courier* and *Observer* showing the necessity for legislation. I do not intend to refer now to those articles, but I cannot allow the opportunity to pass without referring to one which appeared in the *Observer* of Saturday, 7th October, 1893—

“It may be taken, therefore, as fairly certain that the statements appearing in to-day’s issue are not beyond the truth. Of what character, then, are these statements? Generally they disclose the existence of sweating—whether we take the technical or the common-sense meaning of the term—to a degree which disgraces our common humanity.”

When these statements were made, and those articles appeared in the Press, naturally one would have thought that the Government would at least have shown some sympathy with this class of workers. A question was put to the then Premier, Sir T. McIlwraith, by the member for South Brisbane, Mr. Turley, asking if the Government intended introducing the desired legislation, and the Premier replied that, in view of the facts stated in the Brisbane Press, the Government would consider the advisability of at once introducing some such legislation. But nothing has been yet done. If the necessity existed in 1890 for a Shops and Factories Bill—if it existed in 1893, when these disclosures were made by the *Brisbane Courier* and *Observer*—I say the necessity exists a hundred-fold more to-day. I maintain that in Brisbane at present the most degrading and wretched conditions exist in connection with factories and workshops. Not alone is that the case, but sweating, which comparatively did not exist in 1890, has grown up to a most alarming extent in Queensland. Since the passing of our tariff the wholesale houses import very little made-up material, but the work is given out here, and sweaters get this work done by women and little children. There are hundreds of little children of eleven years old and upwards who are toiling every day of their lives for a few miserable coppers. The conditions may not be quite so bad in the large factories, but anyone has only to visit some of the large factories to see the workers, principally girls and children, crammed like sardines in a tin, and notice the provision which is made for ven-

tilation, whilst of sanitary conditions there are comparatively none. But the worst feature of the system is the giving out of work to people at starvation rates. Within the last few weeks I came across the case of a man named Pollard, who carried on a manufacturing business in Gotha street, off Wickham street, in Fortitude Valley. This man got any amount of work from several large wholesale houses, and the bulk of his workers were out-workers. They came to his place and took away the work, and this is a statement of the prices he paid—

Mole Pants, complete	4½d.
Boys' Sailor Suits, Galateas	4½d. per suit.
Boys' Tweed Suits	4½d. per suit.
Boys' Knickers, lined	5d. per suit.
Ladies' Blouses, with collars and cuffs	2s. 6d. per doz.
Ladies' Dressing-gowns	6d. and 9d. each.
Ladies' Dressing-gowns, lined and trimmed with lace	1s. 3d. each.

This man employed between thirty and forty women. His system was that the work had to be brought in to his factory on the Wednesday, and on the following Saturday he paid these unfortunate women for the work done. This went on until about a fortnight ago, when he disappeared; when the workers came for their pay on the Saturday they found that he was gone. A complaint was made to me, and I hold in my hand the names of some twenty of these poor women whom this man defrauded of their miserable wages. I did all in my power to get a warrant out to bring this man back from Melbourne. In fact I went so far as to go with the hon. member for Bundaberg, and we submitted the whole matter to the Home Secretary. He expressed his sympathy, but he pointed out that the law was defective, and that the man could not be brought back. Within the last six months four cases of a similar nature have occurred in Brisbane; and, in order that there may be no concealment about the matter, I shall give the names of these individuals, and if inquiry is made it will be found that what I state is perfectly true. Two men named Power and Foster, in Kent's buildings, employed between thirty-five and forty girls, whom they advertised for, at low rates of wages. Then a man named Beckman, who came from Sydney, advertised for a large number of these people. He knew nothing about the trade but he took rooms in Kent's buildings, hired machines, and gave out work at a rate as low as 2s. 6d. a week. Arrears of wages accumulated, and suddenly two detectives came up from Sydney and arrested him on a charge of misappropriation of funds. He was taken away and these unfortunate girls who were earning only 2s. 6d., 4s. 6d., and up to 6s. a week were deprived of their miserable wages. Another case was that of a man named Moran, who employed between fifty and sixty girls, and carried on the same tactics. In fact, during the last six months over 300 girls in Brisbane have been victimised in this way—robbed of their hard-earned wages by these villains. But bad and all as the sweater is in this respect, I maintain that it is the wholesale houses which are to blame chiefly. They have taken a lesson from Victoria and have not built large factories and purchased large numbers of machines, but they give out their work to the sweaters, who carry on the practices I have described. I may point out that under the present system a large number of people of very questionable character work in some of these sweating establishments, and by that means evade the operation of a certain Act which is in force in Queensland. Under such circumstances I need hardly explain the dangers which wearers of ready-made clothing subject themselves to. These are not nice questions to bring up here,

but such are the conditions which exist in Brisbane. In connection with the clothing, tailoring, and millinery trades, I may point out that there are large numbers of children who earn not one single penny of wages. The employers get them in in droves, keep them for twelve months until they have learned their trades, and they are then slung out into the streets and a fresh batch brought in. That was pointed out by the *Courier* in 1893, and the evil has increased since then. I think the Government are largely to blame for the growth of this sweating evil. During the sittings of the 1891 Commission we came across certain places where Government clothing was being manufactured at sweating prices, and even to-day many of the Government uniforms which are being made under contract are paid for at the lowest possible rate of wages. There is another form of sweating which takes place in some of our swell shops in Brisbane to which I wish to allude. When a slack time comes round the employees are turned away in batches; but when busy times return the hands are taken on again and employed night and day without one single penny of overtime being paid. In connection with the tailoring trade there are not 5 per cent. of the tailors in Brisbane who get the clothing they sell made up on the premises. Orders are taken, and the cutter cuts out the garments, which are then handed over to persons who take them away and make them up at low wages. In fact, some of the prices paid in Brisbane are as low as any prices paid in any part of the world; and it seems rather strange that no voice is raised here to protect the large numbers of women and girls who are employed upon the harsh terms in operation in Brisbane. We seldom hear the voice of a clergyman raised in his pulpit in denunciation of the sweater, and some of the men who own the very factories where these practices are carried on are prominent members of the churches. These are the men who cram women and girls into their factories and work their very souls out in order to build up large fortunes for themselves. And these are the men whose names appear for large amounts on subscription lists for charitable purposes, and these facts are well known to people outside the House as well as to hon. members. I do not intend to go beyond the allotted time, but there are several other matters which I should like to mention, in order to give this House—

The SPEAKER: I must remind the hon. member that he has already exhausted the time at his disposal.

Mr. McDONNELL: I intended to continue for only a few minutes longer.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member can only do so by leave of the House.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. McDONNELL: I should like to call attention to the following paragraph which appeared in the *Evening Observer* of the 10th August last:—

"It is difficult to believe that, in this city of Brisbane, sweating has free course. In one of our suburbs last week some of the members of a local benevolent society found an accomplished, refined woman just keeping body and soul together sewing shirts at 2½d. apiece. She had two children dependent upon her, and by working without intermission she could manage to complete a dozen shirts per day. There was no time, however, for the ordinary amenities of life. She could not spare a moment for household duties. The house was cleaned out once a week, and the children were kept from starving; but it was one long 'stitch, stitch, stitch' to make the pitiful half-a-crown day by day. Tom Hood might have written his 'Song of the Shirt' in Brisbane with perfect truth. The facts could not have been sterner in London, and our trying winter has added woe to woe.

"When the kind gentlemen of our large warehouses, who give out this work, are remonstrated with they

call for a basin of water, as Pilate did, and wash their hands. The blood of these women cannot be laid at their door. Although the shirts may be retailed at 2s. 11d. each, that is all in the way of business. . . . One poor woman pleaded for a little consideration; but the shirtman very sympathetically said, 'My good woman, we do not ask you to sew these shirts. Leave them by all means. We can get plenty who are only too glad of the work.' Human life at such hands is a commodity worth so much a yard; and the teaching of the Great Master is to them delightful on the Sabbath, but impossible of application on week days."

That is only one of hundreds of such cases which exist in Brisbane. I know the case of a woman in the east part of the city, who has her machine going every day of her life from morning till night making these shirts, and even on the seventh day, which was ordained for the rest of all men, she has to keep her machine going in order to earn enough to keep her three children from starving. The Home Secretary may laugh at the facts I am giving, but it is a disgrace to the hon. gentleman and to the Government that such things should be allowed to grow and flourish in our midst; that little children should have the life and soul ground out of them by factory owners, without one single protecting hand being held out to them. We have passed Acts for the protection of savages who are brought to our shores to help planters to build up fortunes, and employ inspectors to see that they are properly housed and fed and not ill-treated by their masters, but we are deaf to any appeals on behalf of the white children, the sisters of our own children, to protect them from the cruel conditions under which they work. I appeal to this House to do something before this session of 1896 closes. I am sure that every member of this House, or rather the majority of them, would be satisfied to see the session prolonged for a week or a fortnight in order that some legislation of the character I have mentioned should be introduced and passed. In all the other colonies of Australasia such legislation is in existence.

The HOME SECRETARY: No.

Mr. McDONNELL: I beg the hon. gentleman's pardon. There is the exception of New South Wales, but a Factories Bill has been passed by the Lower House there and is now before the Upper House, and it is more than probable that the measure will become law within the next few days.

The HOME SECRETARY: Would you be satisfied with that measure?

Mr. McDONNELL: If such a measure had been passed here some years ago the abuses I have mentioned would not exist to the extent they do now. But the measure we want is something after the measure which has been passed in Victoria. That measure provides for boards to be elected by employers and employees, and the board is empowered, not alone to limit the hours of labour for the people employed in the trades concerned, but to fix the number of apprentices and improvers and the price for every single article made inside or outside a factory. We want an Act which will ensure those people the miserable wages they earn, and prohibit the employment of children of tender years in factories and workshops. Only to-day I heard on good authority of a boy of nine years of age who had his arm torn by machinery in a sugar-mill at Beenleigh. When he came to Brisbane the doctors had to cut his arm off. That boy should never have been employed in that mill until he was at least fifteen or sixteen years of age. But I can tell the Home Secretary that in the brickfields at Bundamba and Dinmore boys of from eleven, twelve, to thirteen years of age are employed, and work exactly the same number of hours as the adults. The same thing exists in connection with other employments, the only difference

being that in many cases the children so employed receive no wages. I trust the Government will see their way to do something in the direction I have indicated, and that Queensland will take the same action as has been taken in the other colonies of Australasia to protect women and children from the cruel and heartless conditions under which they work. I beg to move the adjournment of the House.

The HOME SECRETARY: Had the hon. member used this method of moving the adjournment of the House to bring prominently before the House and before the community facts, instead of directing charges against myself and the Government, it would certainly have had more weight in advancing his cause, a cause with which I have every sympathy. It is no use for the hon. member to say that it is a disgrace to the Home Secretary that legislation has not been passed on this subject, for that disgrace must be shared by members of the House. It will be quite time enough for the hon. member to attack the Home Secretary and the Government when members who are charged with the special mission of protecting labour have introduced measures for that purpose and failed to get assistance from the Government. It will then be time to make charges and use language of that kind. I can assure the hon. member that wild and reckless charges do not assist the cause he has at heart. I do not withdraw one word of what I said upon the occasion to which he has referred. Experience has more than satisfied me that there is necessity for legislation in matters regarding the health of those engaged in our industries, and there is no warmer advocate of it in this House than myself. The hon. member was quite wrong in stating that the change of Government was the cause of the Bill being dropped. The fact of the matter is that the arguments advanced by hon. members on the other side were sufficient to induce Ministers to lay the Bill aside, as they considered it did not meet the public wants; it did not go far enough to remedy the complaints that were rife at that time. I may say at once, and I speak for the Government, that we are perfectly satisfied that some legislation is necessary not only upon this question but upon many others of a similar nature. Last year the Government made it a prominent part of the Governor's Speech, and they introduced a measure which was to a great extent upon all-fours with it. Had that measure succeeded in getting through another place it would have been instantly followed by a Factories Bill, which was printed and ready to be introduced. I did my level best, with the assistance of hon. members opposite, to get the first Bill through, but my work had been very heavy, and I felt, after the fate of a Bill of a similar nature, that it would be utterly impossible with the remaining strength I had to get a Factories Bill through by argument; and if I succeeded in getting it through another place at all, it would have to be through sheer force of argument emanating from this House. I assure the hon. member, and those associated with him, that I do not withdraw, in sentiment or practice, one single word that I uttered from the other side of the House upon that occasion, and when I get a chance I bring under the notice of my colleagues the necessity of introducing both a Shops and a Factories Bill. I unhesitatingly say that in a climate like this I would not object to the most drastic legislation which will secure to women and children, who are unable to be represented in this House, the necessary legislation which will protect them, and their lives, and their comfort.

Mr. STEWART: Why do not the Government do it?

