

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 8 NOVEMBER 1899

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

WEDNESDAY, 8 NOVEMBER, 1899.

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

REGISTRATION OF DEEDS BILL—
SUPREME COURT ACTS AMEND-
MENT BILL—LOCAL WORKS LOANS
ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

ASSENT.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of messages from His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, assenting in the name of Her Majesty to these Bills.

QUESTIONS.

AMENDMENT OF SHOPS AND FACTORIES ACT.

Mr. McDONNELL (*Fortitude Valley*) asked the Home Secretary—

1. Is it his intention to introduce, during the present session, the Bill promised in the Governor's speech for amending the Shops and Factories Act of 1896?

2. If so, about what date does he propose to introduce the same?

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. F. G. Foxton, *Carnarvon*) replied—

1. Yes, if time will permit.
2. Date uncertain.

INEBRIATE INSTITUTIONS.

Mr. McDONNELL asked the Home Secretary—

1. How many institutions "for the reception, control, care, and curative treatment of inebriates" have been proclaimed in Queensland under the Inebriates Institutions Act of 1896?

2. Is there any "curative treatment" applied to diseased drunkards in such institutions; and, if so, what is the treatment?

3. How many diseased drunkards have been treated under the provisions of the Act of 1896?

The HOME SECRETARY replied—

1. Two.
2. Yes; dietetic and hygienic.
3. Thirteen.

DELAY IN DESPATCH OF TRAIN FROM TOOWOOMBA TO BRISBANE.

Mr. ARMSTRONG (*Lockyer*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

1. Is he aware that the train timed to leave Toowoomba for Brisbane daily at 7.15 a.m. was not despatched from Toowoomba on the 7th instant till 10.5 a.m.?

2. Is it usual that the above train should be detained until after the arrival of trains from the South and West at Toowoomba?

3. Is he aware that this detention caused great inconvenience to intending travellers from the electorates of Drayton and Toowoomba, Lockyer, and Rosewood?

4. Is the district traffic manager at Toowoomba clothed with sufficient authority to enable him to run a special train when abnormal delays occur?

5. Does he consider the district traffic manager at Toowoomba competent to discharge the responsibilities of so important a railway station?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Murray, *Normanby*) replied—

1. Yes.
2. Yes; but the delay in this case was quite exceptional.
3. Yes; and he sincerely regrets the inconvenience.
4. Yes.
5. Yes.

WEARING UNIFORM AT RIFLE CLUB MATCHES.

Mr. McDONALD (*Finders*) asked the Premier—

1. Is it true that orders have been issued by Lieutenant-Colonel Hutchison that in future all matches members of rifle clubs are to appear in uniform?

2. If so, is it the intention of the Government to provide members of rifle clubs with the necessary uniform?

The PREMIER (Hon. J. R. Dickson, *Bulimba*) replied—

1. Not that I am aware of. Lieutenant-Colonel Hutchison issued an order to the effect that all members of rifle clubs attending the rifle meetings in New South Wales and Victoria must appear in uniform, as this is one of the regulations of both those rifle meetings.

2. The regulations provide that "efficient" members of rifle clubs must be in possession of the uniform of their club at their own expense.

ELECTORATES FOR FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVES.

Mr. McDONALD asked the Premier—

Is it the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill to define electorates, for the election of senators, in accordance with the provisions specially provided for Queensland in the Federal Constitution lately agreed to by the people of Queensland?

The PREMIER replied—

Not until the Commonwealth Bill is passed by the Imperial Parliament, when consideration will be given to the formation of electorates, both for senators and members of the House of Representatives.

POSITION OF MAJOR BROWN IN TRANSVAAL CONTINGENT.

Mr. LESINA (*Clermont*) asked the Premier—

1. In what capacity is Spencer Browne accompanying the contingent to South Africa?

2. Is he going as an officer of the contingent?

3. Are his expenses being defrayed by the Government?

4. Is it not a fact that he is going to South Africa as war correspondent for the *Courier*?

The PREMIER replied—

1. As a supernumerary captain.
2. Yes.
3. Yes, he receives pay as an officer of the contingent.
4. No officer doing duty with troops is allowed to act as war correspondent for a newspaper.

INDECENT ADVERTISEMENTS.

Mr. LESINA asked the Attorney-General—

1. Is he aware that many newspapers published in the colony of Queensland are in the habit of printing advertisements in their columns of an indecent nature within the meaning of the Act to Suppress Indecent Advertisements, 56 Victoria No. 20?

2. Is he aware that one of the worst offenders in this respect is the *Cooktown Independent*?

3. Is he aware that some two years ago the *Eagle*, *Sportsman*, and other papers were prosecuted under this Act for the publication of similar advertisements?

4. Will he undertake to see that steps are taken to put the law in force against all newspapers offending under the said Act?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. A. Rutledge, *Maranoa*) replied—

1. No.
2. No.
3. I am not aware.
4. The police are under the control of the Home Secretary, who alone has power to put them in motion in regard to any prosecution for an offence indicated in the questions.

LEASING OF TANKS ON WINTON AND BOULIA ROAD.

Mr. W. HAMILTON (*Gregory*) asked the Treasurer—

1. Have any of the Government tanks on the Winton and Boulia road been leased?
2. If so, were tenders called for same?
3. Were such tenders called through *Government Gazette* or through papers circulating in district?
4. What are present lessees?
5. What is the amount received by the Government on each tank?

The TREASURER (Hon. R. Philp, *Townsville*) replied—

1. Yes—the whole of the tanks, eight in number, were leased at one time or other—only one at present. (The other tanks on the Winton-Boulia road are Ada Creek, Britcher's Creek, Hamilton River, Macunda, Middleton, Min Min, and Stakeyard—all under the control of the Agricultural Department.)
2. No.
3. No.
4. T. Gallagher (lessee of Mailman's tank only).
5. £7 per annum, and 1s. per 100 gallons for water.

STATEMENTS CONCERNING CAPTAIN WEBB.

Mr. LESINA asked the Premier—

1. Is it true that Captain Webb, recently appointed Adjutant of the 2nd Regiment by Major-General Gunter, and who was drawing pay and allowance to the amount of £306 per annum, has been granted six months' leave of absence, without pay, with permission to proceed to South Africa?
2. Where has this officer been severally located since his appointment on the 21st December, 1893, and what duties has he performed?
3. Has his fare on the "Cornwall" been paid by the Government?

The PREMIER replied—

1. Yes.
2. At Maryborough as adjutant of the Second (Wide Bay and Burnett) Regiment.
3. This officer is not on the "Cornwall," nor has his fare been paid by the Government.

INQUIRY INTO PURCHASE OF FODDER.

Mr. LESINA asked the Premier—

1. In view of the number of contradictory statements made by persons in authority at the Brigade Office in connection with the purchase of fodder from Rich and Co., is it his intention to have an exhaustive official inquiry into the matter?
2. And, if not, why not?

The PREMIER replied—

The Government will, at the proper time, take such action as may be deemed necessary.

CIVIL SERVANTS WITH THE QUEENSLAND CONTINGENT.

Mr. LESINA asked the Premier—

1. Is it true that a number of Civil servants have joined the Queensland contingent for the Transvaal?
2. Is it a fact that they have received indefinite leave of absence on full pay?
3. Have their places been filled by other officers?

The PREMIER replied—

1. Including police officers and persons temporarily employed, thirteen public servants have joined the contingent.
2. Permanent officers were granted six months' leave, with the possibility of extension, if necessary. Those in receipt of remuneration from the Government greater than that to which they would be entitled as members of the contingent are having their military pay supplemented by the amount of the difference; while, in the case of those receiving less, pay has been granted at rates allowed, according to rank in the contingent.
3. Wherever necessary.

ALLEGED APPLICATION FOR LAND IN NEW GUINEA.

Mr. LESINA asked the Premier—

1. Is it true that Messrs. Burns, Philp, and Co. have applied for 100,000 acres of pastoral land in British New Guinea under the last New Guinea Land Ordinance?
2. If they have not yet applied, have they given notice of their intention to do so at any time in the future?

The PREMIER replied—

The only information in the possession of the Government on the subject is that contained in the enclosure to the despatch from His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor of New Guinea dated 11th September last, a copy of which was included in the correspondence laid before Parliament on the 21st September.

TREATMENT OF THE DRUNKARD.

Mr. LESINA asked the Home Secretary—

1. Is he aware of the fact that modern science now regards the drunkard as a sick man suffering from alcoholic poisoning, and recommends that he should be treated by scientific medical means in order to effect his cure?
2. Will he consider the advisability of introducing a Bill next session establishing a State institution or asylum which will carefully investigate the needs of the dipsomaniac and diagnose and treat his disease?

The HOME SECRETARY replied—

1. I am not prepared to express an opinion as to how science regards the drunkard.
2. Existing legislation appears to be sufficient for practical purposes.

NORMAL SCHOOL CLASSES.

Mr. O'CONNELL asked the Secretary for Public Instruction—

1. The number of classes in the Normal or Central School, Brisbane?
2. The number in each class?
3. The number of classes taught by pupil teachers?
4. The number of pupils in each class taught by pupil teachers?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. D. H. Dalrymple, *Mackay*), for the Secretary for Public Instruction, replied—

Brisbane Central (Boys).

1. Six.
2. 1st class, 54; 2nd class, 179; 3rd class, 224; 4th class, 277; 5th class, 315; 6th class, 122.
3. 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and part of 4th.
4. 1st class, 54; 2nd class, 179; 3rd class, 224; 4th class, 175.

Brisbane Central (Girls).

1. Six.
2. 1st class, 80; 2nd class, 137; 3rd class, 168; 4th class, 191; 5th class, 144; 6th class, 103.
3. Part of 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th classes.
4. 1st class, 25; 2nd class, 47; 3rd class, 45; 4th class, 49.

Brisbane Central (Infants).

1. One.
2. 185.
3. Part of 1st class.
4. 114.

DEEP LEVELS (CHARTERS TOWERS) DEVELOPMENT BILL.

FIRST READING.

This Bill, the desirability of introducing which had been affirmed in committee, was, on the motion of the SECRETARY FOR MINES, read a first time, and the second reading made an order for to-morrow.

ELECTIONS BILL.

SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Mr. DAWSON (*Charters Towers*): Resuming the discussion of this particular question, I may say it is not my intention to detain the House at any length. I find myself in this position of "hands across the Chamber." It is one of the rare occasions on which I find myself very largely in agreement with the Hon. the Home Secretary.

Mr. HIGGS: Or the Secretary for Lands

Mr. DAWSON: Or the Secretary for Lands. That means, of course, that I intend to support the second reading of this Bill, which, as far as I can understand it, is one that I think members on this side of the House can cheerfully accept the second reading of. There are some matters in it which probably will receive very diligent attention when we get into committee. The Bill is not everything that we on this side of the House would desire as an Electoral Reform Bill; but it is certainly much better than we have at the present time. It is certainly a step in advance, with regard to electoral reform, to what we are under at present, and for that reason I am prepared to accept the second reading; but I am quite willing to support any effort made in committee to make it a little more liberal than it is now. The Hon. the Home Secretary seemed to be rather reluctant to introduce the second reading of a Bill of this nature. He seemed rather sore; he seemed to be somewhat annoyed that some political accident had put him in the position that he should introduce an Electoral Reform Bill. I think the hon. gentleman ought to be particularly well pleased that a political accident has allowed his name to be associated with electoral reform. The introduction of this Bill, I take it, is the triumph for the Labour party.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

Mr. DAWSON: We have been fighting for many years to get an alteration of our present electoral system—to get a more liberal franchise, in order that members who are sitting in this Chamber legislating for the people of this colony could honestly and conscientiously say they were representing a majority of the electors of the colony.

Mr. LEAHY: The triumph is a bit mixed, isn't it?

Mr. DAWSON: The triumph is not a bit mixed. The triumph is this—that the first plank of the platform of the Labour party and the Parliamentary Labour party is one man one vote, which is acknowledged and expressed inside this Bill.

The PREMIER: Which is entirely due to federation.

Mr. DAWSON: Which is immediately due to the acceptance of the Commonwealth Bill. I quite grant the hon. gentleman that; but it found its place in the Commonwealth Bill owing to the agitation that was carried on by the labour people throughout Australia. It was that which got it into the Commonwealth Bill in the first instance.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We had it thousands of years ago.

Mr. DAWSON: Surely the hon. gentleman is not going to rake up the past.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: In most savage countries that exists.

Mr. DAWSON: Ever since we have been an organised parliamentary party in this Chamber we have been trying, year after year, to get members on the other side of the House—we have tried and endeavoured in every way, by coaxing, by persuasion, by even threats—to get the Government to introduce a Bill based on this particular Bill; but they have times out of number—every time—refused us. When we have accepted their refusal and took the matter into our own hands and introduced a Bill on private members' day, we have had the most eloquent speeches, and, goodness knows, the most lengthy speeches delivered by hon. members on the other side of the House, showing that it is a very false principle; that it would be ruinous to the country, and that we would certainly be inviting disaster if we accepted an

iniquitous principle of that description. I am very pleased to say that, after all this agitation, after all our efforts, we have been successful, finally, in getting hon. gentlemen opposite to disabuse their minds of this wild dream that they had; that this awful picture that they pictured in their imagination has been dissipated; and that they believe, after all, that the Labour party was right from the jump, and that the principles they have advocated are the best and the truest that can be adopted by the people of this colony. I quite agree with the Hon. the Premier's interjection that they are introducing this measure, not because even now they are thoroughly convinced that one man one vote is the best principle that could be adopted for themselves, but it is inevitable. Is it largely a consequence of the acceptance of the Commonwealth Bill by the people of this colony. I am very pleased to be able to stand up here this afternoon and say that that was the principal argument I used when in the Northern portion of the colony—that the easiest, the quickest, and surest way of getting electoral reform and the abolition of plural voting in our domestic legislation was for the people of Queensland to accept the Commonwealth Bill. They took my word to some extent, according

to the vote, and I am pleased to find [4 p.m.] that I was correct. Certainly there were a large number of my friends and supporters who had a sincere belief that the acceptance of the Commonwealth Bill would not make any alteration or difference in the extension of the franchise in our domestic legislation. But to-day we find that they were wrong and we were right.

Mr. JACKSON: It is not through yet.

Mr. DAWSON: It is as nearly being through as we can get it.

Mr. STEPHENSON: What about West Australia?

Mr. DAWSON: It may meet with a few snags like the hon. member for Nundah, but nevertheless I think it will survive.

Hon. E. B. FORREST: It will be all right.

Mr. DAWSON: If I understand this Bill correctly, the idea aimed at is that we should in our domestic legislation have just as liberal a franchise as has already been adopted for our national legislation; that every man in this colony, no matter what position he may occupy, —unless he comes within the particular clauses which would disqualify him—that on the day of election he is just as important and has just as much electoral value as any other member of the community—that the lamplighter of our streets has the same electoral value as the millionaire has.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The values are not equal.

Mr. DAWSON: Why not? Can the hon. gentleman point out why the values are not equal? The millionaire and the lamplighter both stand on equality on this day. That is the object of the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: A man in Brisbane would have four or five times the power as a man in Charters Towers.

Mr. DAWSON: I quite understand the hon. gentleman's notion; that is that we should have a redistribution of seats. It follows, naturally, though not necessarily, that in this session we should have a Redistribution of Seats Bill. At any rate, at the first opportunity, in order to make one vote one value of any service, we should have a distribution of seats and single electorates.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. DAWSON: But it does not follow—as I understand the interjection of the hon. member—that before you can operate on this Bill that such redistribution must take place.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There is only one vote one value under this Bill.

Mr. DAWSON: The object aimed at in this Bill is, that on the day of election the peer and the pauper shall stand on exact equality, and I think that object has been to a very great extent achieved by the hon. gentleman who has introduced the Bill. What is it first proposed to do? I am certainly most enthusiastically in favour of this—the abolition of the plural vote. That is, that a man whose name is Tom Jones can vote twice, and John Smith can only vote once. There are three qualifications which we shall have to wipe out of existence—freeholder, leaseholder, and householder—and in the future the only qualification which will entitle a man to cast his vote on the election day is this: That he is actually a *bonâ fide* resident in the colony of Queensland—that is, he must be a Queenslander. There are some other provisions, which refer to the case where a man resides in South Brisbane, and he may change to Toowong. That man would have the right of transfer. The great thing is that he must be a *bonâ fide* resident of Queensland. Under the present Act, a man who never saw Queensland, but who has a little bit of freehold property, can claim a vote for it.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: No.

Mr. DAWSON: Yes; that right had been exercised on more than one occasion. I think that the abolition of the plural vote is a very great step in advance of the system that is in vogue at the present time. In the first place, it will mean that every hon. member who comes into this Chamber can honestly and conscientiously say that he represents the majority of the electors in his own particular electorate. I do not think that any hon. member now sitting in this Chamber can say that he is absolutely certain that he represents the majority of the electors in his own electorate.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Any number can say that.

Mr. DAWSON: I don't think so. Take, for instance, the electorates around the metropolis. As a matter of fact, there are several electorates around the metropolis that are absolutely dominated by the property vote—by those men who have a little bit of property outside the electorate in which they reside, and this class is very numerous. That was brought home to us very forcibly at the last by-election at South Brisbane, when the present hon. member for South Brisbane was returned. He had a majority of 174, I think, but, owing to the operation of the plural vote in the North Brisbane booth, that majority was reduced very considerably.

The HOME SECRETARY: How do you know that those votes were property votes?

Mr. DAWSON: I know they were. Some of these voters were undoubtedly *bonâ fide* residents of South Brisbane, but the bulk of these votes were property votes. If any democratic candidate came up for a metropolitan constituency, he would have to allow a margin of 100 for these property votes, which would go against him. The first time the hon. member for Woollongabba stood for that electorate, he defeated all comers in Woollongabba itself, and it was North Brisbane that beat him.

The HOME SECRETARY: It was because these voters had their businesses in North Brisbane, and lived on the other side.

Mr. DAWSON: No, it was because of the large property vote. On a pure residence vote that hon. gentleman would have been elected in 1893 for that electorate. In this direction the abolition of the plural vote will do a lot of good. In the future hon. members in this Chamber will be representing the majority of the electors

in their constituencies. It will be a representation of the people, and not a representation of the property of some people. In that way the Bill will do a lot of good, and it also will do good in this way: It will put a stop to a good deal of the bad feeling which has been generated and the suspicions created; and it will save unnecessary expense and prevent a lot of litigation, as instanced by what has taken place lately in our courts. As instanced also by the last election for Cambooya—

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. DAWSON: Where on a property qualification—

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. DAWSON: Where on a property qualification—

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. DAWSON: The same property has been put in for two or three different electorates. The hon. gentleman admits that there are quite a number of property-owners in Cambooya—

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. gentleman is pursuing a most unusual course, and a course that ought not to be pursued, in alluding to a matter now pending in a court of justice.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. DAWSON: I had no intention of doing that, but that was the most striking illustration I could think of. I had no intention, I can assure you, of prejudicing anything that was pending in the courts in the slightest degree. At any rate, what I want to point out is that the abolition of the plural vote will prevent a lot of this litigation, and a lot of the suspicion and ill-feeling at present existing, because when a man's only qualification is residence, he cannot possibly prove before the court that he is residing in two places.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: In the Warrego case he did.

Mr. DAWSON: No.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes.

Mr. DAWSON: No; it was not proved. Under this a man cannot come before the court with only a residence qualification, and prove that he is residing in two places at the same time; but if it is a property qualification he can prove a lot of things. He may prove to the satisfaction of the court that he has property in three or four places. In that respect the abolition of the property vote will do a lot of good. Now, I have mentioned that the object aimed at by the hon. gentleman is to, as nearly as he possibly can do it, put every man on an equal footing on the day of election; that his manhood shall be his claim, and that he shall not suffer any penalty on account of his poverty. Well, admitting that that is the object aimed at by the hon. gentleman, I think in some respects he has not altogether achieved it. There are two or three serious defects in the Bill, there are some contradictions, and there are what appear to be some manifest errors on the part of the draftsman. Then there are some minor things that can be dealt with when we get into committee.

The HOME SECRETARY: The draftsman was not to blame. They are not errors of his.

Mr. DAWSON: Some of the clauses contradict one another.

The HOME SECRETARY: It is not the fault of the draftsman.

Mr. DAWSON: Well, it is not essential whose fault it is.

Mr. LEAHY: You might give us some indication of what they are, so that we may deal with them when we reach the committee stage.

Mr. DAWSON: Yes, I will. One of the very serious things is that in the attempt at consolidation, I presume by an error, rights already enjoyed by electors are taken away. There are

certain rights now enjoyed under the old Act by electors with residence qualifications that are not in this Bill at all.

The HOME SECRETARY: What are they?

Mr. DAWSON: There are several, and before I get through I will point out to the hon. gentleman what they are. I merely mention these matters so that the hon. gentleman may know what we consider defects in the Bill, so that he may have time to consider them before we get into committee. The first is in clause 5, subsection 1. There is an omission there which I think is unintended. No mention is made of Asiatic aliens. According to this subsection a Japanese is not disqualified from voting. The old section makes it very clear, and the same provision is in the last Mining Act that we passed.

The HOME SECRETARY: How can an Asiatic alien be naturalised? He cannot be a naturalised British subject if he is an Asiatic alien.

Mr. DAWSON: As a matter of fact the Government have naturalised some Japanese at Thursday Island to permit them to take out pearling licenses.

The HOME SECRETARY: Then they cease to be Asiatic aliens. They are Asiatic British subjects then.

Mr. DAWSON: How can they be Asiatic British subjects? The same thing would apply to South Sea Islanders. If that doctrine is correct, what is the necessity of putting in aboriginal natives of Australia or South Sea Islanders?

The HOME SECRETARY: Although they are naturalised they cannot vote.

Mr. DAWSON: Can the others, if they are naturalised, vote?

The HOME SECRETARY: Certainly.

Mr. DAWSON: Well, I object to it. I do not see any reason why a naturalised Japanese can exercise a vote, while a naturalised Chinese cannot.

The HOME SECRETARY: Naturalised Chinese do vote now.

Mr. DAWSON: But the hon. gentleman said they could not vote if they were naturalised.

The HOME SECRETARY: Chinese can vote if they are naturalised.

Mr. DAWSON: Then in clause 6 there is a disqualification of any person receiving charitable allowances or receiving outdoor relief, or any inmate of a hospital. That matter will, of course, be contested in committee. Clause 8, giving the definition of residence, is rather serious. I would like to specially direct the attention of the Attorney-General to this matter, as probably he may be able to suggest some means for getting over the difficulty. I quite understand that what the hon. gentleman is aiming at is that every *bona fide* inhabitant of the country shall be entitled to get on the roll, to remain there, and to record his vote in the ordinary way.

The HOME SECRETARY: If he is a naturalised British subject—except aboriginal natives—

Mr. DAWSON: This is in clause 8. The Attorney-General has had some experience of this particular matter, and what I am inclined to move in committee is that there shall be a clear definition of what is *bona fide* residence. The hon. gentleman referred last night to the circular letter which was issued by the late Premier—that residence was not actual squatting, but *bona fide* intention to reside—and a *bona fide* intention to reside has been decided to be where a man's nearest and dearest possessions are. But if there was something more definite put into this clause it would save a lot of trouble, and we would be better able to understand where we are. The hon. gentleman referred to the Willard case. That particular case turned on the meaning of this very term "residence"—

whether it was actual squatting or *bona fide* intention to reside. I commend that matter to the hon. gentleman, and I let him know that we intend to raise the question in committee, and ask him in the meantime to see if he cannot devise some means or other to give us a clearer definition than we have at present. There are some little amendments necessary in clause 15. I now come to one of the serious defects of the Bill—the attestation clauses. Hon. members on this side feel very keenly about that. Of course it is provided here that claims may be attested by "a justice of the peace, electoral registrar, classified officer of the public service, railway station-master, classified male teacher of a State school, or clerk of the local authority in whose district the claimant resides"; but what we desire is that it should be extended, because in some outlying districts there is not one of these officers at all. I can mention several districts in the colony where they have not got any one of these officers, and it is utterly impossible to get a claim attested. We think the attestation clauses should be considerably widened. The police, for instance, could be authorised to attest claims. The people in the towns, along the coast line, and anywhere within easy distance of a railway will have no difficulty in this respect; but take a place like the Woolgar. There is not a solitary individual of all those classes of officers mentioned in the Bill anywhere near that neighbourhood. They do, however, get an occasional visit from the police, who go around every quarter, and if they were authorised to attest claims there are lots of little holes and corners where a man could get on the roll. The Government should either extend the attestation provisions or else do away with attestation altogether, and revert to the old system. There is a small matter in clause 23, which I will not touch upon now. There is a matter in clause 49, to which I will draw the hon. gentleman's attention, as it appears to conflict with clause 75. It is in subsection 2, and this is what I mentioned a while ago—that in the framing of the Bill there were certain omissions that deprived electors who are on the rolls in respect of a residence qualification of rights they already enjoy. The right they have now is that if they have been in an electorate for two months out of the last seven months, they have a right to exercise their vote on a residence qualification. Under clause 75 that right will be taken away. Clause 49 provides that an elector must have resided for two months out of the preceding five months in the electorate, and, according to clause 75, he must have resided there for the last preceding two months.

The HOME SECRETARY: I explained that that was one of the errors in the draft.

Mr. DAWSON: I did not catch that. Then you intend to alter it?

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes. Clause 75 is to be altered back to the other.

Mr. DAWSON: I am very pleased to hear that. I would like now to draw the hon. gentleman's attention to clause 97, with reference to the absent voter. I must admit that it is rather a difficult matter to get at what the hon. gentleman is driving at. Still I think this can be improved to some extent, so that the man who is compelled to be absent through pressure of business, or who is away through pleasure, or on account of the nature of his business, if he has shown himself a *bona fide* resident of Queensland, should be entitled to record his vote in another electorate. Of course, on referendum day on the Commonwealth Bill every voter was afforded facilities for voting, but I am inclined to think that that system would hardly suit parliamentary elections, because in the case of a close contest it might be

months and months before we really knew who was elected. Still, I certainly think that better facilities should be afforded to ordinary voters than are provided here. The absent voter is, I suppose, in ninety-nine cases out of one hundred the Western bushman, the sailor, the commercial traveller, or the digger—I do not mean the miner, but the man who travels about from goldfield to goldfield.

The HOME SECRETARY: Drovers.

Mr. DAWSON: I include them in the Western bushmen. It is to meet the necessities of these people that these absent voter clauses have been inserted. I would suggest that more ample provision should be made in regard to our travelling public. We could easily make it the law of the land that at all parliamentary elections—it was done on referendum day—the captain of every vessel should be a returning officer, and on the day of election everybody on board could record his vote, and have it sent to the returning officer of the electorate in which he has a vote. Then, again, if a man who has a vote presents himself in another electorate to record his vote, and he is willing to make a declaration, knowing that there is a penalty, say, of two years to follow if he makes a false declaration, he should be entitled to record his vote.

I think that would reach more people than are likely to be reached by the provisions we have at the present time. Another omission is to be found in clause 154, which provides that "all offences under this Act, punishable on summary conviction, may be prosecuted before two justices." Section 126 of the Act of 1897 provides for an appeal, and I think that is a right which should not be taken from electors.

The HOME SECRETARY: There is an appeal here.

Mr. DAWSON: I did not notice it.

The HOME SECRETARY: Oh, yes; under the Justices Act.