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member might answer that question quite as easily as I can. I do not want to take advantage of the opportunity the hon. member has given me to recriminate, but I may put it in this way: Legislation has to be brought forward in Parliament according to certain forms which give the greatest liberty of speech to hon. members. So long as the House is constituted as it is, with the Government upon one side and a disorganised Opposition upon the other, unable to make any arrangements by which they can focus their views, so long will legislation be prevented and obstructed. If particular members think it is necessary for them to express their views upon all subjects, then our system fails. Hon. members will see that when parties cease to be parties and split into factions, although they are perfectly right in their action from their own point of view, business will be prolonged, and that is one of the reasons why we are so slow in the matter of useful legislation. The charge cannot be thrown upon the Government, but it would be more convenient in the conduct of public business if the Government could deal with hon. members opposite as an Opposition. There is a party claiming to be a Labour party sitting upon the other side, but it does not undertake the duties of an Opposition.

Mr. McDONALD: You will not recognise the leader upon this side, and you must put up with the consequences.

The HOME SECRETARY: Nobody would be more glad than the Premier to hear the Labour leader get up and say he was the leader of the Opposition, and accept the responsibilities of the position. If that were done I am sure we would get through the Shops Bill and the Factories Bill, and other measures. I do not want to gloss over the facts that the hon. member for Fortitude Valley has brought before the House, but I am satisfied that no Factories Act will stop what he wants to be stopped. He stated that some person, a rogue clearly, came to this colony, and got work from certain wholesale houses, let it out to others, and when he got the work done he did not pay for it. The hon. member told us there is a Factories Act in Victoria which he wishes us to imitate, but he also told us that this man came from Victoria, and had done the very same thing there.

Mr. McDONNELL: I did not say the very same thing there.

The HOME SECRETARY: No matter what Factories Act may be in force, you will be unable to prevent men being rogues.

Mr. McDONNELL: You can make the wholesale houses responsible for the payment of the wages.

The HOME SECRETARY: You cannot do that. The Factories Act which was originally introduced was to protect the general health of the community, and the legislature can do that just as it has done it under the Health Act. I had not heard before the hon. member made the statement to-day with reference to the employment of boys in the brickyards at Bundamba, but that was not a question of employers letting out work. That must have arisen from labourers—disgraceful labourers—employing their own children when they ought to have been sending them to school.

Mr. McDONNELL: Not their own children.

The HOME SECRETARY: I do not know the particulars, but certainly the sinners in that instance must have been the parents, who should have sent their children to school. We can regulate the conditions under which people work with regard to health, and the Bill which I prepared last year did not profess to deal with these complicated economic questions. I never had

the slightest idea of introducing legislation of the kind desired by the hon. member. In a young country like this such questions must be settled by the community on ordinary lines, but we must begin in another direction. The Factories Act in New South Wales does not attempt to deal with any question of the sort raised by the hon. member. It only deals with the question as it affects the public health. Wherever they have attempted to deal with that question the evasions have been very great. You cannot by legislation prevent people being dishonest. Penal laws will not help. If the business of the House will permit, I hope to be able to submit, even this session, legislation in regard to factories on the lines I have indicated, but I am quite sure that will not satisfy the hon. member. What he wants is legislation which will prevent rogues. The law already provides means by which people can deal with such men, if they like to exercise it. They have power to retain possession of the material which contains any of their work until they have been paid for that labour. They have a lien on the cloth which belongs to the wholesale house until their work has been paid for. These work people are like all other human beings, they trust to human nature, and they have found human nature deceitful. No matter how we may legislate people will continue to trust others, and they will continue to be deceived. I sympathise thoroughly with those persons who have been robbed, and if anyone can show me how it can be done, I will bring back those men, so that they may return to these people the wages which were their just due. I do not think it possible to introduce this year a Shops Bill, but I have a Bill prepared on lines similar to that introduced by the Labour Government in New South Wales.

Mr. TURLEY: What nonsense; it is not a Labour Government.

The HOME SECRETARY: It is kept in power by the Labour vote, and it should recognise the claims of labour. If I find that the business of the House will permit, I hope to be able to introduce the Factories Bill promised last session. That will be the first instalment of what the hon. member wants, and the hon. member will have no warmer supporter than myself in trying to get that Bill through.

Mr. GLASSEY: The speech of the Home Secretary on the whole is somewhat disappointing. From my knowledge of his feelings on this question, I thought he would be able to give the House more hope of a measure being introduced at an early date dealing with this very important question. The hon. gentleman says there has been no time; that there is a want of organisation on this side which has prevented the introduction of this measure, and he also says he is tired and weary after some years of official life. I want to mention another reason which the hon. gentleman has ignored. It is that the Cabinet is not united on this question. That is the real reason, and I will give some proof in support of the statement. If the Home Secretary was in earnest, and was imbued with lofty motives, I say that in spite of the divisions in the Cabinet he would have given some sign of introducing this legislation.

The HOME SECRETARY: That is only imagination.

Mr. GLASSEY: I will show by documentary evidence that there is no imagination about it. It is an open secret that the Cabinet is not united on the matter, and I will refer to what was said during the recent election campaign. What did the hon. gentleman say in February last?—

"The member for Townsville had stated that the Colonial Secretary had brought in an Early Closing

Bill, and the Government stonewalled it, with the result that it was thrown out by the Upper House. He (Mr. Tozer) assured them that there was no need for Mr. Ogden to make that statement. He did his level best to draft that Bill, and was particularly intent on passing it. He never worked harder in his life than he did to get it through, and he got it through the Assembly with a large Government majority supporting it. It was not thrown out by the Upper House, but by the pockets of interested persons, who threw it out. If he lived he would bring in that Bill again, and would not rest satisfied until it was passed, because he thoroughly believed in it."

What is the reason the Bill was not introduced? It was not even mentioned in the Governor's Speech, although it formed part of their programme in 1895. Was it not owing to the dissensions to which I have referred? If the Home Secretary had been sincere he would have put his foot down; he would have risen to the occasion and told his colleagues that if that Bill was not included in the programme they could find another Home Secretary. During the election for North Brisbane the following question was put to the Attorney-General:—

"If he was in favour of the early closing of shops and the limitation of the hours of work therein."

Mr. Byrnes said—

"The subject was involved in a Bill brought in by the Government. As a member of the Government he adhered to what was contained in it. He was entirely in favour of the early-closing system, but thought the only way it could be brought about was by voluntary arrangement."

Mr. FINNEY: Hear, hear! That is the only way you will ever establish it.

Mr. GLASSEY: The hon. member for Toowong has had great experience, and has done something to assist the early-closing movement, but let me tell him I have watched this movement for forty years, and have done what I could towards protecting the young, and I say that in no country in the world has there yet been any successful attempt by the people themselves in the direction I indicate.

Mr. FINNEY: The people can do it if they want to.

Mr. GLASSEY: The people cannot do it; the best proof of that is that they have not done it. What has been the effect of legislation in Great Britain and in the United States? I have documents showing what has been done in America, and hon. members would be astonished at the drastic measures they have been compelled to adopt in that country. I can assure the Attorney-General that if he lives for a few years he will have cause to alter his mind on the question of voluntary effort. I know many merchants in Brisbane who have altered their minds very materially on the matter.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That is a proof of the voluntary principle.

Mr. GLASSEY: They have come to the conclusion that there is no means by which this matter can be decided except by law. I sat on the Royal Commission of 1891, and I think I am correct in saying that Mr. Chapman, one of the largest merchants in the city, was then opposed to legislation on this subject. But I have since heard with pleasure that gentleman state on a public platform that, after having given the matter much consideration, he had come to the conclusion that there was no means by which those persons could be protected except by the power and through the agency of the legislature.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He has made his pile, I suppose, and that is why he talked like that.

Mr. GLASSEY: I do not know whether he has made his pile, but I do know that as far as Great Britain is concerned it has been demonstrated for the last fifty, sixty, or 100 years that short hours of labour cannot be permanently maintained except by law, and that good sanitary

conditions for the protection of the health and lives of work-people cannot be established except by means of the legislature. And that has been demonstrated over and over again in the States of America. It has been proved conclusively and beyond cavil in every country that voluntary effort is not a success. To my own knowledge it has been tried without success in Queensland for the last ten years.

Mr. FINNEY: Look at the headway it has made in the early-closing movement.

Mr. GLASSEY: I have seen a time when there were far more shops closed at 1 o'clock on Saturdays than is the case now. Some of them closed for a time, and then went back again to the old system; it is only one house here and there that abides by the early closing arrangement. I am aware that in Bundaberg, Maryborough, and Toowoomba, and a few other places, they have been able to keep their weekly half-holiday, but in Rockhampton the weekly half-holiday arrangement was broken through because one of the large storekeepers in that town would not keep it. All these things prove that the voluntary effort is a failure. The Home Secretary said that members on this side should introduce legislation dealing with this matter, and that if we failed and the Government did not then do something to pass such measures into law we might have some reason to complain of the action of the Government. Was the hon. gentleman serious in talking in that way? Seeing that seventy-one members have only two and a-half hours a week for private business, it is impossible for a private member to pass a measure of such importance, and if measures for the protection of human life and limb are to be passed into law it is essential that they should be taken in hand by a powerful Government. We all know the history of the Early Closing Bill introduced last year. I hope that when we have another measure introduced it will be far more drastic and far reaching than that one.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It was defeated by your friends in the Upper House.

Mr. GLASSEY: Not by my friends. There are no friends of mine who will oppose legislation for the protection of human life and limb. I should like to see them assisting the Government in passing even the modicum of reform embodied in that Bill. I believe that the real and sole reason why we have not had a measure introduced this session is that the Cabinet are not agreed on the matter. It is well known that the Attorney-General and the Secretary for Public Instruction are not by any means favourable to such legislation. I believe the Premier is fairly favourable, and that the Home Secretary is very favourable. In conclusion, I would say to the Attorney-General that if he lives for a few years, as I trust he will, he will alter his opinion as to the necessity for bringing about such changes in the law as I should like to see—changes which are desirable not only in the interests of those immediately concerned but which will also result in great benefit to the whole of Queensland.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I had not intended to speak on this subject, but the few remarks of the hon. member for Bundaberg have brought me to my feet. He practically has prayed for me a long life—a long legislative life—but I believe he would do his very utmost to bring my legislative life to a speedy termination to-morrow if he had the power. However, I take the expression of his wish on this occasion as really embodying his most pious thoughts. He expressed the wish that I may live long in a legislative sense, and bring about many changes. I want to see the hon. member have a long legislative career, because I believe the longer he remains in politics the more certain will be the

position of a strong Government in this colony. I believe he is one of the best friends the Government have got.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: That is stale.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It may be stale, but stale bread is good for some purposes. The hon. member says he hopes that I may yet bring about some changes in legislation. I should like to bring about some changes in the hon. gentleman's views on this subject, but I have given him up as being beyond redemption in this matter. The hon. member says the Cabinet is divided on the subject. I have never heard of it.

Mr. DANIELS: The Home Secretary said so.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I did not hear the speech of the Home Secretary, but I know that Bill was brought forward, and I do not know that any member of the Ministry dissented from it. If I had wished to do a bit of popularity hunting, which I know some hon. members do whenever they are standing on a public platform, I should have said when I was before the electors that I was prepared to go for that Bill at all hazards. I said there what I honestly thought. I supported the Bill when it was brought forward, although I had no hope that it would realise the wishes of those who were supporting it. People may bring in measures I have not absolute faith in; but I am not prepared to say my opinion should prevail, and in that way I supported the Bill brought in by the Home Secretary. The Ministry supported it, but at the same time I am free to express the opinion that I did not think it would meet all the wishes of the people who desired it. Hon. members often support legislation because they do not see any reason to dissent from it—because their honest hearts wish to realise the result aimed at; and nothing would give me greater pleasure than to see factories conducted upon satisfactory conditions and shops closed at such hours that the employees would be able to obtain outside relaxation, which they undoubtedly require. But I do not believe these things will be achieved by legislation. I think the voluntary principle is the solution of the difficulty. The people must be educated up to believing that it is the right thing. The hon. member for Bundaberg quoted an instance to show that this half-holiday system is in force by mere voluntary agreement, but that is an argument against himself, because it shows that in that case circumstances were favourable to it. The hon. member must distinguish between a place like Brisbane and an up-country town like Gympie, because the circumstances are different. It is no use trying to enforce such a law in Brisbane when it is not in force in Sydney.

Mr. McDONNELL: It is in force in Melbourne.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I lived in Melbourne, and, although they had the law there it was not enforced.

Mr. McDONNELL: An amending Act came into force on the 1st of this month.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: We do not yet know how that will work. If we enforce such a law here before it is enforced in Sydney our trade will be driven there, and that is not a result I wish to achieve. Hon. members must not look at this from the parochial point of view. Brisbane, Rockhampton, and Townsville are not places where there is a mere local trade. There is an up-country and a coastal trade to be supplied which will not wait upon hours and matters of that sort, but must be carried out if it is to be kept in one particular centre. Although I would like to see the hours of labour reasonably shortened, I think the people engaged in the trades are the people to decide the matter; and although I am not prepared to dissent from any legislation that may be brought forward by the

Government, I am not prepared to say that it will have the effect people think. Mr. J. Morley took very strong views upon this subject, and he is the soundest and most philosophical Liberal in England.