Mr. DAWSON: I had not observed that. But I suppose the biggest difficulty of all in connection with the Bill is that found in the temporary provisions, clauses 155 to 159. I may just as well intimate here that hon. members on this side feel very strongly about this matter; in fact, we consider that if there is not some alteration made in those provisions the Bill might as well go by the board as far as a reform Bill is concerned. The retention of those clauses as they stand at the present time is absolutely fatal to the Bill as a Reform Bill. This is the most important portion of the Bill, and I want the Home Secretary to look very carefully into the matter. I thoroughly understand what the hon. gentleman is driving at in these provisions—that he wants to purify the rolls. When this measure becomes law there will be a new roll compiled for each electorate, which will only contain the names of persons who have proved a residence qualification, and the hon. gentleman has adopted this method in order to get rid of the freeholder, the leaseholder, and the householder.

The HOME SECRETARY: And any man who is on the roll for a residence qualification which he does not possess.

Mr. DAWSON: That is done at the ordinary November court, and is quite a different matter altogether. These provisions must be read in conjunction with the attestation clauses. If every person on the roll is suddenly struck off, and he can only get on again by sending in a claim form, then at least 50 per cent. of the men in the Western districts and in the far North around the Gulf will not be on the roll—they will be disfranchised. What I think should be done is this: The department should appoint in each electorate a special officer whose business it

should be to go round to every elector whose name is on the roll at the present time, supply him with a claim form, get it filled up, and take it back again to the registrar.

Mr. LEAHY: He could not find many electors.

Mr. DAWSON: How does a census collector go round from house to house with a long form containing about a dozen questions which are to be answered by the head of the household, and get the required answers to the questions? Surely to goodness in dealing with a reform of this character a mere question of 2½ per cent. should not be allowed to stand in the way of doing justice to a number of voters. I say the Government should appoint a special officer, who may be drawn from the Police Force, or from any other branch of the service, or from outside the service, for each and every electorate in the colony to go round with claim forms, and get them filled up and attested; otherwise in the outlying districts where men are not within reach of a justice of the peace, and never see one from one year's end to the other, where there are no railways and no clerks of petty sessions, electors will be disfranchised under these temporary provisions. Every facility should be given them to get their names enrolled, and a mere matter of 2½ per cent. should not be allowed to stand in the way of dealing out justice to men of that description.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I did not refer to money, but to the large number of people who could not possibly be got at.

Mr. DAWSON: I further think that these provisions should be amended in such a way that the resident voter will be left alone, and that only men who are on the roll for a qualification other than residence shall be notified by the electoral registrar in their particular districts that they must fill up claim forms and prove their residence qualification. If that were done that would be an improvement, but even in that case a special officer should be appointed to go round and discover those particular persons. I have taken up much more time than I had intended to do on this matter; I have indicated places where I think amendments might very well be made, and I think it is only fair that I should do so. I am prepared to accept the second reading of this Bill, and I congratulate the hon. gentleman on having introduced it. He is a very fortunate individual indeed that he should have his name associated with a Bill of this description. It is not all that we might desire, but it is certainly a long way better than the law we have at the present time. I shall cheerfully support the second reading of the Bill, but will do my best in committee to make it a better measure than it is now.

* Mr. COWLEY (*Herbert*): I trust I shall not be considered presumptuous in rising at this stage of the debate to say the few words I have to say on this question, but I do so because I shall not be able to speak after tea. I may say, in the first instance, that I very much regret that the Home Secretary introduced this Bill at such a late hour last night. I should very much have liked to have heard his speech, but it was impossible for me to be here. I think it is hardly fair to members of this House to introduce such an important measure as this is at a time when many hon. members had not an opportunity of hearing the speech made by the Minister in moving the second reading. It is a very unusual procedure, and I do not think it is exactly right that a Bill of this magnitude should be introduced at a very late hour, especially as we cannot get *Hansard* to see what the hon. gentleman really said in explanation of the very important provisions of the Bill. I must also say that this measure was not before the country at the general election. In the Premier's

manifesto at the last general election it was never mentioned, and I consider that the followers of the Government have been basely deserted by their leader on this occasion. A measure of this magnitude, which proposes a complete revolution in our electoral system, should have been announced in the manifesto of the leader of the Government, and every man who was a candidate for parliamentary honours should have had an opportunity of expressing his views for or against the measure, as well as every other measure foreshadowed in the manifesto on that occasion.

Mr. GIVENS: It was the manifesto of the leader of your party in 1896.

Mr. COWLEY: I am not speaking of 1896, but of the manifesto of the Premier at the last general election. I believe the hon. gentleman who introduced this measure gave as the excuse for its introduction that it was a necessary corollary of federation. That I deny entirely. No man can for a moment say that because we have passed the Federal Enabling Bill and the electors have adopted the Commonwealth Bill it follows as a matter of course that we should adopt the same franchise for our local Parliament as is adopted for the Federal Parliament. If the adoption of the Commonwealth Bill is any argument at all it is not in favour of the adoption of one man one vote for the local Parliament, but of the adoption of a differential franchise, like that which exists in Switzerland, for instance. The questions which will have to be dealt with by the Federal Parliament are national questions, and the questions which will have to be dealt with by the State Parliaments are local and purely State questions. I can easily understand that there should be one franchise throughout the whole of the States for the election of members to serve in the Federal Parliament, but having gone that far I cannot at all see that the Government are justified in bringing in this measure, if that is the only recommendation they have. I understand that in South Australia they have woman suffrage, but I have not heard that because the people there adopted the Commonwealth Bill and agreed to join a federation of the Australian colonies they are prepared to abandon woman suffrage.

Mr. McDONALD: It is specially provided for in the Commonwealth Bill.

Mr. COWLEY: That is just what I am arguing. It is specially provided in the Commonwealth Bill that each State shall have its own local franchise. That is why I say the argument adduced by the Home Secretary—the only argument he used so far as I could see from reading the *Courier* this morning, in support of this measure—is no argument at all. If because we are to have a universal franchise throughout the States for elections to the Federal Parliament is a sufficient reason for adopting the same franchise for the State Parliaments, then South Australia should abandon woman suffrage, or the whole of the Australian colonies should adopt it. In adopting the one man one vote principle for the Federal Parliament, so far as I can ascertain at present, it is intended that the constituencies shall be divided about equally, that is to say, if we can believe the Premier—

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Oh, oh!

Mr. COWLEY: In the statement which he made in saying that he would advocate a measure to divide the colony into three divisions for the election of senators, I understood him to say so.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Six.

Mr. KIDSTON: He has made three different statements about it.

Mr. COWLEY: I can understand a division of the colony into three divisions—North, South, and Central—for that purpose, but not for the

election of members of the House of Representatives. So far as I can understand, it has been said that the colony will be divided into equal electorates—electorates having as nearly as possible the same number of electors—for the election of members of the House of Representatives in the Federal Parliament. But I cannot understand any Government bringing forward a measure of this description providing for one man one vote, unless they do as has been advocated by them and by others—that is, divide the colony into equal constituencies. That is the principle which I believe will be adopted when we come to divide the colony into electoral districts for the House of Representatives. I say it would be far more wise and far more judicious for us to wait until federation is accomplished before we deal with a measure of this kind. (Opposition laughter.) We have not obtained federation yet, but I suppose we will shortly, and that will be the time to deal, not only with this question, but with the greater question of redistribution. After the Federal Parliament is established, we must, so far as I can see, have a redistribution of seats, and I think this Bill should have been accompanied by a measure providing for redistribution. I should say that after federation we shall not want seventy-two members in this House. I think we shall then be able to get on much better with larger constituencies and fewer members.

Mr. McDONALD: Half-a-dozen.

Mr. COWLEY: I do not go to the extreme of half-a-dozen, but I think forty or fifty will be found to be enough after all the big national questions are taken away from the consideration of this Assembly. I say advisedly that if the hon. gentleman wishes to pass this measure—if he believes in this measure, and if the House believes in this measure, we should also insist upon a Redistribution Bill being brought down at the same time. But I say it is not the time to deal with either at present. We have only just come from our constituents. This Parliament should run on for another three years, or at any rate until after federation is consummated, and then, in the last session of this Parliament, we should deal with this measure, and also with the question of redistribution. The questions the Federal Parliament will deal with will be questions of national importance and matters pertaining to the State will be relegated to the State Parliaments. It has been acknowledged in our Local Government Acts that there shall be a property qualification, and that a maximum of three votes may be given to one voter. I say the State government will pertain more to local government than it does at the present time, owing to the whole of the national questions being removed from the State legislature, and instead of federation being an argument for one man one vote in the local franchise, it is a greater argument for the property vote being maintained, and, if necessary, an amendment in the direction of the provision at present existing in our Local Government Acts. I have tried to look at the question dispassionately, and to me it is impossible to reconcile the views the Home Secretary has given expression to in introducing this Bill with any opinions I entertain. I do not know that in the United States the franchise is equal in the different States. The franchise for the State legislatures varies very considerably, and no reason has been adduced to satisfy me that we in Australia having determined to enter into a federal union should bring all our State franchises down to one common level. Another thing I object to is the removal of the property qualification. I think even if the Home Secretary was determined to bring in a Bill providing for one man one vote he

might have retained the property qualification, and I do not see that any grave danger would arise from its maintenance. Perhaps hon. members will show where I am wrong—if I am wrong in this—but I think it is very advisable indeed, for hon. members of this House especially, to retain the property qualification. Many of us who live in the North and the West have either to spend half the year away from our homes or else make our homes in Brisbane, and why should we be deprived of a vote in our own electorates? It seems to me that it is a very bad principle indeed. We are driven, much against our will in many instances, to break up our homes and make new homes, and after doing that we are disfranchised for those electorates in which our homes, our belongings, and our interests are located. I hope when the Bill gets into committee hon. members will see the force of this, and that they will so amend that clause that under certain conditions a man may elect to have either a property or a residential qualification as he thinks fit.

Mr. HARDACRE: Then you will swamp elections—you can do it.

Mr. COWLEY: I see no danger. Perhaps the hon. member will be able to point out where the danger is; but I cannot see any danger likely to arise, so long as a man has only one vote, whether he has it for a property qualification in a certain constituency or on a residential qualification. I know it will come very hard on Northern and Western members, who have to live out of their constituencies, to be deprived of the property qualification. I should like to speak on this Bill at length, but it is physically impossible for me to do so. I cannot say how much I feel in regard to the Government bringing in this question at the present time. It has been said that a bargain was made between the Premier and the leader of the Labour party, that if the leader of the Labour party supported federation the Government would bring in this measure. Whether that is true or not I cannot say.

Mr. LEAHY: A new coalition.

Mr. COWLEY: A new coalition.

Mr. GLASSEY: There is no truth in it.

Mr. COWLEY: I am very pleased to hear it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Are you in the confidence of the leader of the Labour party?

Mr. GLASSEY: Yes.

Mr. COWLEY: All I say is this: It seems to me to be unwise to bring forward the Bill at this juncture; but if this Bill becomes law this session there should be a general election next session—one follows from the other as a matter of course. If it is true, as has been stated repeatedly by hon. members on the other side, that there are 30,000 or 40,000 individuals disfranchised and this Bill will enfranchise them, then I say that immediately this Bill becomes law there should be another general election.

The HOME SECRETARY: This does not give the franchise to anybody who is not already entitled to it.

Mr. COWLEY: Hon. members on the other side have repeatedly stated that owing to the disabilities which many of the Western and Northern population labour under 30,000 or 40,000 are disfranchised. I understand that this measure by making provision for voting by post and other things will to a very great extent remedy that defect.

Mr. KERR: Not at all.

Mr. COWLEY: Then they will continue to be disfranchised.

Mr. KERR: A good number of them.

Mr. COWLEY: I understood that there was some provision in the Bill by which that would be remedied, but if that is not the case I hope some amendment will be introduced by which every man entitled to a vote shall have a vote if he so desires. I am perfectly in accord with hon. members to that extent, but I do not say that every man should have one vote, and one vote only. I believe also in the property qualification. If this Bill will not remedy the defect which hon. members say exists, I trust they will, in committee, endeavour to introduce amendments which will give what they actually need, and will enable all men that are entitled to a vote to exercise their vote.

Mr. LEAHY: What do you mean by "entitled"?

Mr. McDONALD: How many acres does it take to make a wiseacre?

Mr. COWLEY: I trust that when we get into committee I shall be able to speak at greater length upon this question of one man one vote; all I can do to-day is to protest against the Government bringing in this Bill at the present juncture. I consider that it is untimely, and that it is unnecessary. I consider that it is fraught with very grave results to the whole colony; and I certainly say that unless they are prepared to go to the extent advocated by the leader of the Labour party to-night—unless they are prepared to go to the extent of introducing at the same time as this, if it is passed into law, a Redistribution Bill, equalising as much as possible every electorate in the colony—I say this Bill is a perfect farce, and that it should not pass this House. I apologise for not being able to go more fully into the matter owing to my physical condition, but I hope to speak at greater length when the Bill goes into committee.

* Hon. G. THORN (*Fassifern*): I think I will just say a few words on this Bill. First of all, I would advise members of the Labour party to accept this Bill at once without talking about it. I am anxious to get at the policy of the Government, and while this Bill is humbugging about we do not know what the policy of the Government is. I intend to support this Bill, and I will promise the Labour party that in regard to enrolling the names at the courts of the colony I shall be prepared to support them in making the franchise more liberal than it is at present. There will be great difficulty even with this Bill in getting names on the roll. I pointed out when the last Bill was introduced by Sir H. Tozer that the proposed "cure was worse than the disease," and my words have been verified. That is the only part of the Bill with which I disagree—that is, the enrolment of the electors of the colony. Take my own electorate, Fassifern. Of course, I do not care about going about the country enrolling names.

[5 p.m.] I am not young, like the hon. member who sits at the head of the Opposition benches, but to my certain knowledge there are fully 15 per cent. of the people in that electorate who are not on the roll. I shall be prepared to support the Labour party in getting everyone on the roll. I shall also be prepared to support one man one vote, not that I think it will have the effect that the hon. member for Bundaberg imagines, because, as a rule, there are as many property voters for the Labour man as for the property man. That is really the case in and around Ipswich. I do not think the Labour party will gain much by one man one vote. In fact, there will be no more vocation for the extreme section of the party. Their vocation will be gone. They will have nothing to cry out about. We shall have a repetition of what they had in New South Wales. Before they had one man one vote in that colony

there were about twenty Labour members in the Legislative Assembly for Sydney; but after they got one man one vote the number dwindled to three or four.

Mr. GLASSEY: No.

HON. G. THORN: In the city of Sydney there is one Labour member, and in the suburbs two or three. That has been the result there, and I believe it will be the result here.

Mr. BROWNE: Is that the reason you are supporting it?

HON. G. THORN: I am prepared to go "the whole hog" now that we have got a liberal franchise under the Commonwealth Bill. I say our franchise should be assimilated to the federal franchise. I am in favour of allowing a person to vote once, and I think a person ought only to vote once. I hope hon. members will allow this Bill to go to the second reading to-night. Indeed, I should like to see it go through committee to-night, because I want to know what the Government intend doing this session. I want to see their works policy. The country is crying out everywhere for a works policy; but in my opinion, there is not the slightest chance of getting such a policy from the present Government. I may also say that I deprecate altogether the statement made by the Hon. the Premier a night or two before the referendum was taken on the Commonwealth Bill. He held out a kind of olive branch to the Labour party to vote for the Bill. He said, "If you support this Bill, I will give you one man one vote." I do not know whether a compact was entered into; but, to my mind, it seems very likely. There is no doubt, however, that it turned a good many Labour men to vote in favour of the Commonwealth Bill who would have gone against it. They look upon this electoral reform as a *sine qua non*. I also deprecate the action of the Premier the other night in trying to hurry through the Estimates. He said that if they would pass the Estimates of the Chief Secretary's Department, he would be prepared to bring on this one man one vote Bill. I did not like that. This Bill ought to have come on in due course. It ought to have been brought in on the first day of the session, and, at the same time, the Government should have brought in their public works policy. Let us finish this and go on with the public works policy. Let us know what the Government really contemplate doing. I have been in the country, and north, south, and west there is an opinion that the Government does not intend to bring down a works policy this session or any other session. That is the opinion of a great many of their friends, and in order that those complaints may be found to be wrong, I am anxious we should get to work at once and let us know what their policy is. I do not know whether the Secretary for Railways has a railway policy?

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes.

HON. G. THORN: I do not think he has, or that he has ever thought about it. I know a very great many promises have been made.

THE SPEAKER: Order!

HON. G. THORN: I know I am transgressing, and I submit to your ruling, Mr. Speaker. When this one man one vote Bill is passed, and I hope it will be passed to-night, we ought to go in for a general election at once on the one man one vote principle. I have said before in this House that we have a very unequal electoral system, taking the residence qualification and the property qualification; but I could draft a Bill which would be acceptable to nearly every member of this House. I make bold to make that statement. I could do it in a couple of days. When this Bill is passed we should go to the country at once, because this

House is not a true reflex of the country. I will take the electorate of the hon. member at the head of the Government. I have analysed the roll of that electorate, and about half the number are plural voters. In that electorate only about 600 or 700 voted for the Commonwealth Bill; but at the last general election about 2,000 voted, and about 1,400 were for the Premier himself, showing at once how one man one vote will cut in in that electorate. And I believe that it will alter the complexion of matters completely as far as the suburban electorates in and around Brisbane are concerned. In order that we should have a true reflex of the opinions of the people we should have a dissolution immediately after this Bill passes, even before fresh electorates are carved out. I am not afraid, like some other hon. members, to face my constituents—not the least. I could go to the country at any moment. When the Bill is in committee I may have a lot to say about it; but at present I should counsel hon. members on the other side of the House to say no more, to let the Bill rip, and go to the second reading at once, because some hon. members on this side are only anxious it should be humbugged and knocked about. (Opposition laughter.) Let them act like they did on the Address in Reply, and let us get to the work of the session. We have had no work really done yet, and I am anxious for something practical to be done. We shall have no work while this hangs fire; while it is in the road.

Mr. JENKINSON: This is a good start; a splendid start.

HON. G. THORN: It is, but let us get rid of it, and go on with the real work of the session.

Mr. BARTHOLOMEW (*Maryborough*): In addressing the electors of my constituency I told them that I considered that all constitutional changes should be referred to the people to decide upon. In a conversation I had with the late Hon. T. J. Byrne he impressed that upon me very greatly, and he intended to advocate it very strongly. Unfortunately he was not able to do so; the opportunity did not occur. Is it likely that the Upper Chamber is going to pass a measure to alter the Constitution of this colony without knowing the people's wishes?

Mr. KIDSTON: Let us settle what this Chamber will do.

Mr. BARTHOLOMEW: Whatever is the quickest way of getting it the proceeding we should take. Speaking on this particular matter, my electors did not ask me whether I believed in the one man one vote, nor did I say whether I believed in it, but I say to this House that I believe in adult suffrage, and I hope hon. members will consider that I am sincere in asking that the question should be referred to the people. I cannot agree with the Home Secretary when he says that the question of adult suffrage should be left to some more convenient season. I think we should thrash it out now. It is said that one man one vote is a corollary to one electorate one representative, but then all the towns will rule the country. How are single electorates to be worked on that basis? With regard to single electorates, I understand that the colony would have to be divided into equal electorates, approximately, returning one member each, and each elector would have one vote.

Mr. GLASSEY: There is no necessity for that.

Mr. BARTHOLOMEW: It will come, I'm afraid.

Mr. GLASSEY: Look at New Zealand and South Australia.

Mr. BARTHOLOMEW: The objection to the single electorate system is that it involves an arbitrary division of natural constituencies.

Queensland has natural divisions, and it is very questionable whether a multiplicity of areas will be beneficial or not. Suppose the colony were divided into equal electorates, it will be found that the boundaries will require to be continually altered, which will be the means of causing a good deal of labour, and a suspicion might be raised that the alteration of the boundaries were made for political purposes. Now, if we are going to have federation some people may say that there should be one representative for every 10,000 people, which would mean reducing the number of members of this House to fifty. Others might say that there should be one representative for every 5,000, but don't you think, Sir, that the people of the colony should have some say in this matter? There is another contention. In fact, we have now in existence a preferent vote: Every elector has one vote and every voter has the privilege of marking the figure 2 on his paper; but it is not necessary for me to mention that now, as it is now in existence. I consider that this matter should be referred to the people. It is for them to say whether they believe in one man one vote or in adult suffrage, or whether they believe in single electorates or whether they believe in the electorates remaining as they are now. I do not wish to move an amendment on this matter of the referendum, because the time of the House is very short, but I will support any hon. member who will move an amendment for a full suffrage.

* Mr. HIGGS (*Fortitude Valley*): Although this Bill does not contain as many reforms as I would like, as one who has taken a prominent part in the electoral reform movement for some time, I am willing to accept it as a first instalment, and a very good instalment, too. As I am anxious to get the Bill through, I shall not take up very much time in making a long speech on the second reading. For many years I have taken a prominent part in the attempt to establish one man one vote, and I was led to believe in the principle through some speeches made by Sir George Grey in New South Wales some years ago—in 1891. Sir George Grey pointed out to those who were present at his meetings that it was impossible to get a fair representation of the will of the majority of the people when we had the system of plural voting; and such a marked effect had Sir George Grey's speech on the people of New South Wales that not a single candidate who put up for Parliament at the forthcoming election, who advocated plural voting, was returned. The whole of the members returned to Parliament at that time were in favour of one man one vote, and that was made the law of the land very shortly afterwards. Now, apart from what I consider the justice of the claim, I am very anxious to get this Bill through, because a few months ago—or rather a few weeks ago—I undertook the rôle of prophecy, and in undertaking that rôle I got myself into a considerable amount of disrepute with a considerable section of the populace of Queensland. I based my forecast on Mr. Garran's opinion, expressed in connection with the Commonwealth Bill, that the Constitutions of the United States bore a striking resemblance to the Federal Constitution, indicating that the Federal Constitution had a marked influence on the State Constitutions; and believing that that opinion was a good one, I gave my vote for the Federal Enabling Bill—believing that the carrying of the Draft Federal Constitution would at an early stage in our history be the means of establishing the one man one vote principle in Queensland. Well, I must say that the proposed change has come about a great deal sooner than I expected. As has been said before, the Bill does not contain all that we would wish it to contain, and I believe there are a number

of hon. members of this House who would be favourable to the inclusion of woman suffrage in the present Bill.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. HIGGS: I think the question of woman suffrage has been so well agitated throughout the colony for some years past, and the principle has been found so beneficial—I will not say beneficial because I might be challenged on that—but I will say that it has not been found to be detrimental to the interests of the countries in which it has been established. I refer to New Zealand and South Australia; and I think that the head of the Government, the hon. member for Bulimba, might have gone further and made one of the principles of this Bill one adult one vote. However, I do not think, had he introduced that principle into this Bill, that the Bill would have had the same chance of going through the Legislative Council as this one will have. I would advise those of us in this House who believe in the principle of woman suffrage at an early date to get an expression of opinion on it by the means advocated by the hon. member for Maryborough—that is through the referendum. Let us get an expression of opinion of the people of the colony as to whether the women should have a voice in selecting our legislators who make the laws that we all have to obey. As regards the hon. member for Herbert's suggestion that this Bill should also contain a provision to establish single electorates, I think such a proposal would not go unsupported in this House, and I believe the majority would support it, but as has been said, that principle can be established later on. We could have single electorates based upon some system such as that which obtains in New South Wales where the electorates contain an average of 2,200 voters. Of course, in Queensland, owing to our smaller population and larger area, we might make the average less, say 1,500. At the present time we find very great discrepancies in the number of electors who return certain members to Parliament. I would like to say in passing that the evils which the hon. member for Herbert alleges are taking place now, owing to the fact that one vote one value is not in existence, are more pronounced under our present system than they will be under the system which will prevail if this Bill becomes law. Now, I do not know how any member of this House can defend the present qualifications which obtain to enable a man to become an elector in this colony. The property qualification mentioned by the hon. member for Herbert seems to me to be the weakest qualification that we could seek for. Our first aim, I believe, should be to get the best legislators—endeavour to get the very best men who will make the laws which are to govern us. Well, now the system under which a man is allowed to have a vote in every electorate in the colony, if he is possessed in every electorate of £100 worth of land, seems to me to be about the worst method of selecting legislators to represent the people. The man who is possessed of an allotment worth £100 has a vote, but the man who is possessed of £100 in cash in the savings bank—100 golden sovereigns, which may be worth more than the allotment of land, which is supposed to be worth £100—has no vote. The man who, instead of accumulating money and putting it into land, spends his £100 in educating himself or in purchasing books to complete his library, does not get an extra vote. I think, if we could arrange the matter satisfactorily, the best method would be to establish an educational test for the voter, but then what sort of standard are we going to fix?

Mr. GLASSEY: Would you carry that a little further, and apply it to members of Parliament as well?

Mr. HIGGS: We might do that, but I am proceeding to point out the difficulty. The difficulty is what kind of education shall we deem necessary to qualify a voter, more especially for the election of legislators who occupy seats in this House? I can imagine a man who spends all his days immersed in science, and yet that man, when the canvasser comes round to him at election times and asks for his vote, may reply, "I take no interest in politics, but if my vote is of any use to you you may have it." On the other hand, the man who has no book learning at all, but who has had a general experience of the world, may possibly be a thousand times better able to select a lawmaker than a man who has received a university education. I do not propose to make a long speech. The hon. member for Fassifern made a very good suggestion, which I propose to follow. With him I wish to test the sincerity of the Government in this matter. I should like to add a word to what has been said about the difficulties that are in the way of the man who wishes to get on the roll, and about the necessity for widening the scope for attestation and witnessing claims. When the Government went so far as to name certain individuals—justices of the peace and officers of local boards—to witness claims, I think they might as well have gone further and followed the example of, I think, it is New Zealand, where two *bond fide* electors may witness a claim. Clause 49, which provides that no person shall vote unless at some time within five months he has been resident two months in the electorate, has already received attention, and I do not propose to say anything about it, but the absent voter clause certainly requires some amendment, because a man may suddenly be called away from an electorate, and he may not have time to apply to the returning officer for the right to vote, and therefore will be disfranchised. That is a great defect. While speaking of defects, I should like to mention two others. There is the absence in clause 75 of an important question which should be put to voters. If the returning officer deems it necessary he should be able to put the question, "Have you voted for any other electoral district?" The clause contains, so far as that matter is concerned, only the question, "Have you voted already in this district?"

Hon. G. THORN: He cannot vote twice if there is only one qualification, and that residence.

Mr. HIGGS: The last question which I have read is the only safeguard, and I think the one I have suggested would be an additional safeguard. Now, in clause 11 justices of the peace are penalised and prevented from sitting at the court of revision if they have had anything to do with the claims made for names to be placed on the roll. I see no objection to that, but at the same time I think an addition should be made preventing any person who has had anything to do with objecting to names taking part in the proceedings of the court. The clause permitting objections to be made to names on the roll appears to me to be very objectionable. I admit that that is largely a matter of administration, but surely some means could be devised for preventing such happenings as take place in the electorate which I represent. I have frequently seen notices sent to men stating that the electoral registrar has reason to believe that they are dead, or that they have left, or that they are disqualified—men who were neither dead, nor left, nor were disqualified.

Mr. GLASSEY: But who had lived in the same house for years.

Mr. HIGGS: Yes, and as the hon. member for Bundaberg says, who had lived in the same house for years. That evil obtains through the fact that it is in the power of any political opponent to go up to the electoral registrar and tell him that he has reason to believe that a certain person has left the electorate. It then appears to be the practice for the electoral registrar forthwith to send a notice to that man stating that he has reason to believe he has left the electorate, and unless he comes up to prove his qualification his name will be struck off the roll.