Mr. SIM: Is Mr. Gladstone dead?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I am glad to say he is still in the land of the living, but with all due respect to him I am prepared to take the opinion of Mr. Morley, who represented such a place as Newcastle, and was prepared to go before the electors and stake the result upon his opinions. He was returned, but he was opposed by a Tory who had the meanness to try to obtain the support of the independent Labour party, and the objection urged against Mr. Morley was that was not in favour of a compulsory eight-hours system. Later on at the general election he was defeated, but will any hon. member say that it was a creditable thing of Newcastle to have ousted him? It was a perfect disgrace, although he might have opposed a section of the people, because he was in line with the best thinkers in regard to industrial and democratic legislation.

Mr. DANIELS: Why don't you imitate him?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I have not the ability, and therefore can only express my humble admiration.

Mr. SIM: Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: If it is any flattery to have an admiration, I subscribe myself a simple flatterer, and I am sorry hon. members will not confine their flattery in the same way. I have quoted Mr. Morley before, but always with expressions of dissent from hon. members opposite. Apart from that, what is the use of bringing in laws that will be ineffective for the purpose?

Mr. McDONNELL: Don't you believe in factory legislation.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I believe in legislation which will be suitable for the age—that will be up to the requirements of the times.

Mr. DUNSFORD: I thought you believed in voluntary action.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: There are times when legislation is the true expression of voluntary action. A great majority of people may be agreed upon a particular subject, and then their views should find force in the shape of legislation; but I do not think that is the case in regard to this matter. What the so-called reformers should do is to educate the people. If they bring in drastic legislation without educating the people there will be a reaction, and instead of the employees being better off they will be worse off than before. That remark applies to all kinds of crude legislation which often emanates from hon. members holding the opinions of those opposite. Many things that emanate from those hon. members turn out to be really relics of the dark ages—suggestions 500 or 600 years old. You will see them there in all their pristine freshness. On this particular question we want an expression of opinion from far more people than we have yet heard from that this drastic legislation is absolutely necessary. With all sympathy with the employees in the shops about Brisbane, I say that we have no justification for imposing legislation on this colony that may be restrictive of trade and enterprise in other parts of the country where this legislation is not called for. That is the position I intend to take up. Any legislation brought forward, if I think it effective of this purpose, will have my full support, but I certainly am not going to subscribe myself as an advocate of a system of legislation that will perhaps prove disastrous in its results, and in many cases absolutely tyrannous in its operation.

Mr. SIM: The Attorney-General on a recent occasion twitted me with generally in a generous mood answering my own arguments. I think this afternoon we have had an example of this from the hon. gentleman himself. He began by stating that he was absolutely in favour of voluntary effort, and did not believe in legislation; and he wound up by saying that he believed in legislation.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I did not say I was in favour of legislation.

Mr. SIM: The hon. gentleman said he was in favour of voluntary effort, and he subsequently stated in reply to the introducer of this motion that he was in favour of legislation, and also that, as a member of the Government, he was not at variance with the Home Secretary. Therefore, not being at variance with the Home Secretary, he must be in favour of legislation, because the Home Secretary promised that before the close of the session he would, if possible, introduce a Bill to give effect to some portion of the motion of the hon. member for Fortitude Valley.

THE HOME SECRETARY: Just the same as the Health Act.

Mr. SIM: The arguments which have been used by the hon. member this afternoon have been used in bygone years, before the hon. gentleman was born, and were met by men as able as the hon. gentleman. The voluntary system was tried in communities much greater than Queensland when I was a child, and it proved absolutely ineffective, and legislation was found necessary.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I used the argument of freedom, which will last for all time, I hope.

Mr. SIM: There is an old Roman law—*"Salus populi suprema lex"*—and it is one that ought to be taken into serious consideration by the hon. gentleman and by Ministers generally, because it has been conclusively proved by the report of the commission which sat in 1891 that the exhausting labour which is being carried on in this place, in consequence of the sweating which is being practised, is seriously deteriorating the people, particularly women and children, both physically, mentally, and morally. I do not think any hon. member will attempt to deny that. It is well known that this employment of women and children for protracted hours of labour is still going on, and that the evil is increasing to an alarming extent. As it is the duty of the Government to protect not only the property of the people but their lives, they ought to see that legislation is passed without any further loss of time, and so prevent this waste of material strength. The Attorney-General advocated the extraordinary doctrine that this legislation, which affects the lives and the health of a large number of people, should not be introduced because it would be restrictive of trade. I would remind the hon. gentleman of two lines written by a countryman of his own—one of the most distinguished men who ever lived—

"Ill fares that land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates and men decay."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: They do not decay.

Mr. SIM: I assert that they do, and on the evidence of a document signed, I believe, by the hon. gentleman himself, and I assert it on the evidence of my own senses. I was present when a population as large as that of Queensland assembled to see the late Earl of Shaftesbury unveil a statue to Richard Oastler, the factory king, who met the same arguments that have been advanced this afternoon so effectively that their advocates were beaten, and the Factories Act was passed.

The PREMIER: We are now in Queensland.

Mr. SIM: It is most extraordinary that when a question is raised which Ministers do not like, they object to other colonies being referred to as examples, and we are told that we must legislate for ourselves without reference to the other colonies; but this afternoon the Attorney-General trotted us off to Sydney and Melbourne when it suited his purpose to do so. We were told what was done in Victoria and New South Wales and in the democratic colony of South Australia.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I would not follow South Australia at any price.

Mr. SIM: The hon. gentleman asked us whether this law that we ask for is in force in New South Wales and Victoria. What have we to do with those colonies? It is Queensland we have to consider; and no attempt has been made by Ministers to deny the evils which the hon. member for Fortitude Valley alleges exist in this colony. What we have to deal with is how to remedy this growing evil.

The PREMIER: The main question is, can we do it this session?

Mr. SIM: The Premier is now sitting between two gentlemen who on this question appear to hold different views.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Not in the slightest.

Mr. SIM: The Attorney-General has stated that he is a believer in voluntary effort, as legislation would be restrictive of trade.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That is entirely different from what I said. I said that I would support any legislation that deals with the subject, though I do not believe it will prove effectual.

Mr. SIM: If the hon. gentleman believes that, I have no doubt he will give hearty support to the Home Secretary, who I am thankful to believe has stronger beliefs on this question than the Attorney-General.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I do not want any encomiums from you.

Mr. SIM: I am not attempting to pass any encomiums upon the hon. gentleman. I am simply attempting to meet his arguments upon two points.

The PREMIER: What is the urgency?

Mr. SIM: We wish a distinct understanding from the Government that legislation will be introduced as soon as possible, and we are willing to stay here a fortnight later in order to bring that about. We believe an evil exists, and that a remedy should be found. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley has given us figures to prove what is going on, and they show that when we are wearing certain garments, in the words of Thomas Hood, "It is not linen we're wearing out, but human creatures' lives." The hon. gentleman has given instances showing that women are employed from daylight until dark, and even if we know of only a very few instances of hardship it is our duty to remedy the evil, for even the humblest citizen deserves the protection of the State.

The PREMIER: Throw everything else aside.

Mr. SIM: We are dealing with subjects which are not half as important. It does not follow because we are addressing empty benches that the subject is not of importance. There is an impending crisis in the other Chamber, and possibly that is the reason for the empty benches, but I do hope the Government will take this matter into their serious consideration, and that they will at an early date bring down a Bill which will have the effect of remedying the evils which have been so much complained of.

Mr. FINNEY: I was not here when the junior member for Fortitude Valley was speaking but if I had known the subject was going to be debated I certainly would have been here. However, I know the hon. member's principles

so well that I can pretty well guess what he has said. I agree with him entirely in trying to get shorter hours for business people, but I do not believe in the method he proposes to adopt. He has been a very hardworking secretary to the Early Closing Association for many years, and I have a great admiration for the persistent way in which he has worked, but I never could agree with the principle that legislation is the only method by which early closing can be brought about. I am thoroughly of opinion that legislation could be applied to factories, but there is a great difference between factories and shops. In factories you only have the employer and employees to deal with, but in shops you have the general public to take into consideration. If they wish to buy, nothing in the world will stop them. There are two classes of laws. Some lie in abeyance because Governments find that they are not in accordance with public feeling, but where the public feeling is in favour of a law there is very little trouble in carrying it out.

The HOME SECRETARY: Why do we shut the public-houses?

Mr. FINNEY: We do not want to keep them open all night. They are shut up by sheer exhaustion, I suppose, but they do not finally put their lights out until 12 o'clock. The people who help most to maintain these long hours in shops, in some of which their own children are employed, are the mass of the people. I know the member for Bundamba would never encourage his family to shop late, and it is a pity some of his followers do not profit by his example. The fact is that so long as people find it pays them to keep open they will do so.

Mr. FRASER: It pays you to shut.

Mr. FINNEY: Yes; because I like to keep my health. I consider the wealth I enjoy in having good health, but I could make a great deal more money by keeping open on Saturday nights.

Mr. KERR: You keep a good light as an advertisement.

Mr. FINNEY: We do not want to hide our light under a bushel. I hope the hon. member for Fortitude Valley is not jealous of us having the shop lighted up. Our footpath is a favourite walk for the hon. member's friends, and as it is lit up people have to behave themselves.

Mr. DUNSFORD: You believe in advertising, even in this House.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. FINNEY: I believe in speaking on a subject I am acquainted with. There are some persons who never give one credit for good motives. When our Saviour was on earth there were plenty of people who would give him credit for nothing good. If the people would only make up their minds not to shop late, the voluntary principle would work very well. It is all nonsense to say that for the last forty years there has been no improvement. I was a member of an early closing association in Dublin thirty-five years ago, and at that time all the shops kept open until 10 o'clock on Saturday night and 9 o'clock on other nights. At the present day the principal shops throughout the United Kingdom shut at 6 o'clock in the evening, and many of them at 1 o'clock on Saturday. Those are really good hours. I regret to say that I think the Government have done a great deal to prolong the hours worked on Saturday night, because when a holiday falls on Saturday they move it on to Monday, thus encouraging the late closers on Saturday night. The early closing people have to suffer, because there are a lot of storekeepers in Brisbane who go to the Home Secretary and make out that it will be a great loss to them to have to close on the Saturday. But it is a free country, and they can keep open if they wish. The early closing

people might, with equal justice, say that it is a great loss to them to have a holiday kept on the Monday, because that is their best business day, and, therefore, if a holiday falls on the Monday it should be observed on the Saturday.

The HOME SECRETARY: This discussion is about a Factories Act.

Mr. FINNEY: This is a discussion on factories and the early closing of shops.

The SPEAKER: I would remind the hon. member that the motion for adjournment was made for the purpose of calling attention to the necessity for introducing shops and factories legislation.

Mr. FINNEY: So I understand. A shop is a place where goods are sold, and a factory is a place where they are manufactured. I hope that in future the Government will consider this matter of the changing of holidays from Saturday to Monday; as it destroys two days' business, and is only for the benefit of a section of the community. I believe in the principle of early closing, and have carried it out ever since I have had a business of my own. I believe in closing at 6 o'clock in the evening, and at 1 o'clock on Saturday, and have for many years preached and practised that principle. I should like to see all business houses doing the same thing, but I do not think it would be a just thing to compel a lot of people in the suburbs, whose whole trade depends upon the business they do at night, to close at a particular hour, whether they like it or not. Of course if a law were passed making everyone close at the same hour, that would be all right, but if people would refrain from shopping at night there would be very little trouble in getting shops closed early, and no need for legislation on the subject, as business people would not keep their places open and pay for gas if it did not pay them to do so. I should like to see a Factory Bill introduced, and should be very happy to do all in my power to assist in improving the position of those people who are employed in shops making up goods at what I call disgraceful prices. With regard to the cases which the hon. member for Fortitude Valley has referred to, I do not think we could pass any law that would prevent thieves, rogues, robbers, and scoundrels going about the world, because they will be there to the end of the chapter. One of the first men born in this world was a murderer, and to the end of the chapter there will be thieves and murderers among us. There is no doubt that what the hon. member says is perfectly true, and though I do not believe in cruelty to animals I would like to see those scoundrels who come here and get unfortunate girls to work for them and then clear off without paying them a sixpence tied to a cart-tail and flogged.

Mr. McDONNELL: The wholesale houses are worse for giving them work to make up.