That is a great injustice, and if we [5 30 p.m.] cannot insert in the law itself some provision guarding against it, we ought to get an assurance from the Government that such a thing will not be practised in the future, or, at any rate, if any person takes upon himself the responsibility of going to the electoral registrar and saying that he has reason to believe that a certain elector has left the district, he ought to give his name, if required. His name should not be kept secret from the man to whom the injustice is done. It is in the power of any man to make an objection, and compel a working man to lose a day's pay, which he can ill afford, in order to have his name retained on the roll. I will not pursue my remarks in that strain any further. Some cautious men of this Assembly interjected not long ago that we are not out of the wood yet. Well, I suppose we are not out of the wood, or this Bill is not out of the wood of political troubles; and I may say that the Government, who promised us this reform some two months ago, have given us every reason to believe that they are not sincere in this matter. Only last evening the hon. member for Nundah—

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We have heard that gag before.

Mr. HIGGS: The hon. member for Nundah and two or three other hon. members on the other side were endeavouring to delay matters, and some members of the Ministry—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We might as well say that you are endeavouring to delay the Bill because you are talking—that is your argument.

Mr. HIGGS: The hon. members were highly amused at the efforts of hon. members opposite to raise a stonewall to prevent the second reading of this Bill coming on last night.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Nonsense. If you are going to charge us with stonewalling—

Mr. HIGGS: I do not charge members of the Ministry with stonewalling, but their actions during the past two months have led us to suspect them.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: But you always suspect.

Mr. HIGGS: If the Bill does not go through both Houses, then it is the fault of the Government. After the promises that they made, what do we find? There have been several Bills brought down to this House and dealt with, although we were told that this Bill would be one of the very first measures introduced in this House.

MEMBERS on the Government side: So it is. The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Hardly any of the Estimates have been passed.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You threatened to stonewall unless we brought it in. What could we do after your threat?

Mr. HIGGS: We have dealt with the Aborigines Protection and Sale of Opium Restriction Bill; the University Bill has been dealt with up to a certain stage; the Criminal Code Bill has

been dealt with—a comprehensive measure containing over 700 clauses; and the Supreme Court Bill and the Local Works Loans Bill have also been dealt with. Now, these Bills having been brought down and dealt with, certainly indicates to people outside, if it does not indicate to hon. members in this Chamber, that there appears to be a disposition on the part of some hon. members, anyway, to delay the passage of this measure.

Mr. JENKINSON: We are thankful to get it now. "Better late than never."

Mr. HIGGS: I just mentioned this matter in passing, because a late member of the Ministry, in speaking not long ago—evidently referring to members on the Ministerial side of the House—said, "They think this House will be a buffer—"

The SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. HIGGS: "A sort of door mat for them." They say, "We will pass this one man one vote—"

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HIGGS: "And send it up to the Legislative Council—"

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HIGGS: "It is certain to be rejected there, and things will be all right!"

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HIGGS: Well, I will pass on, though I was not aware that I was offending.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member is quoting from a speech delivered in another Chamber, which is contrary to our Standing Orders. That is where he offended.

Mr. HIGGS: If I have offended, I must apologise. I hope that hon. members on the other side are sincere in this matter.

Mr. JENKINSON: Let us get to a vote—that is the true test.

Mr. HIGGS: We will get to the vote very soon.

Mr. FORSYTH: Wait till you see, then.

Mr. HIGGS: I promise hon. members that hon. members on this side will not stonewall this measure, and that the speeches which will take place upon it will be neither lengthy nor numerous. Hon. members on the other side are charging me with stonewalling the Bill. I have only spoken for about fifteen minutes on such an important measure as this, and I believe I have spoken as infrequently this session as any hon. member of this House.

Mr. FINNEY: Hear, hear! I have never heard him stonewall since he came into this House.

Mr. HIGGS: I hope that the Bill will go through both Houses. I certainly think it will go through this one with very little opposition. There may be some opposition to it in the other Chamber, but let us hope that the attitude of members in the Legislative Council will not be that taken up by the Hon. Mr. Barlow, but the attitude of the Hon. Mr. Gibson, who, although he is not in favour of the principle, says he will raise no objection. It goes without saying that I agree with those who say that no injury will come to this colony by the establishment of the principle of one man one vote. On the contrary, I believe it will do a great deal of good. I do not think it is calculated to increase the numerical strength of the members on this side of the House, but I do think that it will have a most wholesome restraint upon the whole of the members of the House, and that certain acts of omission and commission which have characterised the Queensland Legislative Assembly in past years are not likely to happen in the future.

* Mr. GROOM (*Drayton and Toowoomba*): If hon. members of this Chamber, when they are dealing with an important question of this kind, are going to consider, in the first place, what is

going to happen elsewhere, we would hesitate very much over what we were going to do. We should not consider the Bill in that spirit at all.

We are simply here to discharge public duties on our own account. What may happen elsewhere is a matter that may have to be taken up at some future time, but the question now for us to consider is whether we should read this Bill a second time. I am not going to stonewall the Bill, nor am I going to give a silent vote. My opinion is that it is advisable to read the Bill a second time. In answer to questions by my constituents at the general election as to whether I was in favour of one man one vote, I gave an emphatic reply in the affirmative. I also stated that if the principle of one man one vote was applied to the election of members of this Chamber, the principle should also be applied to municipal elections. I have said before in this Chamber, and I repeat it now, that the principle should be of general application. I am a property owner in Toowoomba, and at municipal elections the returning officer gives me three votes in two wards, so that I have to record six votes. Coming behind me is a gentleman of culture and ability—with almost a university education—but, as he has not got a freehold of his own, and is simply a resident householder, he simply had one vote. There must be a feeling of irritation in the mind of any person who goes to an election under such conditions. His one vote is completely swamped by my three votes for that ward. In fact it has come to this—that I could name a ward where on one side of a street there are a sufficient number of three-vote ratepayers, including an establishment in which there are six partners, each of whom is given three votes, so that this one establishment will give eighteen votes, and this street will simply swamp the whole of the single-vote ratepayers in that portion of the town. Now we have established the principle of one man one vote for the Federal Parliament, and we are going to establish it as far as this Chamber is concerned. I think we should go further and make it of general application, and establish the principle in connection with municipal elections. I have some sympathy with the contention of the hon. member who leads the Labour party, that some measures ought to be taken to enable every man to be enrolled under this Bill. I do not think the difficulties in the way of doing that will be nearly so great as some hon. members appear to imagine. In New South Wales the members of the police force collect the names for the rolls, and there is no trouble in the matter. A policeman goes round to a house and says to the man, "Are you qualified to have your name put on the electoral roll?" If the man says "Yes," the paper is filled up, and he knows nothing more about the matter, but on the day of the election he goes and records his vote. I think the same thing could be done in Queensland.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: We had it in this colony at one time.

The HOME SECRETARY: And there were very great complaints about it.

Mr. GROOM: I do not know that there were complaints about it.

The HOME SECRETARY: You read what the *Toowoomba Chronicle* said about it in those days.

Mr. GROOM: I am not aware that there were complaints about the system; and, though I am frequently in the adjoining colony of New South Wales, and have been at Tenterfield when the names were being collected, I heard no complaints of the system there. It is certainly less difficult than the cumbersome system we have here now, under which a man has to make a claim and get it attested. With regard to what the hon. member for Maryborough said respecting the franchise to women, if his amendment will

enfranchise women it will have no heartier supporter than myself. When we are adopting this principle, I think we should carry it out in its entirety. I shall support the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. BRIDGES (*Nundah*): The first time I spoke in this House this session, some hon. members on the other side accused me of stonewalling. It seems that I am not supposed to speak at all, but noticing the tired look of hon. members opposite again this afternoon, I think everyone should have their say on this matter. I have some objection to this Bill, and it is only fair that I should give warning of that objection. The main reason advanced so far for the introduction of this measure is, that having adopted the principle of one man one vote in regard to federation, we should pass this Bill, and establish the principle of one man one vote in connection with our parliamentary elections. Federation is not yet an accomplished fact. Why then should there be this haste? If we wait till next session, possibly we may be federated, and then there may be some reason for passing a Bill of this character, though I am not satisfied that even then there will be a necessity for the measure. The old proverb holds good that it is a wise thing to be off with the old love before you are on with the new. Provincialism is not dead at the present time. We are very much in the position of the man whose wife is certainly very sick, and who is looking round for another, but who would be in a very awkward position if his wife should recover. If we adopt this Electoral Reform Bill, and then federation does not come off, I do not know what position we shall be in. The majority of the members of this House will have committed themselves to a measure that they did not approve just because they thought that something was going to happen, and there would no doubt be trouble in the colony, and a good deal of comment on our action. In common decency the Government might have waited in this matter. They are already accused of being dishonest in their intentions in connection with this Bill. We may as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb, and I think we should strangle the Bill without wasting any more time over the matter. I do not intend to support the Bill, and if it gets into committee—I am not sure that it will, but I am afraid that it will—I will endeavour to have it amended. The Government ought not to have brought in the measure at the present time; it would have been better to have postponed it till next week when hon. members were fresh. But now the weather is hot and oppressive, and hon. members have been working at high pressure, and are not in a fit condition to deal with such an important measure. I suppose, however, we must do our best with it. If our electoral laws are to be radically altered, I do not see why I should not have some opportunity of protecting the interests of my family. I have more at stake in this colony than some of my hon. friends on both sides of the House, as, for instance, my hon. friend, the member Leichhardt. I do not see why that hon. member should have the same voting power as I have, seeing that I have a numerous family. (Opposition laughter.) I do not say that I should have a vote for my wife, if we adopt adult suffrage, but for my children who are under twenty-one I think I should have some extra voting power in order to protect their interests. It is said that there should be no representation without taxation. Well, my children are taxed, and have to obey the laws, and I am the only one who can give protection to them. I think that a married man with a family should have some way of balancing affairs in this particular line. I think it was very unwise for the Premier to promise on the

eve of the federation referendum that if federation was carried he would bring in this Bill. It has been said that there was an understanding about the matter between the heads of the two parties in this House.

Mr. GLASSEY: That is untrue.

Mr. BRIDGES: I cannot see that the hon. member for Bundaberg is in a position to contradict it.

Mr. GLASSEY: I am.

Mr. BRIDGES: The hon. member is not at present the leader of the Labour Opposition, and I am sorry that the leader of that party is not present; but I still think—and there is no harm in thinking; we do not hang people for thinking—that there was some understanding, because at that time certain things seemed to bear out that view, and until I am convinced to the contrary I shall continue to hold that opinion. On account of that promise, which had an undue influence on the voting, I have a grievance in connection with the introduction of this Bill, and I say that the main reason advanced in favour of passing it is not a true one, seeing that we have not yet a federated Australia, therefore the whole necessity for passing the measure goes to the wind. For that reason I am against the Bill, and if the second reading is carried I will do my best in committee to get some amendments made which will to some extent balance the evils contained in the Bill.

Mr. GLASSEY: I wish to take this early opportunity of contradicting officially, on behalf of the leader of the Labour party, the statement that has been twice made in this House that there was some understanding entered into between the Premier and the leader of this party with regard to federation. It is just as well the contradiction should go forth to the country.

Mr. FOGARTY: It was the Premier made the condition.

Mr. STEPHENSON: You are not in a position to speak for the Premier.

Mr. GLASSEY: I am in a position to speak for this side and for the leader of this party, and I say he had no hand or part in any compact of the kind.

Mr. JENKINSON: Half your members were opposed to it.

Mr. GLASSEY: The statement has been made twice this afternoon, and I now emphasise the statement that no compact was entered into between the leader of this party and the Premier with regard to support from this side for federation if this Bill were introduced. I do not charge hon. members on the other side with stonewalling, and certainly I do not charge the hon. member for Nundah with it. We have heard six speakers on the other side this afternoon. Three are practically opposed to the Bill, and two very strongly against it. One, the hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Bartholomew, thinks it should be referred to a referendum of the people. They are not at all satisfied that the Bill should be introduced at this particular time, notwithstanding that the people have already expressed themselves emphatically in favour of the principle as embodied in the Commonwealth Bill.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No.

Mr. GLASSEY: In most unmistakable language it has been expressed that we, as a community, are by a substantial majority in favour of the Commonwealth Bill, which we know embodies the principle of one man one vote.

Mr. JENKINSON: The people have also returned a majority of members in favour of it.

Mr. GLASSEY: This Bill goes a long way to meet the demands of those who have been urging electoral reform for many years; but I am by no means satisfied with the Bill as it stands, because

it contains some provisions against which objections have been urged again and again by members on both sides of this House. The hon. member for Fassifern has this afternoon, in a very reasonable manner, urged his objection to the attestation clauses. Where is the necessity for attestation at all? From my conversations with the late Premier, Hon. T. J. Byrnes, and with his predecessor, the present President of the Legislative Council, I know that neither of them believed in attestation. They could not see the utility of it. I believe there is only one other colony in the group where there is such a thing as attestation at all. In the New Zealand law, a person claiming a vote must have his claim attested. But by whom? Not by a select few, as provided here, but by any two *bonâ fide* electors of the electorate for which the vote is claimed. Here we have gone on in this namby-pamby fashion, always dreading and fearing to trust the people in a legitimate way. I accept the Bill, and welcome it as a big step in advance. It has been alleged that the Premier made a certain statement prior to the taking of the referendum on the Commonwealth Bill as a bribe to the electors to vote in favour of it. I am not here to speak for the Premier.

Mr. STEPHENSON: You seem to be.