Mr. FINNEY: The wholesale houses do not know that a man is going to rob his employees, and it is rather hard to blame them for the conduct of such men. There are a lot of people whose girls earn a few shillings a week by doing such work, and are of great assistance in helping to keep the family; and business men cannot inquire from each person who comes to them for work whether he is going to pay his assistant. If any wholesale house had any idea that the men to whom they gave work were men of the character referred to by the hon. member, they would be afraid to trust them with their own goods, and the fact that they did trust them with their goods showed that they believed them to be honest. I wonder that the men do not go off with the goods as well as the wages of their employees. I would readily assist to pass a Factory Act which would improve the position of all workers, and I would

like to see everyone who is able to work receive wages that would support him. Of course when persons are learning their business they cannot expect such a wage, as they are really of little use, and the time of a good assistant is lost in teaching them their business, but when they have learnt their business they should be paid a fair salary. But as long as there are people in the world there will of course be bargain-hunters, and there will always be people prepared to give them bargains. And so the cutting system goes on from one year to another throughout the whole civilised world, and I do not see what is going to stop it. In fact it seems to me that as we get more civilised the practice becomes keener and keener, and that it will go on to the end of the chapter; but I dare say the lessons which have been taught some wholesale houses in this matter will lead them to be much more particular in future. I believe in the principles advocated by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley and will support a measure for carrying out his views so far as factories are concerned, but I cannot see my way clear to compel people by Act of Parliament to close their businesses at a certain hour.

Mr. FRASER: I am sorry I was not here when the hon. member for the Valley introduced this motion, and have only been able to gather what was said about sweating from the remarks made by the hon. member for Toowong. I contend that there is no such thing in this colony as sweating. I do not know anything about the retail houses here, but I know something about the wholesale houses, and I can assure hon. members that no wholesale house in Brisbane has any idea of sweating. I do not believe such a thing exists in the Australian colonies, and if the hon. member knew the meaning of the word he would not have used it.

Mr. DAWSON: What is sweating?

Mr. FRASER: It commences with No. 1 Jew, who is able to speak English in London, and then it goes on to No. 2 Jew who cannot understand English or can only talk a little, and then it goes on to No. 3 Jew, and so it goes all the way round. One smart man goes to the wholesale houses, and gets work which he gives out again to men who do not understand the language. It is all very well for the hon. member to talk about sweating, but there is none of it here. It might be done in the retail trade, but it is not in the wholesale trade.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Yes, it is.

Mr. FRASER: I can assure you it is not.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member must address the Chair. I would ask hon. members to refrain from interjecting. The time allowed hon. members is very limited, and they can deliver their speeches much better without interjections.

Mr. FRASER: I must apologise; but it is not my fault that they make interjections. I would like to correct the hon. member with regard to early closing. We have no factories yet, only tinpot shops; but the hon. member does not want legislation to enforce early closing, while I do. He wants to blow his own horn, and show that he will close at 1 o'clock without any Act of Parliament; but others will not follow him, and they must be compelled to. The hon. member has lost money by early closing in the absence of legislation compelling others to close early also. I am sorry that the Bill brought in last year was thrown out by the old fogies in the other House.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member is distinctly out of order in referring to members of the Council in that manner.

Mr. FRASER: I must apologise, but the hon. member for Toowong whispered it in my ear just now. I hope this discussion will result

in something beneficial to the community, and the hon. member for Fortitude Valley will have my support in anything he may bring forward to shorten the hours of labour. At the same time we have no more grievous sinners in that respect than the supporters of the Labour party.

Mr. STEWART: They returned you.

Mr. FRASER: You did not. I have done more hard work than you have. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley will have my support.

Mr. STEWART: The Labour party has had many sins to answer for.

Mr. FRASER: You need not speak for them.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. STEWART: The Home Secretary said if it were not for the Labour party there would be no difficulty in passing a Factories Bill. He seems to infer that, because the Opposition and Labour party have no recognised mouthpiece, there is a great deal more talking than there is any necessity for, but I have found that there has been less talking since the Labour party came here than there ever was before. The hon. member knows perfectly well that if he brings forward a Factories Bill he will not have the slightest difficulty with the Labour party. If we cannot get all we want, we will take all we can get. This is a question that affects the physique of all the people.

The PREMIER: In Brisbane.

Mr. STEWART: In all the large towns of the colony; but if it affected only the people of Brisbane, or if only one citizen labours under difficulties which we can remove, it is our bounden duty to remove that difficulty. One-fourth of the people of the colony are in Brisbane, and they are living under greater disabilities than in any other part of the colony, and they should be considered. The Government do not desire to pass legislation of this kind; but the Home Secretary admits the importance of the subject. He says that there is nothing of more consequence to the country than the health of its people. Then why does he not bring in a Bill which will promote the health of the people? The cattle of a portion of the country were lately affected by ticks and the hon. gentleman brought in a Bill to deal with that matter, and what opposition did he meet with from the Labour party? The members of this party assisted him in every way to pass the Bill, which took only a few days to rush through. Then it was property that was affected, and, as we all know, the present Government looks after property very carefully, but it lays no particular stress upon its duties in regard to health or life. The Home Secretary taunted us on this side with not bringing forward any legislation, but as the leader of the Labour party asked—What opportunities have private members of carrying any legislation? Any legislation brought forward by members on this side has been most religiously talked out by hon. members on the other side, and I have not the slightest doubt that if we brought in any measure attempting to deal with this question no one would be readier than the hon. gentleman himself to burke it. Some hon. members have asserted that there has been no demand for this legislation. I would just remind hon. members of the Royal Commission which was appointed in 1891 to inquire into this question, and I shall read one or two extracts from both the majority and minority reports to show the necessity for this legislation. I shall quote some remarks with regard to the sanitary conditions under which employees in shops and factories were required to work. [The hon. member read extracts from the report referring to the insanitary conditions under which many people had to live and

work; the closet accommodation was inadequate, and without due regard to the proper separation of the sexes or sufficient privacy for the women; with the exception of some of the larger factories, there was not sufficient room or ventilation for employees when the establishments worked full-handed. The members of the Commission recommended that it was imperative that the local authorities should have more extended and better defined powers than their officers considered they had for dealing with overcrowding in factories and in connection with closet accommodation.] There is sufficient in those few paragraphs to warrant us in taking instant action. Five years have elapsed since that report was written, and I have no doubt the evil has become intensified. Competition is becoming keener every year, the population is increasing, and the value of property has been enhanced, and, as a necessary consequence, in many cases the owners of factories are induced to curtail their business premises. A great deal has been said about early closing. The hon. member for Toowong closes voluntarily, and the shopkeepers and the public of Brisbane are indebted to him for the example he has set, but the fact that very few have followed his noble example is a very good reason why the State should step in and make closing at a reasonable hour compulsory. I think it was the hon. member for Brisbane North who blamed the supporters of the Labour party with being the chief offenders in the matter of late shopping; but I contend that if the shops were not open nobody could get into them. No one desires to go into Mr. Finney's shop on Saturday afternoons for the very good reason that the shop is shut, and if that was the case with all shops there would be no late shopping. We have heard a good deal about voluntarism. The Attorney-General at first said that he was in favour of voluntary action, but then he came down from his high horse, and agreed that State interference was at times necessary. The necessity for legal prevention in the case of shops and factories has been abundantly proved. After the facts adduced by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley and the admissions of the Home Secretary and Attorney-General, combined with the fact that last session we had an Early Closing Bill passed by Parliament, there can be no doubt of the necessity, and in common with others who have spoken I desire to know why action is not taken. The Premier says that if this Bill was brought in all other legislation would be blocked. No doubt it would, for the reason that we never can have two Bills before us at the same time. If the Government bring in this Bill I have no doubt it will receive every consideration from this side. Either they believe the question to be important or they do not. If the Government believe human life to be of any consequence, let them introduce a Shops and Factories Act. If they do not bring in such a Bill, they are merely gulling the country with vain platitudes. We legislate for the prevention of ticks and the diseases of fruit trees, and provide homes for inebriates, but here we have a measure demanded which strikes at the very root of the prosperity of the people and the Government will not move a finger. The leader of the Government has insinuated that the Government are at sixes and sevens on this question, and if the Home Secretary is honest in the matter it is his bounden duty to come over here and help us to carry out this necessary legislation.

The HOME SECRETARY: I will say the Lord's Prayer. "Deliver us from evil."

Mr. STEWART: I do not believe the hon. gentleman ever repeats the Lord's Prayer. He does not spell "pray" with an "a," but with another letter. If the hon. gentleman is in earnest he ought to be with the people who wish

to carry out reform. If he brings forward a measure to legislate for shops and factories he will find no more genuine supporter than myself.

Mr. HOOLAN: It seems necessary to offer some reason for moving the adjournment of the House and interfering with the Government business. I think very strong reasons have been given by hon. members on this side. The question does not concern the early closing of shops so much as the protection of the 3,000 women and girls at present engaged in earning miserable wages in Brisbane. The Government say this is not the time or the way to advance the question. Then let them show us the time and the way to advance legislation for the protection of the women and girls who are grinding away day after day to sew the clothes which are on the backs of hon. members opposite and on the backs of all who support them. Let it be known that these wretched sweaters' wages which are paid in this city are paid for the purpose of providing the female members of the Government and their party—their wives and their relatives—with what they wear on their backs. It is not only the bushman with his moleskins made at 4d. a pair, and the seamen with their dungarees at 2d. a pair, who reap the benefit of these sweaters' wages, and who are benefited by the impoverished condition of the seamstresses of Brisbane.

Mr. GRIMES: Possibly they make your clothes.

Mr. HOOLAN: Possibly they do, and it is all the more reason why, if I cannot afford protection to them, that the Government should step in and provide a drastic remedy for a very great evil. Now the Government tell their supporters that there is other urgent legislation required which calls forth all their powers and needs all their attention. I challenge them on that point. They have no legislation requiring urgent or pressing attention. The legislation that we demand inside and outside of Parliament is the most urgent that could be brought forward, and certainly it is urgently desired not only in Brisbane but throughout the colony. I do not profess to be the champion or advocate of the seamstresses of Brisbane. Being a Northern member I have something else to occupy my attention, but a worthy object should, of course, occupy the attention of every member of the House, and I am forced to take a part in this discussion. When I was in Brisbane formerly I heard that the firm of D. L. Brown and Co., Scott, Dawson, and Stewart, Stewart and Hemmant, R. Armour and Co., and many others, including the firm of the hon. member for Toowong—in an off-hand way—were particularly engaged in this sweating business. I heard that those four big firms and others, who are behind the Government, were actually building up their businesses and their position in society by sweating seamstresses and little girls, but I thought it was a yarn, that it was too monstrous a thing to believe that anyone professing to be a respectable man and the father of a family, and holding a prominent position in the church to which he belonged, should try to keep up an appearance before the world by making a few shillings and pence out of the sweat of tailoresses and seamstresses. But I find on inquiry that it is a fact; that both little firms and big firms are, to use a vulgar phrase, engaged in it up to their necks. Here is a letter on the subject which I have received from a seamstress—

“17th July, 1896.

“Now that you are again in Parliament, I trust you will, with the assistance of others, endeavour to make some alteration in the present rate of wages and prices paid to the working women and girls of Brisbane. The rate of pay just keeps us from starving, and that is all. If you would call up some evening in company with Mr. Frank McDonnell, the member for the Valley, I will give you a list of prices that will, I think, astonish you.

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I do trust that something will be done for the seamstresses this year, and I further think if you pressed the matter on the Government it could be brought to a successful issue.

“JANE HAMMOND.”

The PREMIER: Put it on the table of the House.

Mr. HOOLAN: This is a copy, but I can lay the original on the table if the hon. gentleman desires it, and seamstresses and their daughters will appear at the bar of the House to support those statements, if necessary. I do not look upon the matter as a laughing matter. I call those people my kith and kin, my flesh and blood, and I do not believe in laughing at their miseries and misfortunes. I am as ready as anyone to laugh when it is a man who is concerned, be he white or black, but when it comes to dealing with women and their everyday work I am not inclined to laugh. I think the man is wanting in heart who will laugh at a degradation which is so akin to harlotry in this city of Brisbane. I wrote to that woman in a somewhat jocular strain, telling her that as an individual member I had not much influence in the country or in Parliament, that I had no influence with the Press in the city, that I knew very little about Brisbane and its doings, and was not particularly anxious to know more, and that I thought she might put the matter into better hands. I also said that it was her duty as a respectable hardworking woman, with any amount of common sense, to go with other seamstresses in a body to their various clergymen, and state their case to those men—the men of God, who professed to follow in the footsteps of the founder of the Christian religion—and see if they could not do something to assist them in getting their grievances redressed. This is her answer—

“4th August, 1896.

“Sir,—I regret to say that I have no faith in the clergymen of Brisbane. They are all in touch and in sympathy with the sweaters and grinders, who despoil us of the fruits of our labour. . . . There is no hope for us from the side of the Church or the clergymen, and, for myself, I have long ago decided that there is no redress to be obtained in that way. The clergy advise humility and obedience to what they term ‘Divine will’; and I must confess that if the sweating prices of the Brisbane shops are the outcome of Divine will, it is time to doubt even the existence of the Almighty, and to seek a midnight plunge in the Brisbane River as a relief to slavery.

“JANE HAMMOND.”

The hon. gentleman can have plenty of proofs of that if he requires them. Some time ago an agitation was got up in the city on this matter by persons interested, and the Press did its duty so far as laid in its power. However much we may criticise the Press, we know that it is not the duty of the Press—particularly of the big papers—to pry into everything. If they did try to expose all the nefarious tricks, abuses, villainies, and degradations in this city of Brisbane they would not live a month, unless they had a big banking account behind them. I will give the *Courier* credit for going as far as any other daily paper in Australia would have gone in seeking to expose these abuses. It laid statements of the case before the Government and the country, and what has become of those statements? They have simply been dropped overboard, as so many unpleasant acts. The matter has come into prominence lately through the action of that man Pollard, who evidently thought that these unfortunate tailoresses and seamstresses were not sufficiently sweated in the first instance, and D. L. Brown and Co., Scott, Dawson, and Stewart, Stewart and Hemmant, R. Armour and Co., and other establishments, have encouraged unknown persons to go to their places and receive large bales of cut-up stuff. They order the raw material, and it is made up at sweaters' prices, and the people who employ

these women and children run away without paying them. The Government may probably doubt this, but to make assurance more sure I have obtained some affidavits on the subject. This man came here as a boss sweater under the nose of the Government to make a rise by robbing tailoresses, which is connived at by the big firms; and I contend that a firm that will assist men to extort money like this are greater robbers than a man who puts his hand in your pocket. Such a firm is more contemptible than Pollard himself. I made inquiries, and found such a deplorable state of things that I cannot relate them in the time allowed me by the Standing Orders. As a justice of the peace, I obtained affidavits from certain seamstresses in the city, so that I would not come here with any "cock and bull story," and I challenge the Government, and any firm of sweaters they like, to prove me a liar if they can. Here is one—

"I, Harriet Wells, of Brisbane, make oath and say I was employed as a seamstress by Pollard at the following rates:—

"For sewing, seaming, and fully completing moleskin trousers at 4d. per pair;

"For completing knicker suits for children at 7½d. per pair.

"Sworn before me this 3rd day of October, at Brisbane, in the colony of Queensland.

"JOHN HOOLAN, J.P."

This woman was trying to educate three or four children and help her husband. She had a grown-up daughter working in another shop for 1s. per week, but her father sent her away somewhere else. I want these facts to be attended to by the hon. member for Bulimba, who wishes to import more females into the colony. These women have to make moleskin trousers at 4d. per pair to be worn by Chinamen and kanakas, and the Government say that is not a fit subject for legislation. It is a shame upon the colony, and far less horrors than these have caused great loss of life in the history of the world. Large firms send out travellers. Scott, Dawson, and Stewart send five or six, D. L. Brown and Co. send a dozen, Stewart and Hemmant send half a dozen, and Armour and Co. send about a dozen, and they all go in for cut-throat competition. One offers a storekeeper slop shirts at 2s. 9d. each—

The SPEAKER: The hon. member has now exceeded the time allowed him by the Standing Orders.

Mr. HOOLAN: I can speak with the permission of the House.

The SPEAKER: Yes; only by permission of the House.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. HOOLAN: If a traveller wants to do business he has to cut prices down, and when the next comes along and finds the previous man has sold for lower than he is authorised to sell, the second wares to his principal in Brisbane, and is authorised to reduce his price. But that reduction does not come out of the firm. It comes out of the wages of the working girls, and they are cut down until they are in a state of abject poverty. A man would refuse to do that amount of work. Tweed pants are made by the thousand in this city for 3d. per pair; and if that is not enough to bring our legislators to their feelings to devise some kind of relief, it is time they decided they are not legislators at all. Dungaree jumpers are made for 2d.; and men's trousers are made to order for 9d. per pair, and pyjama suits are made for 6d. Children's clothes are made at something like famine prices. Even the seamstresses of China and Japan, whom we affect to despise, receive just as much money for their daily hire as the seamstresses of Brisbane, and it is quite time that the Government introduced some legislation to put an end to this state of affairs. At any rate, I intend to bring it forward whenever I

hear of such things occurring, and to take advantage of the rules of the House until some legislation is enacted to remedy this state of affairs. It is no use trying to ignore them; they stare us in the face. If the figures which we quote are disputed, these women can be brought to the bar of the House to tell their own tales of woe, and you are less than men if you do not interfere.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The hon. member has brought forward certain matters, and has spoken in a declamatory style. There is nothing easier than to declaim upon such questions as this, but I am not aware, in the first instance, as to whether the statements of the hon. member are accurate, and the hon. member has given us no indication how, supposing them to be accurate, this House can remedy them. It may be that the prices of slop articles are as low as the hon. member said, but the main point is how much these people can make at this work.

Mr. McDONNELL: Five shillings a week.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I decline to accept an *ex parte* statement. Possibly they may earn 15s. or 30s. a week; but, supposing wages are very low, I am quite certain that this is not the only resource for women. There is a demand for domestic servants—a demand which is not by any means supplied. The hon. member for Burke seems to think that the employers get a large amount of profit out of the low prices he referred to; but it is the purchaser who gets the advantage of the low price, although I dare say the employer does to some degree make a profit out of it. If there is a large demand for these articles, employers will bid against each other, and wages will rise. With regard to the moleskins, for making which 4d. a pair is paid—moleskins are chiefly bought by bushmen, and not by kanakas. But does the hon. member mean to say that if there were no kanakas higher wages would be paid for making moleskin trousers? If there were no kanakas, there would be less demand for these trousers; consequently a large number of women would not be employed, and there would be more competition for employment, with the result that wages would fall still lower. Assuming that seamstresses get low wages, what does the hon. member propose to do to rectify this? His view appears to be that wages may be raised by diminishing the demand, but that would have the contrary effect. The moment you raise the price of an article that moment you diminish the demand for the article. But I do not think this a convenient opportunity for discussing this question. It was brought forward ostensibly as a matter of urgency, because the hon. member for Fortitude Valley has discovered that some man who employed women at low wages ran away without paying them.

Mr. McDONNELL: Not one man alone, but six.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The hon. member does not appear to have observed that the whole gravamen of this state of affairs is not that the man agreed to pay low wages, but because he ran away without paying at all. If he had agreed to pay 25s. a pair for trousers, the women would have been no better off. So that really we are occupying our time upon another question altogether, and the low rate of wages was dragged in by the neck and shoulders. Hon. members have asked why the Government do not introduce legislation dealing with this subject? If anything should show why the Government have not brought in such legislation, this debate should furnish a reason. Here we have a motion for adjournment sprung upon the House—not on private members' day, when a great many matters are discussed—but on a day when we

should have been occupied with Government business. It is five years since the Royal Commission sat upon this question, but hon. members on the other side, who espouse the cause of the workers, have brought forward no legislation to deal with the question. We have had discussions on coloured aliens, on quinquennial censuses, on electioneering matters, on the Ayrshire Downs case, and on all sorts of questions; and yet we are asked why the Government have not dealt with the matter. Hon. members on the other side have deliberately refused to introduce such legislation themselves, and under all the circumstances it is not becoming for that party to bring it forward under cover of a motion for adjournment on a Government day. One hon. member made an observation with regard to talk. I have heard the hon. member for Burke say, with great justification, that there is an enormous amount of talk here. We were told by the hon. member for Rockhampton North that during the time the Labour party had been in the House there had been less talk than formerly. He expressed a confident opinion about the amount of talk which had taken place, although he was not here.

Mr. KIDSTON: Quite right, too.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The hon. member was not in the House either, or he would not make that remark with so little justification. Hon. members know that in committee *Hansard* is much condensed; a member may speak for half an hour and his utterances be put in a few sentences. At one time it was not so. Members were reported in full. Now *Hansard* does the difficult task of finding out and recording the very little that hon. members say. Therefore, the hon. member's conclusion is erroneous. This debate in my opinion is entirely unnecessary. It has been brought on on grounds which really do not exist. What the hon. member has to complain of is not low wages, but that someone who is a rogue and ought to be in gaol is not there. If the Government is to be charged with not bringing forward legislation of this sort, the reason is perfectly clear when hon. members opposite have not used the opportunities they have had of legislating on the matter. Therefore, if there is a fault at all, hon. members opposite, if they desire to do justice, should take their portion of it. At any rate they have had five years in which to do this work, and it only occurs to them suddenly that it is desirable to do something. It has only occurred to hon. members to bring this matter forward when a specific case occurs. If that case had not occurred we would have heard nothing of this matter this afternoon, and Thursday afternoons would have still been reserved for little discussions which everybody knows can have no practical result.

Mr. CROSS: The Minister for Education has entertained the House with one of those disingenuous speeches which the House and the country know so well. He has deliberately made an assertion which no fair, intelligent, and honest-minded man would make—that is, that this party is to blame for legislation on this subject not being introduced during the past five years. No one knows better than the hon. gentleman the insuperable difficulties that a private member has to contend with in introducing Bills.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The hon. member for Dalby has got two Bills nearly through.

Mr. CROSS: Any hon. member can get tin-pot legislation through this House, but let anyone bring forward legislation which will give general relief to the community, and that business is blocked by the Government. I myself have two measures on the paper, and the Government

have not the courtesy to let them go to a first reading. I claim for those measures that they would be highly beneficial to the country. I have introduced those measures simply because the Government have neglected their duty. In the manifesto of the Government to the electors they dangled the principles of one of my measures before the people. The Premier promised assistance to the farmers, and what has been the result? Nothing.

THE SPEAKER: I must ask the hon. member not to wander away from the question before the House.

Mr. CROSS: I had no intention of speaking until the hon. gentleman made charges reflecting upon this party, and I thought I should be allowed a little latitude in replying to him. I will not waste any further time on that matter, because the House and country is aware of the hon. gentleman's subterfuges. Then the hon. gentleman said that sewing was not the only occupation for women, that they could go into domestic service. Yes, they can; but if the hon. gentleman knew as much about domestic service as I do he would know that the position of domestic servant is becoming more and more a drudgery and cruel white slavery of a contemptible character. I know of many cases of servant girls who work for such wages as 5s. and 6s. a week.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS on the Government side: No, no!

Mr. CROSS: I challenge the Government to make inquiry into my statements. I can produce the girls and name the people. All through the city and in the suburbs girls are kept drudging from early morning till late at night at 5s. and 6s. a week, and it is looked upon as a good wage if they get 8s. a week. A gentleman from Maryborough told me to-day that he could get any amount of girls for much lower than 5s. a week, and that a girl came to him and offered to work for a mere pittance, as she had nowhere to go to. The man is not in a position to give a servant proper wages, and he gave her 3s. a week simply from motives of charity. The registry offices in the city are swarming with girls, as any hon. member will find if he makes inquiry at the registries. The Secretary for Public Instruction also said that it was the purchasers who were the real cause of those low prices. The hon. gentleman must have a very poor idea of economics, and a good deal less of experience in business and society, when he made a statement like that. The junior member for Fortitude Valley has told us that for making a pair of trousers, for which tailors in this city get 25s. or 30s., a work-girl received 8d. or 9d. Did not the purchaser contribute his share in that case? If the girl who made those trousers had got her proportion of the payment she would have received 6s. or 7s. at least, instead of a paltry 9d. The Home Secretary has admitted that he was favourable to the principles advocated by members on this side in this matter, and has made one effort at legislation in that direction. I hope that before the session closes he will make another effort in the same direction, and I am sure that if he does he will receive no more hearty support than that which he will get from members sitting on the left of the Speaker. The hon. gentleman was good enough to say that he did not believe that any member of the House would object to the most radical legislation for the protection of women and children with regard to their labour and comfort, and I think the majority of members will agree with that statement. But if we were to take the opinions expressed by some members on that side we should not come to that conclusion. The Attorney-General, who I believe is conscientious in his opinions on the subject,

says that voluntary action is by far the best way of dealing with these matters. Experience, however, does not prove that; on the contrary, the experience of these young colonies shows that nothing effective has ever been done by voluntary action. The most successful and effective means of dealing with such matters has in many cases been found in the most drastic interference with private enterprise. A more drastic piece of legislation has, I think, never been introduced in any Parliament than that which was passed this session dealing with the tick pest, and members on this side gave it their hearty support. Why did not the hon. gentleman preach voluntary action in that case? What would have been the result if we had left it to the voluntary action of stock-owners to dip their cattle? The hon. gentleman certainly modified that statement afterwards when he said that legislation was very often the best expression of voluntary action. That was a shifting of his ground entirely, and exactly expressed what we wish. We say that public opinion as to the necessity of legislation of the character we desire has been formed so long that legislation would be the most fitting expression of that public opinion. And we are supported in that view by the fact that similar legislation to that which we advocate has been passed in all the other colonies except New South Wales, where a measure is now passing through Parliament with every prospect of success. The Attorney-General also laid down the principle that we should wait and observe what is the effect of such legislation in other countries before taking any steps to pass a measure in Queensland. Surely it is paying a poor compliment to his own intelligence and experience, to the Government, and to this Parliament, to say that we should wait and see the effect of legislation elsewhere before passing measures which are necessary for the protection of helpless women and children. We are surely competent to initiate legislation of this character independent of what may be done in any other colony, and to deal with the evils that we see around us. If it were a really wise principle to lay down that we should wait to see the results of similar legislation in other countries, it would be a wise one for all countries to adopt, and then what would be the result? Every Parliament would be waiting for some other Parliament to do something, and nothing would be done? That statement expresses in a concrete form the policy of the stagnation party—the Tory party in Queensland and elsewhere. Reasons of humanity urge the necessity for some legislation in the direction desired. I am sorry that the Premier is so indifferent to the sufferings of 3,000 people, because it is time he seriously considered the question of helping them. At all events, if he brings forward a measure with that object he will receive unanimous support from this side. An hon. member on the Government side said the Labour party made proposals which would take us back to the dark ages. Would the institution of one man one vote take us back to the dark ages? Would the abolition of the nominee chamber, which blocks legislation, take us back to the dark ages? Would the proper adjustment of taxation, placing it on the shoulders best able to bear it, or would a State Advances Bill to help the farmers take us back to the dark ages?