Mr. GLASSEY: But I believe the Premier was then, and he and some of his Ministers are now, sincere in this matter. The Home Secretary explained last night that while he had not previously been a strong advocate of the principle of one man one vote, seeing that the people had expressed themselves in such clear and unmistakable language in favour of it, like a sagacious politician he came to the conclusion that the principle could no longer be delayed. Why should it be delayed? I listened to the arguments advanced by the hon. member for Herbert, the late Speaker of this House, and during the whole of my public career, and during the time I have been able to read the debates which have time after time taken place on the great question of electoral reform and the extension of the suffrage to the people, I never heard or read more rotten old fusty Tory arguments used than I listened to from that hon. member this afternoon. There are many defects in this Bill, but with the principle of it I entirely agree. The hon. member for Herbert regards this Chamber, after federation is consummated, as a large edition of a divisional board, and on that ground he urges the retention of the property qualification, and he further urges that some people with property should have more votes than one—that they should have two and three, and I suppose he would go as high as half-a-dozen, provided a man had sufficient property to warrant his getting them, in the opinion of the hon. member. I have never believed that any man should have any more than one vote, but I regret that the suffrage is not to be extended to women under this Bill. If, as I dare say there will, there should be an amendment moved in that direction, I shall give the principle my adhesion. Criticism has been offered on the question of attestation, and I hope it will be dropped out of the Bill altogether, or if it be retained that the Home Secretary will consent to widen its scope, and allow attestation by two *bonâ fide* electors. One amendment I should like to see in the Bill affects the counting of the votes. This is a matter I have urged again and again in this Chamber. I contend that the ballot-boxes should be brought to one centre and their contents mixed up there before the count is made. Under the present system of counting in sections, in places where there are only a few votes recorded the secrecy of the ballot is made a farce of. It will be said that

this proposal would cause delay in getting the result of the poll. So it would in perhaps six or seven electorates in the colony, but so far as the bulk of the constituencies are concerned it would cause very little delay at all. I have gone into the matter very carefully, and I say that so long as we have sectional counting of votes in places where only eight or ten votes are to be recorded, it is impossible to get a true expression of opinion from the voters who may be employed in one mine or on one station, and where every man's vote will practically be known. I hope the Home Secretary will agree to widening the scope of the attestation clauses in the way I have suggested, not only that it may be possible for men to get on the roll, but also that it may be almost impossible to get them off except for substantial reasons. I hope also that the hon. gentleman will agree to the proposal to have all the ballot-papers counted at one centre.

Mr. SMITH: This Bill is said to be brought in in consequence of the passing of [7 p.m.] the Commonwealth Bill—that it is a natural corollary from the principle we adopted in passing that measure. The principle of one man one vote is, to a certain extent, good. I believe myself that every man in Queensland should have a vote, but I never could see the justice of depriving a man who has proved himself, perhaps, a more worthy citizen of Queensland of more political power than his fellows. The system appears to me to be coming into force, however. The world seems tending in that direction, and it is scarcely possible to stem the current. However, we may express our opinions upon it, and my opinion is that instead of levelling down, which this Bill evidently does, we should level up. By adopting the principle of one man one vote, all men are brought down to one level, as far as the franchise is concerned. My opinion is that we should endeavour to give men the privilege of levelling up if we can possibly do so without doing an injustice to our fellows. It would be more in keeping with the principles of good government that we should hold out inducements to men to level up to a higher state of citizenship than it is to bring them all down to one dead level. Those notions may be called old-fashioned, still there is a good deal to be said in their favour. The hon. member for Nundah, in speaking on this subject, asked why should a married man who has a family not have more voting power than a man who is not married and who has not the same interest in good government, we might say, as the man who has a large family. There is something in that argument, and it is no use shutting our eyes to the fact that, although the trend of public opinion is in the direction of one man one vote, there is a good deal to be said in favour of giving all men one vote, and at the same time giving some men the privilege of levelling up to the position of having more political power. It is said that one man one vote necessarily entails one vote one value. I would like to ask, if that comes into force, where shall we be in the outlying districts of the colony? On our present population basis about every 1,200 men would have a representative, and that would cast the entire voting power into the large centres of population; and those people who live in the more remote parts of the country, where the population is not large, will simply be without true representation. In my opinion that principle will scarcely hold. Although it seems a fair principle, and one that cannot be argued against, still I say it would do an injustice to a great many electorates in Queensland. Therefore I do not see that we can possibly argue on the principle that if we have one man one vote we must necessarily have

one vote one value. I do not know how this Bill will work with regard to members of Parliament. If a member of Parliament has to be in his electorate at least two months during the five months immediately preceding an election I think a great many members of Parliament would be disfranchised. It seems to me that if they do not fulfil that condition of residence they will be disqualified from sitting in the House even if they are elected. Then, again, suppose a member of Parliament, after his very arduous duties in the House, takes a trip to southern colonies or to the old country; before he comes back he is off the roll, and by that means he is disfranchised. These are questions to which we should give due consideration before we pass the Bill in its present form. I know one man one vote is a very alluring cry, and it seems to be gaining the ear of the world very considerably at the present time. The travelling voter ought, I think, to have the privilege of voting, and I suppose that in committee we shall be able to fix him up. Although he is not in the electorate in which he is registered, he should be able to vote under this Bill. That is a very important matter, and it is something to which he is entitled. If every man in the colony has a vote—

Mr. KEOGH: Why not every woman, too?

Mr. SMITH: It is argued that adult suffrage should be allowed under this Bill. I do not know that adult suffrage would not be a good thing. However, it has not been proved yet that it has been a very great benefit where it has been tried. I do not think in any country or State where adult suffrage has prevailed the state of affairs has been more favourable than in the neighbouring State where adult suffrage does not prevail. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley, Mr. Higgs, said it had not proved detrimental, at the same time it has not been proved to be beneficial, and I think it may be said that it would do neither good nor harm. If the ladies desire to have the franchise, I see no reason in the world why they should not have it, but the ladies have not in large numbers asked for this boon, if it may be called a boon.

Mr. KEOGH: I think they have.

Mr. SMITH: If you take the number of those who asked for it I think they are very small in proportion to the whole number of ladies in the colony. The hon. member for Fassifern I know is a great advocate of the ladies, and he would like to see them all enfranchised, and I would not be a strong opponent of their enfranchisement at any rate. Though I am not in favour of this Bill as it stands—though I never did believe that we should bring all men down to the same level—

Mr. KIDSON: Up to the same level.

Mr. SMITH: I am fully seized of the great advantage it is to encourage men to attain to a higher state of citizenship.

Mr. GIVENS: How are you going to judge of their state of citizenship.

Mr. SMITH: One rough way of judging that is by their accumulating property. I say that the man who by individual effort has proved himself in some way or other a more worthy citizen than his fellow, is entitled to more political power than the man who is aimless in life, and never attempts to attain to a higher position.

Mr. GIVENS: That is a rotten idea.

Mr. SMITH: The hon. member will have the privilege of showing how rotten it is. I am just as entitled to express my own conviction on this subject as the hon. member for Cairns. I stick fast to that privilege, and as long as I am in this House I hope I shall never be afraid to express my opinion on any subject that comes before the House, notwithstanding the fact that my opinion may not agree with the opinions of other hon. members. I say that I am not going to oppose

the second reading of this Bill, though I do not approve of all its provisions; and when we get into committee possibly we may be able to amend it so as to make it more generally acceptable.

Mr. FOGARTY (*Drayton and Toowoomba*): I regret exceedingly that the Government has not seen fit to introduce the principle of adult suffrage, because I have no hesitation in saying that the women would vote quite as intelligently as the males. Not having very great confidence in the Government, I think it would be injudicious at this stage to endeavour to have the thing made perfect, and on the principle that half-a-loaf is better than none, I think we should accept the proposal. I should not be surprised myself at the Government being considerably relieved if the second reading was not carried, but I shall certainly vote for the second reading, and I trust to see this very imperfect measure considerably amended. I think if we are not to have adult suffrage we ought certainly to have adult male suffrage; but a certain section of people are disqualified—people who are qualified as well as the electors in any sphere of life as far as intelligence is concerned—and I say it would be wrong to deprive those people of their birthright. The hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Bartholomew, and the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, Mr. Higgs, said that before we had female suffrage a referendum should be taken. The referendum taken on the 2nd September last was a complete farce. Hundreds if not thousands of electors were misled owing to the peculiar words on the ballot paper, and had the paper been in a different form the majority, if there had been a majority at all, would not have been so large. It is true that it was promised by the Premier that in consideration of the Commonwealth Bill being carried, he would introduce the principle of one man one vote, I say this is not one man one vote. I also notice that people in receipt of charitable assistance are disqualified, with the exception of those in hospitals, and I shall endeavour to amend the Bill in committee in that respect. There are a number of worthy people, pioneers, who made the colony for other people who came here after them, such as myself and other hon. members of this House, but unfortunately they have not been successful, and hence they are now depending on the State for a little assistance, and I think it would be very unfair, indeed it would be harsh, to say that those people, while receiving a charitable allowance of 5s. a week, should be disfranchised. I think it may have been an oversight on the part of the hon. gentleman that they were not placed on the same footing as patients in hospitals.

Mr. BROWNE: They might as well disfranchise the pensioners on page 3 of the Estimates.

Mr. FOGARTY: The hon. member points out that if the Government intend to carry out this particular provision they should disfranchise all pensioners; but there is no such proposal, and I think it would be very unfair if there was any. I hope the Bill will be passed on the voices. I know a very large majority in this House are pledged to their constituents to support the principle of one man one vote. I have given a promise to that effect myself, and that promise I am prepared to keep, and it will give me a considerable amount of pleasure to be able to say that I assisted in amending the present electoral laws, which are faulty in a number of ways. This Bill is not a very radical change. I even have doubts myself whether the principle of one man one vote is embodied in it or not. The Bill is certainly hazy, and I have no doubt that when we reach the committee stage considerably more light will be thrown on the matter, and it is very sadly in need of it. As brevity has been, up till the present time, the

order of the day—and I trust that this will characterise the present session up till the rising of the House—I will certainly follow that excellent example, with an intimation that I shall certainly vote for the second reading and also vote for the Bill when it reaches the Committee stage, and assist in every way in placing this excellent proposal upon our statute-book.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

Mr. KATES (*Cunningham*): I certainly congratulate members on the other side on the achievement of a great victory. The leader of the Opposition said this afternoon it was a triumph getting this principle of one man one vote on the statute-book. They have been for eight or nine years fighting very hard for it, and I assure them they deserve the victory they have obtained to-day.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: We have not obtained it yet.

Mr. KATES: Hon. members seemed to think it would be opposed largely by this side.

Mr. BROWNE: Oh, no.

Mr. KATES: It has been expressed by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley; but I can assure you there will be very little opposition on this side.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

Mr. KATES: It will be carried by a very large majority, if it is not carried on the voices. I am prepared to support this Bill. In addressing my constituents—I have addressed them many, many times—I have always told them that if this Bill was brought forward I should support it, and this statement of mine was generally received with applause and satisfaction. I am very much pleased to have an opportunity of supporting a Bill of this kind. In fact, I can assure you that I have lost one or two important elections during my political career through it not being on the statute-book. My opponent had a paddock on the Downs—a very large paddock. He cut it up into small portions and issued leases to his friends in Brisbane to put them on the roll. (Opposition laughter.) When the polling day came round they got a special train, and came up and outvoted me. I have good reason to remember that, and for that reason I am going to support this Bill. I should also like to see a clause introduced to have all the elections on one day. If that had been the case in previous years, there would not have been so much plural voting.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: And shut the public-houses.

Mr. KATES: I also agree with my hon. friend the member for Toowoomba that there should be collectors appointed to the various districts to go round and put names on the roll. We know that a great many of the electors are prevented from getting their names on the roll, because they do not like to go through the formalities that are necessary. If this collecting had been done years ago, we should have had all these people on the roll who are not on it now. Another thing, it would meet the difficulties raised by the hon. the leader of the Opposition to clause 55, which he fears will have the effect of disqualifying a great many, or not put any on the roll at all. I do not think this Bill will do much harm, and for that reason I will support the second reading.

* Mr. STEPHENSON (*Ipswich*): It is my intention to support the second reading of this measure. I do not support it because I think it will do much harm, or for the reverse reason. I support it because I understand that this House practically affirmed the principle of one man one vote when they decided to remit the Commonwealth Bill to the decision of the electors of the colony. The electors—or a majority of them—having signified their approval of that Bill—

mistakenly, in my opinion—it seems to me a necessary corollary of the action then taken that we should have a Bill such as this measure submitted for our approval sooner or later. At the same time I do not think there was any great urgency for the bringing forward of this measure, and I cannot help expressing my disapproval of the manner in which the hon. the leader of the Government referred to his intention to introduce it when he was addressing the electors of Bulimba on the eve of the referendum on the question of federation. His action was strongly to be condemned. I do not know that it can be regarded as a bribe, and, possibly, it may not be so regarded—but it had very much that appearance—by electors all over the colony. When the *Courier* appeared with that announcement, occupying an exceedingly prominent position in its columns, it was interpreted by numbers of people residing at a great distance from the electorate of Bulimba as a bribe; as being held out as an inducement to them to support the adoption of the Commonwealth Bill with the hint that otherwise there was no chance of one man one vote becoming the law of the land. This is one of the questions which it seems to me has been inevitable for some considerable time, and I do not think the members of the Labour party need plume themselves on any particular foresight in connection with the matter, or claim or attempt to claim any particular credit. I do not believe it is owing to the action of the Labour party, either here or elsewhere, that such a measure is now being submitted for the consideration of Parliament. It arose as a matter of necessity, because in the endeavour, among the Premiers, the authorities, and the Parliaments of the other colonies to hit upon some measure of federation which would be acceptable to the electors of the whole of the colonies, it was found necessary to make concessions one to another. My belief is that a good many of those gentlemen who were largely concerned in the framing of this measure had no more love for the one man one vote principle than, apparently, have some hon. members of this House; but it was allowed to be inserted in the Commonwealth Bill as a compromise, in order that there should be something definite at least to submit to the electors of the various colonies. Therefore I do not think the Labour party can claim any particular credit. Even if they can, it is a singular thing that, according to the showing of the hon. member who is at the head of that party in this House, they have been striving their very utmost to obtain this thing for the past eight or nine years, and have only now succeeded—and succeeded, I may say, by a side wind. If it has taken them eight or nine years to bring their influence so far to bear as to enable them to have the possibility of the Bill being placed on the statute-book of the colony, it does not say much for their influence. Although, as I have said, I believe this is a necessary corollary to the embodiment of that principle in the Commonwealth Bill, still I do not think there was any urgent necessity for it. I think the question could well have afforded to wait. I believe it would have been much better if it had been dealt with by the Federal Parliament when that body comes into existence, and that we should have the advantage of having a law on the subject in the various colonies perfectly assimilated. It is quite apparent at present that there will be vast differences of opinion as to details, although the principle of one man one vote may be generally accepted. These differences would probably be avoided if, as I said, the whole question were remitted to the Federal Parliament. However, it has been decided at present that the question shall not be so remitted. We have it for our consideration