The SPEAKER: The hon. member is now wandering entirely from the subject.

Mr. CROSS: I am only replying to the statements made by an hon. member opposite. The other colonies have introduced State Advances Bills, and if they have gone back to the dark ages it is a good thing for the farmers, and the sooner we go back to the dark ages the better. I hope the Government will take these 3,000

people under their wing, and introduce some legislation which will protect them from the sweaters of this city.

Mr. BROWNE: I am sorry this motion has not met with a better reception from the Government; but it is the usual fate of any motion brought forward from this side to be laughed out by the Premier, who would not have said the complaint applied only to Brisbane if his two nominees had been returned at the last general election. The Secretary for Public Instruction has told us that a great deal of talk can be done without saying anything; but I noticed that the hon. member only referred to the matter before the House for two minutes out of twenty. That is a good illustration of talking a long time and saying nothing. I must give the Home Secretary credit for expressing sympathy with the motion, but I object to the reasons he gave why the matter has not been dealt with before. He said there is no regular Opposition on this side, but that is one of the most paltry reasons he could have given. Here is a powerful Government declining to bring in legislation that it thinks right and proper because the hon. member for Bundaberg calls himself leader of the Labour party instead of leader of the Opposition. That hon. member intimated at the beginning of the session that he had been elected leader of the Labour party, but his statement met with sneers from the Premier; and if the hon. member had made any advances to the Premier after receiving such a rebuff as that, he would not be able to call me a follower of his for a day after I found it out. It is no use the Home Secretary saying that legislation is stopped because there is a disorganised party here. We find from the papers that a month ago in the Imperial Parliament, where there is a strong Government, legislation was blocked, according to the Premier, by the organised opposition of the other side, and the Government could not get through their measures. Yet we are told here by the Home Secretary that the Government cannot get through their business, because a handful of Labour members will not call themselves an Opposition. The statement is unworthy of the hon. gentleman. Let him look at the business-paper. I do not think such a paper was ever presented to this or any other Parliament.

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not think that is at all relevant to the subject before the House.

Mr. BROWNE: The Home Secretary admitted the necessity for this legislation, and the strongest reason he gave for not introducing it was that there is no time in consequence of the amount of talk that is going on. I will only say that on the business-paper—

The SPEAKER: I must again ask the hon. member to confine himself to the question under consideration.

Mr. BROWNE: None of the statements made by hon. members on this side have been denied, and I have shown that it cannot be pressure of business which prevents the Government from dealing with the matter. A good deal has been said about the employment of children, and about seamstresses being robbed, and it has been said on the other side that it is impossible to legislate so as to make men honest. We do not anticipate that we shall ever be able to stop pocket-picking, or bank embezzlements, or land-grab swindles; but does that prevent us from passing laws both to suppress crime and as a deterrent? All over the world legislation has been passed in this direction, and it is high time the same thing was done here. A great deal has been said about the ages at which children are allowed to work. In this connection I wish to refer to a case which was brought under my notice by a gentleman whose word I can rely upon. This case has been kept remarkably

quiet, and it has not been mentioned in the papers. A mere child—a boy of nine years of age—working in a sugar-mill near Brisbane had his arm caught in the mill and torn out by the roots. The arm was taken off in Brisbane, and everything hushed up. Hon. members on the other side say that a factories Act would not have prevented that, but I say that it would. Hon. members say that there is not time to legislate in this direction; but if the compulsory clauses in the Education Act were enforced, this accident would not have occurred. Hon. members go to missionary meetings, and talk on the platform about the cruelty that is practised on children in other parts of the world, but not a single member on the other side has made any inquiry into this case, which occurred within a few miles of Brisbane. We have been passing a Bill to prevent boys of fourteen from selling papers in the streets, and the very members who howled for that have not a word to say about a child of nine years losing his limbs in a mill. With regard to voluntary action, I have told this House before about the result of a voluntary arrangement which existed for some years on Croydon. There we had voluntary early closing until the advent of two or three alien shopkeepers, who began to keep open late, and the European shopkeepers were forced in self-defence to follow suit. That should show that voluntary action does not work when put to the test. It has been said that a Factories Act could not deal with the age at which children should be permitted to work, but I shall give a list of countries in which this question is dealt with. In New Zealand no child is permitted to work under the age of fourteen years. In Victoria the age is 14; in New South Wales, 14; in South Australia, 13; in Tasmania, 14; in the State of New York, 14; in Massachusetts, 13; in Illinois, 14; and in Pennsylvania, 13; and there is another provision in all these places whereby no child under the age of sixteen is allowed to work unless he or she has passed the fourth standard of the Education Act. The Secretary for Public Instruction asks why members on this side have not brought forward a measure on this subject. The reason is that we have had too much faith in the Government. For the last three years the Premier, in Governor's Speeches and in political manifestoes, has promised that we should have factories and workshops legislation; and even if we did not trust the hon. gentleman to carry out his promises, we trusted that hon. gentlemen sitting alongside him would not allow their honour to be sullied by letting the hon. gentleman forget his promise made year after year. I refer hon. members sitting behind the Premier to the Governor's Speeches for the last three years, where they will see that shop and factory legislation is promised in every one of them.

Mr. SMYTH: Hon. members on the Government side do not hold caucuses to consider what legislation the Government shall introduce. We know that members on the other side hold frequent caucuses, and perhaps it is in their favour that that is so, because, whilst we are obliged to speak our individual opinions, they are able to express the opinions of the party. I am in sympathy with a Factories Bill, because I know the wrong that is being done. In my constituency I frequently see gas burning at 8 and 9 o'clock at night, and I knew that people are working late who have no business to be working. A Factories Act would do a great deal of good, and such a measure would have been passed long ago but for one person in this House. He insisted on asking a great many more questions on the Commission than all the rest of the commissioners together, and he also insisted upon two reports, and in various

other ways he blocked a Bill becoming law. I do not believe in sweating; if it exists, I hope it will be suppressed, but it must be done in a thoroughly impartial way. I believe in eight hours a day, and what I believe in I practice. At the same time, this matter should come before the House in a proper way, and if Ministers bring it forward I will support them. If they do not believe in it, and it is brought forward by the opposite side, I shall support them. I certainly consider that there are trades which require more than eight hours' labour a day, but when persons are worked over that time they should be well compensated for it. The hon. member for Clermont has talked of the Labour party; I do not know what he means. Am I not a representative of Labour although sitting on this side? If I did not represent Labour I should not be here. As an Australian I believe in honest and straightforward government. I find most of the arguments that have come from the other side come from men who have not been long in the colony. The persons who have lived here for many years, and have fought an uphill battle for themselves and the people, are the proper persons to have as representatives in this House; but there are some who climb over the shoulders of the people into this House, and I do not think those men are worthy of a place here. But while saying that I admit there are many on the other side who are worthy members of the House. I am strongly in favour of factories and shops closing at 6 o'clock, and will do all I can to secure reasonable hours for working men and women, and generally to elevate their position. I am sure hon. members on this side will do everything in their power to elevate the working population. I am disappointed that such a Bill as hon. members opposite advocate has not been introduced this session, but I hope we will see it at an early period of next session, at all events. I believe the Government are quite in sympathy with such a measure, and will introduce it at the first convenient opportunity.

Mr. TURLEY: I am glad to hear that the hon. member for Gympie is in favour of fair conditions of labour, and that the hon. member has seen fit to compliment this side on the way they conduct their business. He said that we held caucus meetings and knew what we wanted before we came here. That shows that we take an interest in the affairs of the country, but the hon. member went on to say that the Government did not take their supporters into their confidence. That may be the best system on which to carry on Government, but I think the Government would do well to be a little more confidential. The hon. member also said that apparently all the arguments from this side came from men who had only been a short time in the colony. I have yet to learn that it is a crime not to be a native of the colony. The Governments of Australia hold out every inducement to people to come here from other countries, and when they do come here I certainly think it is better for the country if they take an intelligent interest in its affairs. The Secretary for Public Instruction wants to know if the statements of the hon. member for Burke are accurate. The hon. member produced affidavits signed by the persons who had made the statement. How many times do we get from the hon. gentleman assertions in contradiction of anything said on this side? Time after time he quotes pages of matter and no one questions his assertions. We at all events believe that he believes in the truth of what he is saying. Therefore, he should give the hon. member for Burke credit for the same thing. The hon. gentleman wants to know how much these people earn, and says that at the prices quoted they might earn from 15s. to 30s.

per week, but he knows that is not true. If it were true a woman would have to make seven and a-half dozen pairs of moleskin trousers per week in order to make 30s. Is it reasonable to believe that any woman can work anything like reasonable hours for six days a week and make that amount of money? The thing is perfectly ridiculous, and is a misrepresentation of the arguments on this side. Then, again, we are told that this is not a convenient opportunity for dealing with the matter. When shall we have a convenient opportunity? The opportunity never arises in this House that is convenient. Up to 1890 the Government were asked on various occasions to deal with this question, and what was the result? Exactly the same tactics were pursued as have been many times adopted in the Parliament of Great Britain. The Government said, "Oh, it is all right, we believe there is something very wrong; we will give you a commission, and when we get the report of that commission we will take some action." We have had a report from a commission, and what action has been taken by the Government? The Home Secretary says that the Factories Bill which was introduced by the late Mr. Macrossan was dropped because of the arguments advanced by the other side. But the hon. gentleman knows that it was dropped because the members who then sat on this side showed strong opposition to the measure, as they did not wish to see legislation of that description passed by persons who were opposed to them in politics.

The HOME SECRETARY: Your leader was with us, and voted with us.

Mr. TURLEY: At any rate, it is a fact that it was the amount of opposition which came from this side that led the hon. gentleman in charge of the measure to withdraw it.

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes; because it was no good.

Mr. TURLEY: Apparently it did not go far enough, and yet now, although five or six years have elapsed, we are no further advanced. The hon. gentleman asks why members on this side do not introduce legislation? We have done so during the last two or three sessions; amendments of the electoral laws have been introduced, and what has been the fate of those Bills? They have been deliberately talked out either by Ministers, or opposed by supporters of the Government on the ground that such measures should be introduced by the Government. If it is necessary that amendments of the electoral law should be introduced by the Government, it is equally necessary that a measure of this character should be brought forward by the Government. The question we have really to consider is that of the health of the people, and I ask has any attempt been made to deal with that matter since the commission reported that many places in which persons were employed were in an insanitary condition?

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes, we passed a Shops Bill last year.

Mr. TURLEY: That measure had nothing whatever to do with places where clothing is manufactured. In 1893 a *Courier* reporter made inquiries into the matter, and published statements showing that some places where women and children were employed were not fit for workrooms. The hon. gentleman would hardly keep a horse or dog in some of them, and yet he says, "We passed a Shops Bill last session." Absolutely nothing has been done to carry out the recommendations of the commission in this matter. The Shops Bill did not apply to places where people take work which they have obtained from those who have got it from the factory. The only way by which you can deal with them is to make it compulsory that every such place shall be registered, and appoint inspectors with

power to enter them at all reasonable hours, with a view to seeing that they are kept in a sanitary condition. I give the hon. gentleman every credit for introducing the Bill which was passed by this House last year, but we want something more than that; we want a measure similar to that in force in New Zealand. There every place where two persons are working has to be registered as a factory; the inspector has the right to enter them at any time when work is supposed to be carried on, and that legislation has had a great deal to do with preserving the health of the people employed. It is pointed out in the report that—

"Sometimes perhaps these laws are evaded by unprincipled employers or by desperate seekers for work, but the issue of material by respectable firms to women engaged in that murderous competition and cutting prices has virtually ceased."

Why? Simply because the work is not given to persons who sweat those who actually do the work. The hon. member for Brisbane North has told us that there is no sweating in Queensland—that is, that the work has not to go through the hands of four or five Jews. There is mighty little difference between a Jew and a Christian when it comes to a question of making money; then the Christian is just about as smart as the Jew, and is always prepared to accept every opportunity for making money. Where Factories Acts are in operation information can be obtained by the inspectors without any trouble, but here the only means of getting it is to make inquiries from the working people themselves. We are told that there is no necessity for this legislation here, but will any hon. member deny that people in the other colonies are as well off as they are here? I think they are just as well off, and the climates may be better suited to the workers than that of Queensland. Yet this legislation is found necessary there, and if it is necessary there it is necessary here to protect the wives and daughters and sisters of our citizens. How would any hon. member like to have his children running about as we can see little girls running through the streets at 5 o'clock any evening? The Government can prevent that if they like by merely putting into operation the compulsory clauses of the Education Act, and surely the Government would be willing to bring those clauses into operation in certain districts of the colony, if not in the outlying districts. That is one direction in which they could show their good faith. If it were a question affecting any other class in the community or affecting property, they would come down with a measure very shortly.

The HOME SECRETARY: You give me a Bill.

Mr. TURLEY: The hon. member has told us six or seven times that he has a Bill printed and ready to be introduced, and why does he not introduce it? Is the hon. member the only member of the Cabinet prepared to go on with this legislation? There is plenty of time, and the hon. member knows that he will get the assistance of hon. members on this side. Any legislation that has been for the benefit of the community has been supported by this side, and I am fast coming to the conclusion that there is not enough opposition shown by this side to measures introduced by the Government.

The HOME SECRETARY: There is plenty of talk.

Mr. TURLEY: There has been as little talk for the last three years as there ever has been. The hon. gentleman must remember that the Secretary for Public Instruction pointed out that the late Secretary for Lands took up two-thirds of *Hansard*, and the Home Secretary himself talks a great deal and always did.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member has now exceeded the time allowed him.

The HOME SECRETARY: Wind up.

Mr. TURLEY: Never mind.

Mr. KIDSTON: I feel some difficulty in understanding the position the Government have taken up in regard to this matter. Three members have spoken, and they have given different reasons for opposing it; but there is one point upon which they all agree, and that is in opposing the idea of legislation suggested by this side of the House.

The HOME SECRETARY: I did not.

Mr. KIDSTON: It is manifest that all who have spoken on the other side look upon this as a party measure, and they are bound to oppose it. Their conduct does not compare well with that of hon. members on this side a few months ago when the Home Secretary introduced the Tick Bill. Hon. members must admit that that Bill was well treated on this side, and now a greater evil has been twice brought before the notice of the House this session. Although more money's worth might be involved in the former measure, this is an evil in which more human happiness is concerned, and the example set by hon. members on this side might have been well followed upon this occasion and on the previous occasion when the hon. member for the Valley brought the same subject before the House.

The HOME SECRETARY: I am waiting now for the Factories Bill from New South Wales, and for the discussion on it.

Mr. KIDSTON: The position here is this: An admitted evil exists, and it is the duty of the Government—and more particularly of the Home Secretary, in whose department the matter lies—to apply a remedy. The Attorney-General takes up quite a different position from the Home Secretary; he claims that it is a matter which does not require legislation, and that it would be far better to deal with it by voluntary effort. That is a sentiment that is often given expression to, and gentlemen who take up that position, while expressing their sympathy with those who are hardly treated in the social conflict, claim that voluntary effort will remove all the evils which exist; but no one knows better than the Attorney-General that voluntary effort would not remove the evil. It would be quite as easy for the pastoralists to remove the tick plague by voluntary effort as it would be to deal with this evil by voluntary effort. I suppose three-quarters of all our legislation, if not a larger proportion, deals with subjects that could be dealt with by voluntary effort. The establishment of central sugar-mills could have been brought about by voluntary effort, and so with regard to many other matters; but, as a matter of fact, it is found that these matters are more effectively dealt with by legislation. The whole history of factory legislation in England not only proves that such legislation is necessary, but that its results have been highly beneficial to the community. The Home Secretary said that the hon. member for Fortitude Valley would have been entirely justified in his action if he had moved the adjournment for the purpose of adducing facts bearing on the matter. I submit that the hon. member for Fortitude Valley is entirely justified for the very reason given by the hon. gentleman, because he did adduce facts. The hon. member gave specific instances of grievances of poor people who were being sweated, and he referred to particular instances where these people were robbed, in addition, of their small earnings. He referred particularly to the case of one man who came from New South Wales or Victoria and started a sweating factory here, and ultimately cleared out, robbing the poor workers. The attention of the Home Secretary was called to this case, which was as soundly a piece of injustice and as crying an evil as could well be brought under the notice of

a Minister, and the hon. gentleman admits that he cannot do anything to get these poor people redress. If the man had cleared away with a pair of the moleskin trousers he was making he could have been brought back, but the hon. gentleman cannot touch him when he has only robbed these poor people. The poorest of our people find no protection under our laws; yet the hon. gentleman says that there is no time to introduce legislation.

The HOME SECRETARY: I did not say that there was no time.

Mr. KIDSTON: You do worse than say it; you act it. The hon. gentleman professes to have a great deal of sympathy with these people; and, to be quite honest, I have always found the hon. gentleman has sympathy with people who are down on their luck. But it is not sufficient for him in his position to have sympathy with them. It is good enough for a private member or for a man outside to be sympathetic, but anyone in the position of the hon. gentleman should endeavour to find a remedy for such a glaring evil as that to which the attention of the House has been called this evening. The hon. gentleman admits that it is his place to find a remedy, but he gives two excuses for not doing so. Some of the hon. gentleman's colleagues have spoken as if the existence of the evil had not been proved, but the Home Secretary does not take up that position. He admits its existence. Why, the Premier himself—although he scoffs at the thing, as usual—admits that the evil exists in Brisbane. The Home Secretary admits that the evil exists, and wants legislation, and he pointed out that last session he attempted to legislate. If the hon. member for Fortitude Valley had not said a word, the statement of the Home Secretary would be ample justification for this motion. Legislation was introduced last year, and the hon. gentleman did not think it should be introduced again, because it was thrown out, or for fear it would be thrown out again.

The HOME SECRETARY: I did not say that.

Mr. KIDSTON: Then the action of the Upper House in throwing out the Bill was no justification for not introducing it again. The only other reason adduced by the hon. gentleman is that the Labour party talk too much. I venture to say that if the Home Secretary, speaking in the name of the Government, said he would introduce the legislation the discussion would have ceased; nay, if he had said that he could not introduce it this year but would do so next year, we would have heard no more on the question.

The HOME SECRETARY: Oh! we know this was arranged beforehand.

Mr. KIDSTON: It may have been, but manifestly all the waste of time, if it can be called waste, is attributable to the hon. gentleman. Of course, we cannot expect any immediate good in the way of legislation to come out of this, but I think the time occupied with this motion would have sufficed for the second reading of the Bill. I hope that what has been said will awaken the hon. gentleman to the duty which is lying on him, and which will continue to lie upon him so long as he holds his present position. It is his duty to remedy this evil, no matter what his colleagues think; and he will not be fulfilling his duty if he does not take the earliest opportunity of trying to introduce factories legislation into this House.

Mr. DUNSFORD: I do not altogether agree with the hon. member for Rockhampton when he says that no immediate result is likely to accrue from this discussion. I suppose he means no immediate legislative result, but there are other results which I consider good. The hon. member for Gympie said we are wasting time.

No matter what the importance of the subject, we are generally told we are wasting time. I entirely disagree with that. Of course I know that the skins of hon. members opposite are thick and their hearts are hard, and the impression made on them may not be very apparent, but I believe outside this House such a discussion as we have had may do a very great deal of good. I am suspicious of the Home Secretary when he says he agrees with or sympathises with us. It always appears to me that when the hon. gentleman has anything under his serious consideration it gets so far under that we never hear anything about it, and when he says he sympathises with any movement we are apt to think that his colleagues will not altogether agree with him. He lately introduced an Inebriates Bill, but it seems to be a sort of Aunt Sally which the Government supporters have been shying sticks at ever since, and if he introduces a Shops and Factories Bill it is to be feared that his supporters will shy political sticks at it. Many firms have been mentioned which take advantage of the keen competition to give sweating wages to women and girls, but when they know the eye of this House is upon them, and that public opinion is against them, they will be very liable to consider their position and improve that of their employees. It has been generally admitted that the evil, in some degree, does exist in Brisbane. Such being the case, it is our duty as legislators to ask ourselves if there is no remedy. The Government in the past have said that there is a remedy, and have promised to provide that remedy, but they have done nothing more than introduce the Bill which was passed here last session. The Home Secretary deserves some little credit for having done his level best to pass that measure with the assistance of members on this side, but it was unfortunately wrecked in another place, where I am sorry to say many a good measure is wrecked. But, as the hon. member for Rockhampton has said, the fact that we were not successful then is no reason why we should not make a further effort in the same direction, for the evil still exists and is intensified. It looks very bad for hon. members opposite, especially Ministers of the Crown, to say that members on this side who claim to represent labour, should introduce the Bill. If we did introduce it, it would simply become so much waste paper. We have been bringing in Bills and motions ever since I have been in the House, and have never yet been successful in carrying one; we have very seldom succeeded in getting a measure through the second reading.

The HOME SECRETARY: Hand it to me.

Mr. DUNSFORD: You have one or two.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must address the Chair.

Mr. DUNSFORD: The hon. gentleman must know that the mere drafting of a Bill would be a rather costly affair to us, seeing that we have no parliamentary draftsman, and that it would be very little use handing it over to the tender mercies of the hon. gentleman. If we are capable of drafting a Bill, then I take it time should be given to a private member to get it through the House. But time is not given, and really the two hours and a-half a week given to private members' business I am beginning to regard as wasted, as it is very seldom that we can get a vote on any question brought forward. If Ministers do not agree with our proposals they have only to talk a little while to talk the matter out, and that has been done repeatedly. On one occasion I had a motion on the paper for five or six months, and never had an opportunity to open my mouth on the subject. We are told that there are 3,000 women and children immediately affected

by the sweating system in Brisbane, but we must remember that their families, their relatives, the public, and the merchants are also affected. It has been urged that we should leave it to voluntary effort or private enterprise to provide the remedy for these evils. But these evils spring from private enterprise, which is individualism run mad, and it is hopeless to look in the same direction for a remedy. The Secretary for Public Instruction has said that if you raise the price of a commodity you lessen the demand for it. That is not true. If you raise the price of a pair of trousers to a reasonable figure so that the worker shall receive a fair wage you increase his purchasing power, but if you do anything to degrade the worker, and only pay 4d. per pair for the making of trousers, you decrease his purchasing power, and the people, or the mass of the workers, are, after all, the consumers of those articles. I do not know of any special cases of hardship in connection with this matter, and if I did I should not bring them before the House, because I believe that members generally recognise that the evils complained of exist. Speaking for the constituency which I represent, I do not think the prices paid for the manufacture of clothing are so depressed as those which are paid in Brisbane. I believe that reasonable prices are paid there in those lines. Wherever there is centralisation this evil is rampant, although it is not so apparent when we get away from the cities. In some places they have a voluntary system of early closing, and a half-holiday once a week, and surely in a place like Brisbane, where large numbers of women and children are employed, we would be justified in passing legislation that the evidence adduced here to-night proves to be necessary. It is not too late to introduce that legislation this session, and I can promise the Government the earnest assistance of every hon. member on this side. Although hon. members may differ in many things, I believe they all have the same goal in view; and as this is an evil which should be nipped in the bud, I hope it will be dealt with as soon as possible.

Mr. McMASTER: I did not intend to speak upon this matter, but seeing that the night is going to be wasted I may as well say a few words. I do not think there will be any objection to a Factories Bill being introduced when the Government have time to do so, but I think the hon. member (Mr. McDonnell) and some of his colleagues would have done far better if they had waited upon the Government and made a demand that this Bill should be introduced. The hon. member has raised a discussion because some scoundrel has cleared out and omitted to pay what he owes, but a Factories Bill would not remedy that. The hon. member for Burke mentioned a number of firms in Brisbane which are known to be as respectable as any in Australia, and he struck the keynote of this trouble when he referred to the competition between them. There is no doubt that there is keen competition in trade; but how far is that competition carried? It is possible that some of the statements made by hon. members opposite regarding the long hours which women and children are employed are true, and my colleague has said that there is a lot of sweating going on in Brisbane and other large towns in the colony. The hon. member for North Brisbane, who is a woollen merchant, says there is no such thing going on in Brisbane or in the Australian colonies; but I cannot express an opinion about that. There is no sweating in the trade I belong to, although there is keen competition. I was astonished to hear that a pair of trousers can be made for 4d.; but the matter was rather sprung upon hon. members on this side, and

we were not able to get information on the subject. I have heard such statements made in the House before, but the outside public and those who know have told me that the amount stated is for only a small portion of the garment, and that the whole costs a good deal more to complete it. The hon. member who introduced this motion is a draper by trade, and knows where this sweating is done; therefore the hon. member for North Brisbane, who says sweating does not exist, has a great deal to learn, although he ought to know something about it. It occurred to me while hon. members opposite were abusing respectable firms—and even Finney, Isles, and Co. were dragged into it—that their statements cut both ways. If these slop garments can be made so cheaply as we are told, who are the largest customers for them? The working classes. It is not the higher or the middling classes which buy these cheap slop goods.