here. We have got to deal with things as they are, not either as we should like them to be or as we think they ought to be. It seems to me that there is a great deal of force in the contention that if this principle is to become law there ought to be a general election pretty soon afterwards. I opine that such a measure as this is one which might be more fittingly brought in in the last session of Parliament than in the first session, and I doubt much, only it appears the Premier desired to do all he possibly could to influence voters in favour of the course he was pursuing, if he would have shown any particular eagerness to introduce this measure at the present time. I see no objection to the measure beyond this:

that it is not comprehensive or [7:30 p.m.] drastic enough. If any hon. member proposes, when the Bill reaches the Committee stage, that its scope should be made more comprehensive—that it should make provision for adult suffrage—I shall only be very happy indeed to support that. For a good many years past I have come to the conclusion that whatever is to be said in favour of male adult suffrage can be said with equal strength in favour of the franchise to women. If, therefore, this measure is to become law, it will be more satisfactory to every one if it is made more comprehensive. We should not go on with these tinkering, such as we have been content to put up with for some time past, but should make the measure a comprehensive one, and one which is not likely to be amended for some time after it has been placed on the statute-book. A strong argument brought against woman suffrage is that great numbers of women in the colony—and some of them the best and most domesticated—do not desire the franchise; and there is certainly a great deal of force in that. But it is no reason why those who do desire the franchise should be precluded from exercising it—because their sisters, or some of them, do not care about it. There has never been an election in Queensland yet but scores and hundreds—and in some large electorates thousands—of men have not taken the trouble to come and record their votes. Thousands did not take the trouble to cast their votes on the Commonwealth Bill; but no hon. member could say—and I have never heard anyone outside the House pretend to argue—that because a number of men did not take sufficient interest to record their votes, that those who were interested in the welfare of the country, on the one side or the other, should not be allowed the opportunity of saying what they thought on the matter. If hon. members are at all logical, there is no more force in the one argument than in the other. The hon. member for Herbert condemned the Government for bringing in this measure, but it seems to me that he, and other hon. members who share his opinions, are exceedingly inconsistent. They might have known that the introduction of a measure like this would be the necessary result of the passing of the Commonwealth Bill; but some of them were so blinded by their eagerness to secure what they regarded as the great scheme of federation that they overlooked a number of comparatively minor matters, which it was perfectly apparent to persons who took the trouble to think more over the matter than they did, were inevitable. It seems to me that these hon. gentlemen—I know there are some sympathisers with them on this side of the House, and there may be some on the other side—these engineers—are “hoist with their own petard.” Things are not always what they seem on the surface, and, in their endeavours to secure what they deemed a great advantage, if they had been wise, they should have taken the trouble to think over the matter beforehand, and see

whether there were not some corresponding disadvantages. I believe there are disadvantages in this particular case, and looked at from the hon. member for Herbert's point of view, this is one. I do not regard it as a disadvantage; I am perfectly willing, nay, I am anxious, to vote for the second reading of this Bill, with a view to its amendment in committee, and that not because I pledged myself to my constituents to support this proposal, for I never brought the matter up during the last election campaign. The matter was never referred to; I was never asked a question on the point, and I never volunteered any statements on it. I have not the slightest objection to the passing of this Bill, if its provisions are calculated to bring about one man one vote; but I do not think the measure goes far enough. It should make provision for one adult one vote. Whether this Bill makes this provision or not, sooner or later the necessary corollary of one man one vote will carry the principle of one vote one value. That may be very unpalatable to some hon. members on both sides of the House, but it seems to me that it will be the inevitable result of conferring the franchise on every adult. It is complained by some hon. members on the other side that some men have a great deal more influence by reason of the fact that they possess more wealth and more votes than other men. Well, if there is anything in their argument—and I am not prepared to dispute it at the present time—they certainly cannot contend, if they are at all logical, that 100 men in one electorate should possess more power and influence and weight in the councils of the country than 100 men in another electorate. They should be permitted to exercise precisely the same power and influence. Although hon. members may try to make themselves believe that it is not so, I can assure them that that will be the inevitable result of the adoption of the general principle of adult franchise: that one vote recorded is of precisely the same value as another vote—no more and no less.

MR. JACKSON: That argument applied before just as much as it does now.

MR. STEPHENSON: Possibly.

MR. JACKSON: I dispute that the argument applies.

MR. STEPHENSON: The hon. member may dispute that, but I must say that, holding the views that he does, and which he has frequently given expression to in this House, he is an exceedingly inconsistent man. However, the hon. member will have an opportunity on the second reading of the Bill, or at a later stage of its consideration, of giving his views on that matter, but it does not concern me one bit what he thinks, or whether he or anybody else disputes my opinion on the point. I hold firmly to my own opinion, and I can assure the hon. member and others who agree with him that what I have stated will be the necessary corollary of giving one vote to every adult—that is, that one vote will have precisely the same value as another.

MR. BROWNE: There is no such thing in any place in the world.

MR. STEPHENSON: That does not matter. Hon. members will find that this principle will prevail in this colony and throughout Australia and throughout the British Empire before very long. I confess that I am as much astonished to-night as I was last night at the attitude of hon. members generally on the other side. Apparently they are actuated by the same “tired feeling,” as the hon. member for Nundah expressed to-night, as they were last night. It is a singular thing that these hon. gentlemen have kept us here night after night this session, and in

previous sessions, discussing matters of trivial importance, and here we have a matter of the gravest importance to the welfare of the colony, and they are silent. How do we account for this change in their attitude? I presume it is because of the hypnotic influence of the Premier to which I referred last night, and which justifies the hon. member for Bundaberg in filling the rôle of apologist, as he has done to-night, and also of interpreter, for members of the Ministry. He has undertaken to tell us what the Premier thought, and what he said, and what he did, as well as what was thought and said and done by the leader of the Labour party. I think, therefore, that I am justified in coming to the conclusion that this hypnotic power is still felt by hon. members on the other side, and that the Premier is exercising his influence to keep hon. members opposite quiet in order that a certain measure should be passed. Well, last night I ventured to express some objection to voting considerable sums of money in this House without the requisite amount of consideration being given to them, and I specially referred to the £8,000 proposed to be voted as the expense of the referendum on the Commonwealth Bill, but if I thought that the hon. member at the head of the Government could continue to exercise this influence on hon. members opposite I would not only vote £8,000 but £80,000, or £800,000 for that object, feeling assured that I should be doing a service to the country by muzzling the mouths of hon. members who sit on the other side. Now, as I said, I am going to support the second reading of this Bill, but I shall, with the assistance, I hope, of other hon. members, succeed in amending it in committee in the direction I have indicated. I believe with the hon. member for Cunningham that there will be no division, and that the second reading will be carried unanimously on the voices.

Mr. KEOGH (*Rosewood*): What has just dropped from the hon. member for Ipswich in reference to hon. members on this side holding their tongues does not apply to me. I am not aware of any undue influence having been brought to bear upon hon. members on this side to prevent them speaking. Of course the privilege of speech is given to us all, and we have a perfect right either to speak or hold our tongues. As far as I am concerned I have always advocated one man one vote, and I have, too, gone as far as advocating one adult one vote. I do not see why a woman should not be placed on the same footing as a man. Women are equally intelligent, and where the franchise has been granted to them, both in New Zealand and in South Australia, they have shown their ability to exercise it with discretion. I well remember the present Agent-General stating some time ago in this House that experience had proved that women voted as intelligently and in some respects more intelligently than men. Though the senior member for Ipswich has intimated that he did not inform his constituents that he was in favour of one man one vote, I cannot say the same. It is one of the platforms laid down by the Labour party, and I have advocated it strenuously all round, and also pledged myself to one adult one vote. I am entirely in sympathy with women having a vote, and hope that at a later stage in committee some hon. members will propose it, so that we may have an opportunity of voting upon it. It has been stated by the hon. member for Ipswich that a considerable number of women do not desire to vote, but that is no reason why those who do appreciate the franchise should not be placed on the roll. If even men do not care for the franchise let them stay off the roll if they think proper, though I would go further than some of my friends on this side are inclined

to go. I believe, if we give the right to every man and woman to vote, we should go as far as they have done in New Zealand, where it is provided by law that if persons are placed on the roll and do not vote, they must show sufficient reason for not having voted, or their names will be removed. There are plenty of people on the roll at the present time who do not exercise their right, and say that it is of no earthly use to them. I would put those persons off the roll, unless they were prepared to show good, sound reasons for absenting themselves from the poll. I believe that this House is going to adopt the principle of one man one vote, and a very wise one it is. It is one that has been carefully gone into for many years by members on both sides of this House, and when the question has been put to them by their constituents, I think nearly every member has declared in favour of it. I do not remember one instance in which a member having been asked the question whether he was in favour of one man one vote declared that he was not in favour of it, and I therefore cannot for the life of me see how they can get away from voting for it on this occasion. I believe with the hon. member for Toowoomba, who said that he thought there would be no division on the question. I hope there will be none, but that the second reading will be carried on the voices. Now there is one matter that I would like to draw attention to—a penal provision which I think is rather severe. There is a clause which says that any justice or other person who signs any such statement, without personal knowledge or full inquiry, from the claimant or otherwise, shall be liable on summary conviction to a penalty of £50, and on such conviction shall be incapable of acting as a justice or voting at any parliamentary election for a period of two years from the date of conviction. I believe that will be a means of keeping men off the electoral rolls, because there are very few justices who will witness claims in such a way as to find out whether a man is qualified or not. I think that is a very harsh provision, and one which I should like to see obliterated altogether. In my opinion it is quite enough that the magistrate should know the man. At all events, he should not be penalised because he signs a document stating that he knows the claimant, and that he possesses the qualification for which he claims a vote. If that is the case, I have no hesitation in saying that a great number of people will not be placed on the rolls. I for one would be very dubious about witnessing any claim with such a provision in the Bill. I hope that in committee some hon. member will move the omission of this clause. I do not wish to say any more on the second reading. No doubt, when the Bill gets into committee, there may be some things which I and other hon. members will endeavour to have rectified. I have done a good deal of electioneering in my time, and I have no doubt I shall be able to show where the shoe pinches, and to point out some necessary amendments, but I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill. No hon. member on this side has blamed the Government for having brought in this Bill. I think they did a very judicious thing, and acted in accordance with the dictates of the majority of the electors of this colony in bringing in the Bill. It has been stated by the senior member for Ipswich and other hon. members that the Bill has been brought in on account of the referendum, and in order to bring Queensland into line with the other colonies. I suppose that federation may now be regarded as an accomplished fact, and that it is only just and right that we should bring Queensland into line with the other colonies in this respect. I hope that

hon. members will signify by their voices, without going to a division, that they are in favour of the second reading.

Mr. MACKINTOSH (*Cambooya*): I cannot understand how the Government so suddenly determined to introduce this Bill. In the Premier's manifesto at the time of the general election there was no mention of electoral reform. I have no objection to electoral reform. During my lifetime I have done a great deal in connection with the advocacy of electoral reform, and in trying to get everyone on the rolls who was entitled to a vote. Years before many who are now in this House came to the colony I advocated electoral reform. I recollect the time when it was a difficult matter for anyone to get on the rolls at all except property owners and people who had salaries over £100 a year. I give myself credit for having advocated, in years gone by, that there should be manhood suffrage. I am prepared to go still further and have adult suffrage, and I would also give the police the franchise. In my own electorate there are not more than four policemen altogether, so that I cannot be accused of currying favour with them. At the same time, if the Civil Service have the franchise, I cannot see why the police should not have the same privilege. As a rule the police are as intelligent as any other class in the community. In connection with adult suffrage I may point out that we have adopted the principle in the case of municipalities and divisional boards. Besides that, we all know that there are numbers of widows who are rearing families in a most respectable manner. Why should they be deprived of having a say in the government of the country? They should certainly have a voice in it by having a vote. I will refer now to the manner in which the Bill has been introduced and the cause of its introduction. There must have been some connivance in bringing it in. In the Premier's manifesto we were going to have railways into agricultural districts; we were going to have cheap money for the farmers; and on those conditions I supported the Government policy. On those conditions I am here now, and it appears to me that by introducing this measure of electoral reform—and it is a good one—it is like asking for bread and getting a stone in return. We cannot live by a vote. It is right that every one should have a vote, but I do not think that the prosperity of the country should be entirely neglected for the sake of electoral reform. Now, how did this Bill come about? It came about by the Premier offering—quite uncalled for, if I may be allowed to say so—to bring this forward, as an inducement—or, if I may say so, as a bribe—to the electors of the colony.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MACKINTOSH: He did that in order to foist on the people this uncalled for federation—a thing they did not require. He considered his chance of getting federation carried was so poor that I am sorry to say he resorted to this promise to the people. In fact, it was tantamount to saying, "Unless you vote for federation you will not get an Electoral Reform Bill"; and I condemn the hon. gentleman entirely for coming down and doing such a shabby thing as leaving the former policy of the Government in the background, and adopting something that he did not believe in at all.

Mr. LESINA: The candid friend!

Mr. JENKINSON: He is redeeming his promise to you.

Mr. MACKINTOSH: I blame the hon. gentleman for not keeping his promise. There is not one word about the encouragement of the agricultural industry which we were promised, while something has been brought in which was not promised at all.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Do you believe in it?

The SPEAKER: Order.

Mr. MACKINTOSH: I intend to endeavour to get some amendments made in Committee. No doubt it is necessary to have such a Bill introduced, but it ought to have been a great deal more comprehensive than it is. There are a great many things left out altogether which should be in it. There is another matter that I cannot understand. A few years ago the hon. member for Bundaberg said that it was a theft to be possessed of a freehold property.

Mr. GLASSEY: I rise to a point of order.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. GLASSEY: I wish to say—

The SPEAKER: The hon. member can only rise to make an explanation with the consent of the hon. member who is in possession of the floor.