Mr. DUNSFORD: It is those who have to work for 4d., and who cannot afford to buy anything else.

Mr. McMASTER: I have no wish to cast any reflections on the working men or their wives. I represent the working men quite as much as, if not more than, hon. members on the other side, and I have as much respect for them; but there is no getting away from this fact: that many of these people are the cause of the keen competition among the wholesale houses, because they will walk from one end of the street to the other if they think they can get an article for 1d. less than they can get it for at some respectable shop where good wages are paid. I speak from my experience of my own trade. The junior member for Charters Towers admitted that it is well known that on the goldfields a certain class of workers crowd the shops of Chinamen because they sell a little cheaper than the Europeans. No doubt they are perfectly justified in buying in the cheapest market, if the article is equally as good. What I particularly object to is my colleague, and the hon. member for Burke more especially, abusing wholesale firms because their travellers try to do business, when the very class those hon. members are supposed to represent are those who compel the wholesale houses to cut prices. It has been said with justice that hon. members on the other side have taken a long time to consider this subject. Some of them have not been here very long, but several of them have been here for four or five years, and they should have tried before now to introduce a measure to remove the evils of which they complain. It is true that this session there has only been one day a week for private business, but in previous sessions there was a day and a-half, but the whole of that time has been taken up with frivolous motions, and hon. members appear to vie with each other as to how many motions they can get on the paper. What are the wages these sweaters get in Paraguay? I read the other day that a day's wages were only 4d. I hope it is not true.

Mr. GLASSEY: What wages do Highlanders get?

Mr. McMASTER: The Highlanders can take good care of themselves; and I am sure if the hon. member was as good a citizen as the Highlanders are he would do well. He need not trouble himself about the Highlanders. When they come here they see that they earn more than 4d., and they are worth more than 4d. Hon. members on the other side complain that the Government have not brought in any legislation to deal with this question, and a very sad picture has been drawn of the condition of the people of Brisbane; but the remedy for this sad state of affairs would be for people to give a fair price for a good article. Then the retail shopkeeper will be able to afford to give a better price to the wholesale house, and the wholesale firm will be able to pay better prices to their work-people. The

remedy is in the people's own hands. Hon. members blame the Government for having introduced no legislation. Well, if they cease to talk so much, and to waste so much time, they will have cause to blame the Government for not bringing in measures they expect; but as long as they occupy the time of the House as they have done all to-day, and as long as they occupy a whole week in discussing a detective and a jury, they cannot expect the Government to bring forward any legislation. Why, a Factories Bill could have been passed in that week if they had held their tongues! The opposite side might have introduced a measure themselves, and asked the Government to help them to pass it. Instead of that, hon. members opposite talk to *Hansard* to get it full; whether it is to keep the reporters employed or the printers, I do not know. Hon. members complain that the business-paper is a mean-looking one, but they had the assurance of the Premier the other day that he has a number of Bills ready to bring forward when he can get an opportunity. There does not seem to be any chance of that opportunity occurring, for here we have had a whole day wasted, and I fear that we shall not see a Shops and Factories Bill this year.

Mr. DANIELS: The hon. member, Mr. McMaster, blames the Labour party for not having the Factories Bill on the paper. We were told by the Home Secretary that he was in favour of bringing it forward, but that he could not arrange with his colleagues.

The HOME SECRETARY: I never said anything of the sort.

Mr. DANIELS: Well, that is what I understood the hon. member to say. The Attorney-General also tells us we should wait and see the result of similar legislation in other colonies, but I fail to see why we should wait upon any colony. It is just possible that the evil may not be so great there as it is in this colony. The Attorney-General also says that he does not believe in interfering with private enterprise. That is always the cry when it is attempted to benefit the working classes, but when the pastoralists, capitalists, and property-owners are concerned the Government do not hesitate to interfere with private enterprise. When the Home Secretary was speaking I could not help thinking of the time when I saw him on a public platform speaking of the good work of the Salvation Army. One would have thought then that he was the most humane man in the world; that there was nothing he would not do to improve the conditions of the working classes. We have been told that the Government have had this Bill ready for a long time, but we have been promised it for four years, and it is not on the business-paper yet. Possibly this debate, instead of wasting time, may be the means of hurrying the Bill on, and if it is brought forward I can assure the Government they will get every assistance from this side in passing it. I defy the Government to mention any measure which has been for the good of the colony which this side has not supported. Of course, they claim the Peace Preservation Act as a good measure, but there is a difference of opinion upon that. In reference to early closing, there are towns which have adopted that principle, but the shopkeepers are always in fear of one cantankerous individual breaking through the arrangement; and in Warwick and Toowoomba I know the shopkeepers would sooner see the half-holiday established by Act of Parliament rather than trust to voluntary action on the part of the people. The hon. member for Gympie has referred to the fact that he was always in favour of an eight-hour day, and that he practised what he preached. I, too, am in favour of an eight-hour day. I believe eight

hours' work enough for any man, and I would have been glad to work for a shorter time if I could have made a living by it. I should like to see the Home Secretary hurry this Bill forward, because it must be getting blue-mouldy by being kept in his box for five years.

Mr. McDONNELL, in reply, said: I regret to see the way this motion has been received by the Government. I expected that we would have had the assurance from the head of the Government that he would undertake to have the Bill introduced this session. The Home Secretary has certainly said that if time permits he will do something, but I am afraid we can attach very little importance to that statement. I regret exceedingly the sneering and very indifferent manner in which this question was received by certain hon. members, and more particularly by the Secretary for Public Instruction. The hon. gentleman's speech disappointed me in one respect. I expected that he would defend all forms of sweaters and sweating, but he has had the common decency not to go so far. We have been taunted with not bringing in a Bill dealing with factories and shops. I challenge any member of the Government to point to a single instance where a private member has introduced a comprehensive measure dealing with factories in any House in these colonies, or in any part of the civilised world. It would be regarded as a piece of presumption if a private member did undertake such a task. I would like to point out that last year the Early Closing Association, of which I am secretary, drafted a Bill for the early closing of shops, and forwarded it to the Premier. The Home Secretary has stated that he introduced that Bill. But he did not introduce that Bill; he introduced quite a different measure. Had he introduced that Bill I believe it would have passed this House, and that it would have had a better chance of passing the other Chamber than the one which he brought forward. At any rate, I am not presumptuous enough to introduce a Factories Bill. I should like to see such a measure brought in by the Government, and if they will introduce it I can promise them every assistance from my colleagues and myself in passing it. The first time I addressed the House I pointed out the conditions under which the unfortunate people whose cause I am now advocating were working, and have lost no opportunity of bringing their case before the House. A few weeks ago I asked the Premier whether he would introduce any legislation this session on this subject, and he gave a very evasive reply. For all that I was of opinion, and am still of opinion, that the hon. gentleman is somewhat in sympathy with the matter, though my hopes of such a Bill being introduced this session were dashed to the ground by the Ministerial statement which the hon. gentleman recently made regarding the business he wished to see passed this session. Up to then I did not intend to take the action which I have taken to-day, but I considered it my duty to bring this matter before the House, because I believe I am more aware of the facts than any other member of the House. Every day fresh cases showing the necessity for some legislation come before me, and I am sure that if hon. members generally were in possession of the facts I am in possession of they would not treat the subject lightly, indifferently, or in such a sneering way as it has been treated this afternoon by some members opposite. I was surprised to find that most of the statements I had made were ignored simply for the purpose of referring to the one question of those unfortunate people who were swindled of their wages. I referred to the fact that there are hundreds of children of tender ages employed in shops and

factories, and that girls are engaged in their homes doing work at starvation wages, often in places where no attention is paid to ventilation or sanitation, but these points have not been touched upon by the Secretary for Public Instruction and others. The Secretary for Public Instruction got up to sneer at the matter, but he did not refer to the points I have just mentioned. Is it that he has no sympathy with those little children who are building up the fortunes of factory and shop owners? He says that we should have introduced a Bill dealing with the question, instead of bringing the matter forward on a motion for adjournment. But if we had done so, it would have been in all probability talked out by the hon. gentleman, as he has done other matters introduced by hon. members on this side. We had lately a motion brought forward by the hon. member, Mr. Turley, with reference to the minimum wage to be paid to men employed on Government contracts, and on that the hon. gentleman spoke for about an hour and a-half.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: You are quite incorrect. An hour.

Mr. McDONNELL: I know exactly what the result would be if we introduced a Bill.

The PREMIER: There is no business in this.

Mr. McDONNELL: Undoubtedly there is business in it.

The PREMIER: To adjourn the House?

Mr. McDONNELL: No, I do not wish to adjourn the House. I simply wish, under the form of a motion for adjournment, to be afforded an opportunity to bring these matters before hon. members, and I contend that the Government should take the question in hand and introduce a Bill before the close of the session.

The PREMIER: The House can affirm nothing on this motion.

Mr. McDONNELL: I am aware of that, but the fact showing the necessity for legislation can be stated. The hon. member for North Brisbane stated that there is no sweating in Queensland, and gave as his definition of sweating work which is passed through the hands of four or five Jews. I would point out to him that we have in Queensland good Christian men, pillars of the churches, who are as big sweaters as any Jews you could find. I mention this to show what hypocrites those men are. Some hon. members have said that we do not want a Factories Act. Now, we have between 5,000 and 6,000 female workers employed in this city, but unfortunately they are not all employed in factories. If they were we could deal with them much easier by a Factories Bill. But the worst point in connection with this case is that thousands of women and children are not working in factories, but in very inferior places indeed—some of them in sweaters' dens and places that would not pass muster under any Factories Act in the world. I have visited several of these places.

The PREMIER: Why did you not report them?

Mr. McDONNELL: I cannot reply to the hon. member's interjections, but I would like to say this—

The PREMIER: You should have reported them.

The SPEAKER: I must ask hon. members to refrain from interjecting. The hon. member has only a few minutes to close his remarks, and I would ask that he be allowed to do so without further interruption.

Mr. McDONNELL: I think it is very bad form for the Premier to interrupt me. My colleague, Mr. McMaster, stated that he thought the prices that have been mentioned were for portions only of garments, but he is mistaken upon that point. I made a statement to the same effect years ago, and it was challenged during the time the hon. member was mayor of Brisbane

but all my statements were corroborated by the Brisbane *Observer*. I regret that the Secretary for Public Instruction should interject "Bosh."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I did not interject at all. The hon. member is very fond of making charges.

Mr. McDONNELL: I apologise if I accused the hon. member wrongly. To return to what I was saying. The hon. member for the Valley said these prices were paid for parts of garments.

Mr. McMASTER: I was told so.

Mr. McDONNELL: The hon. member's information was wrong. Although I differ from the hon. member upon many points, I believe he is sympathetic upon this question, and I can assure him that if he visits several places in the Valley he will find that the statements I have made are true. The principal point dwelt upon by many hon. members has been that we can do nothing to prevent these people who get work from the wholesale houses defrauding the work-people out of their wages. But we can compel all workers to go into the factories, as they have done in Victoria and New Zealand, and prevent the indiscriminate giving out of large quantities of work to sweaters outside. We can hold those who give out large quantities of work responsible for the wages the workmen are supposed to be paid, or we could do as they have done in New Zealand, and remove the middlemen altogether. The hon. member for the Valley made some statements which are not accurate. One was that I had come here and paraded the names of certain firms in connection with prices.

Mr. McMASTER: I said the hon. member for Burke had done so.

Mr. McDONNELL: Every time he mentioned the hon. member for Burke he coupled his name with mine. It was not my intention to divulge names, because if I wished to do that I would fill several pages of *Hansard*. Sweating is not confined to the wholesale houses; at least 90 per cent. of the retail houses practise it, which is all due to the cut-throat competition that my colleague seems to admire.

Mr. McMASTER: I do not admire it; on the contrary.

Mr. McDONNELL: It is this competition that is causing this state of affairs, and reducing wages as they have been reduced during the last few years. I trust that the Premier will do something before this session is over to remedy the evil. I know that the Government are not pleased with the action I have taken, but I have not come here to receive the smiles of any Government or party in this House. I am determined to do my duty in future as I have done in the past, and many of these people helped me to get here. I appeal to hon. members on the Treasury benches to introduce some legislation to remedy these grievances. I purposely omitted to mention the early closing of shops, because I recognise that this is a more important question even than that.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member has now exceeded the time allowed to him. The question is that the House do now adjourn.

Mr. McDONNELL: With the permission of the House, I will withdraw my motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

SUPPLY.

REPORT FROM COMMITTEE.

Mr. ANNEAR, as Chairman of Committees, presented a report from the Committee, covering the resolutions passed in connection with Executive and Legislative, and with the departments of the Chief Secretary and the Home Secretary.

Resolutions agreed to.

The House adjourned at fifteen minutes past 10 o'clock.