Mr. GLASSEY: I wish to say that the hon. member for *Cambooya* has been misinformed. No such statement ever emanated from me.

Mr. MACKINTOSH: If the hon. member denies it I am very glad to hear it,

[8 p.m.] but what I want to get at is that that qualification has been expunged

from this Bill. The hon. gentleman who introduced the Bill has caved in to the hon. member for Bundaberg, and it seems that a man is guilty of a wrong if he possesses a freehold. Under this alteration in the law, if I could afford to make a tour round the Pacific Islands, and was absent five months from my electorate, and an election took place when I returned, then I would be deprived of a vote at that election, because this measure provides for residential qualification only. That is one reason why I am not in favour of the Bill. I do not see that it is a crime for a man to hold property. I only wish that everyone in the colony had a freehold, because the country will never prosper as it should until we have a peasant proprietary, and there is land enough for all. I hope that those who are totally against this Bill will say so, and divide upon the second reading. I do not say which side I will take yet, because I consider it is a bit of a mongrel Bill.

Mr. LESINA: Then it's like your attitude towards it.

Mr. MACKINTOSH: I have my own opinion on it. I have paddled my own canoe in my own way for many years in this colony, and I am not ashamed of it at all. I have helped materially to make this country, and I wish everybody in it to be prosperous and happy.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. PETRIE (*Toombul*): I do not intend to let the second reading of this Bill go without saying a few words. Like some other hon. members who have spoken, I am at a loss to understand why there should be such undue haste in bringing in such an important measure as this. I disapprove of the action of the leader of the Government in making the promise he did at the meeting held at Bulimba previous to the taking of the referendum on the Commonwealth Bill—that if that measure were adopted he would introduce the principle of one man one vote. It seems to me that there was something queer about the whole surroundings, and I take this opportunity of declaring my disapproval of the action then taken by the Premier. I have always declared myself in favour of electoral reform, and although I have always declared myself against one man one vote, yet as things have changed by the adoption of the Commonwealth Bill, I suppose we will have to fall into line with the other colonies and accept this Bill. I therefore do not intend to offer any serious opposition to the second reading of the

Bill, but, at the same time, I will certainly support any amendments that I consider necessary. I am in favour of adult suffrage, and intend to give any amendment in that direction my hearty support. Because certain women in the colony do not feel inclined for domestic reasons to take the trouble to get their names on the roll, I do not think that is any reason why the majority of the women in the colony should not have a vote. When I was before my constituents at the last general election, I had the honour of having several ladies present at my meetings, and they put the matter straight to me, and in reply to their inquiries I said I was in favour of the franchise being extended to women in Queensland. I am not going back on that now, and I say if we are going to have electoral reform, let us have it in a proper manner, and not have Bill after Bill, making a sort of patchwork. I should like to have all elections held on the one day, and that day made a public holiday.

Mr. STEPHENSON: And have public-houses closed.

Mr. PETRIE: I believe it would be a very good thing to have public-houses closed on that day. I think there has been undue haste in the introduction of this Bill. Although the Commonwealth Bill has been adopted by the country, still federation is not yet an accomplished fact, and I agree with the hon. member for Nundah and the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Stephenson, that it would be time enough next session, or the session after, to bring forward this measure. However, it is here now, and I am not going to offer any serious opposition to it, but I reserve to myself the right to vote for any amendments proposed from either side of the House which my conscience approves as reasonable. I notice that hon. members opposite are very silent on this question. The majority of them look tired, but I think it will be seen that we who are sometimes called silent members can take up a little time when necessary, though we do not talk as much as hon. members opposite. I do not blame them for their silence on this matter, because I know they have been fighting for such a measure as this for years, and are now anxious to get it through the House. I give them every credit for their action in that respect, and I only hope that we shall continue to have short speeches from both sides of the House, so that we may get through the business of the session as speedily as possible.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. D. H. Dalrymple, *Mackay*): I should not have risen at all in this debate had it not been for some remarks made by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, Mr. Higgs. He said he was unable to understand the attitude of the Government, and trotted out the old bogie of insincerity, saying that the whole matter was surrounded with suspicion.

Mr. GLASSEY: I am blamed because I said the Government were sincere.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Then, there is a great rent between the hon. member for Bundaberg and the hon. member for Fortitude Valley. It seems to me that hon. members opposite cannot be sincere themselves when they express a desire that this matter should go through, apparently without discussion, if, at the very outset of the debate, they make a number of charges, which, I venture to say, are utterly groundless, against hon. members on this side of the House. One can hardly reconcile that with sincerity, although I believe the hon. member himself was sincere enough. It was probably only a blunder on his part. The only circumstance upon which he based his charge of insincerity was the fact that a couple of hon. members on this side had spoken.

The hon. member for Fortitude Valley said that he could not himself be charged with speaking very much, and I suppose we must take that for gospel. No doubt it was true, but hon. members on this side to whom he alluded in disparaging terms very seldom speak. But is it to be expected that hon. members on either side will take their cue as to whether they should speak or be silent from hon. members on the opposite side? It is a very poor ground to challenge the action of hon. members on this side who speak seldom, but who, I venture to say, when they do speak, are listened to; and for my part I regret they do not speak oftener. After all, the reason is clear why members on this side seldom speak; it is in order that the business may go through. With regard to the triumph for the Labour party, I am unable to see that there is any triumph for them at all. It has been admitted on both sides of the House that the reason for this Bill is to be found in something which has occurred in other parts of Australia—because the Commonwealth Bill has been brought forward, and because in that Bill the arrangements in connection with the franchise are somewhat similar to those proposed in this Bill to be adopted. If that is the case, what have the Labour party in this colony to do with it? I take it that the Labour party in this colony have had nothing to do with it at all. It has been said that this has been offered them by my hon. friend the Premier, and if that be a triumph, it means that they consider it a triumph to be fed with the crumbs that fall from the Premier's table. It does not go any further than that. When they claim to have been particularly triumphant, I sympathise with them, if all the triumph they are going to get in the future is to be that which they will get by accepting what is handed to them by a Premier whom they consistently oppose. One point I would particularly call attention to. Here we propose, after deliberation and after perhaps ascertaining what the general opinion was in the country—we propose a stupendous change in the Constitution of the colony, and one of the planks of the platform of hon. members opposite is the referendum. Now and again if we give them a plank they say that for years and years they have been trying to get that plank and they have at last forced us to give it to them—no matter how improbable the statement may be. One of their planks has been the referendum. Certain legislation, they say, should be only undertaken by a mandate from the people, and I am not sure that they do not go further and say that after we pass it it should be submitted to the people. I am quite certain of this: That it has always been an article of faith thrust into our faces on all occasions, that every important matter should be submitted to the people.

Mr. HARDACRE: Why do you not take your own medicine?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member speaks on this occasion as he does on many others, in perfect ignorance of what I am talking about—

Mr. HARDACRE: That is not argument. It is only personality.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Or he would never have made a statement of that kind. I have always been in favour of referring every constitutional amendment to the people. It is a most proper thing to do; but when this is refused by hon. members opposite, who in season and out of season have urged this plank, it does seem surprising. I find hon. members opposite now most anxious about extending the franchise, and one hon. member became affected at the thought that the people at Dunwich should not have the franchise. It

was a great shame—a most improper thing—that they should be prevented from having the franchise under this Bill. But when it was the case of our own countrymen in the Transvaal it did not matter if 75,000 of them should be governed by 30,000, and should have no vote at all.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I say there are some very singular things which we discover on this occasion. Another remarkable thing occurs to my mind. I find that Mr. Lane is now an “honorary” member of the Cosmo Colony, of which he was at one time a practical member. At present he seems disposed to accept a position of pure dignity and pure honour. The world apparently is changing, and we are changing with it.

Mr. KIDSTON: Don't forget the revolution.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If the hon. member is proud of that wretched failure—it is the only thing the hon. member opposite can claim to have put into practice, but if he desires to talk of that—and he doesn't really—which is an absolute failure and which he and others would wish to bury ten thousand fathoms deep, he is very welcome to do so. I have not the slightest desire to protract the debate, and would not as I say have risen had it not been for the attitude of the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, who appeared to me to unnecessarily stir up strife by impugning the attitude of hon. members on this side. When it is pointed out that there is really some small opportunity for the exercise of the referendum I find hon. members opposite disown that useful expedient. This Bill will have very important consequences all over the colony. Previously, I think that on the whole I have not been in favour of the principle which hon. members opposite have been so anxious to establish, because I have not considered that it would be in the interests of my constituents. It has never seemed to me either that it would be in the interests of the constituents of the hon. member for Leichhardt, or the hon. member for Carpentaria, or a good many other hon. members. It may be that this colony should abolish dual voting because of the example set by the measure to secure a federation. But it will be equally impossible for the reform or alteration to stand where we are now making it. It will be absolutely necessary now to have one vote one value, and I appeal to those who like myself represent a country constituency to just face the consequences. The consequences may be good for the colony or not—I am not arguing whether they will or not now—but I am pointing out what will be the result to the Labour party for one thing. Several members of that party will vanish. I do not say whether that would be a good thing or not, but I say this alteration will be necessary, and there must be one vote one value.

Mr. KIDSTON: And a good thing, too.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It may be a good thing, too. It will not be a bad thing for Rockhampton, but I do not think it will be a good thing for Bulloo or Bundaberg.

Mr. GLASSEY: It won't make the slightest difference to Bundaberg.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It will not be a good thing for many country electorates, and the members for those electorates may well consider what the result will be with regard to the importance of their constituencies in the colony of Queensland. If they like to throw their constituencies over, or to sacrifice them for the good of the country, or to vindicate some principle they value, well and good; but that is the inevitable result. Shortly, Brisbane and its suburbs, with its population of about 110,000, or very nearly one-fourth of the whole

population of the colony, will immensely increase its representation. We shall have the city life dominating, and becoming the principal power in the State. I am not saying that that should not be so. But there are other constituencies in the outside districts which will have less representation than they have at present, and, perhaps, less representation than they ought to have, because they are far away and out of sight. While I am not concerned at present to say that the alteration is a good thing, I contend that it is a necessary thing; and, when we deal with a problem of this kind, we should look at it not only from one point of view, but from the other. Besides considering it as a general principle, we should consider what its effects will be in detail on the people whom we represent.

Mr. STORY (*Balonne*): When I advocated the passing of the Commonwealth Bill by the people I knew I was pledging myself to the principle of one man one vote. Of course I did not know exactly the form the Bill would take, but I am not surprised, on reading it, that it is pretty well on the lines I expected it to be. But although I am pledged to support it, if I thought for one moment that the passing of this Bill would mean a redistribution of seats, and the principle of one vote one value, I would simply vote against it and take the chances with my constituents. The Secretary for Lands, who does not often speak without considerable thought, says that it is the inevitable result of the Bill. If so, this will be the most dangerous and the worst Bill that has ever been passed in Queensland. Of that I am certain. If the representation of this country is to be confined to the big towns and centres, the men who produce will have no representation whatever, and the men who live on them will represent them altogether. In large districts such as I represent, even with the greatest diligence it is absolutely impossible to get round and see anything like the majority of the men and to know their wants and the difficulties under which they live. We know them in a general way, but each man has some particular disadvantage of his own which it behoves his representative to know. But if those electorates are to be enlarged in order to get a sufficient number of voters, it will be impossible for any man to represent them, and the result will be that those districts—which, I may say, are supplying the whole of the produce which the rest of the community live by, which keep our ports and harbours and cities all going—will have no representation whatever.

Mr. GLASSEY: This Bill has no connection with that.

Mr. STORY: Well, there seems to be a considerable difference of opinion on the matter, because hon. gentlemen for whose opinion I have a very high regard say that is the inevitable result. I hope not, and I cannot see why it should be so; but if it is, the mere question of one man having one vote only bears no comparison with the large interests that are involved. When the leader of the Labour party was speaking and claiming this Bill as a triumph for that party, my memory went back to a speech I heard him deliver in the Exhibition Building, in the course of which he said that although the Labour party had been struggling for this for years and years, he was prepared to say that they had made a disastrous failure of it, and that the only way they could achieve one man one vote was by supporting the Commonwealth Bill. At any rate the hon. member cannot say it was the Labour party who introduced the Commonwealth Bill. It is only fair to enter a protest against any such assumption when all the support to the Bill is coming from this side, so far as we know

at any rate. I do not know whether hon. members on the other side support it or not. I was grieved—much grieved I may say—at some remarks made by the hon. member for Ipswich with reference to my hon. friend, the member for Clermont. That hon. member's position in the House, and his actions lately, have altogether restored my belief in the justice of Providence. We all recollect how, two sessions ago, hon. members on the other side talked and talked, and how the hon. member for Rockhampton North made his hundredth speech in his first session. The hon. member for Clermont is an instance of retributive justice. He has turned the heavy artillery on his own party, and silenced them; but I am afraid that is only temporary. I should like to know whether this Bill is a member of Parliament's Bill, or whether it is a Bill that the people want. In discussing this Bill members of Parliament may think how it affects their present position. I have not heard that there has been a great agitation anywhere to have one man one vote, so long as a man can get on a roll if he wishes, and no difficulties are put in the way of his claim being signed. That was what I advocated in 1897, when the concessions given by Sir Horace Tozer were of no advantage whatever to the district I represent. Claims were to be signed by head teachers of State schools, members of local boards, and others, who, in my district, are always confined to the townships. I suggested that respectable members of the community, such as bookkeepers on stations, might sign claims, as it would greatly facilitate the getting of men on the rolls in the West. The question now is, whether there is a great desire on the part of many men out

[8.30 p.m.] West to get on the rolls at all. I lived a great many years there; I know a good deal about it, and my impression is, that in a great many instances a working man will object if he possibly can to having his name on the roll. There is a sort of compelling power where men are living in scattered districts and travel about alone, and if they have the courage of their opinions in the matter of voting they are marked men for a very long time afterwards. There is no fable—

Mr. JACKSON: Marked, by whom?

Mr. STORY: Marked by their own mates. There are men living out in those scattered districts who, from their position, belong to the Labour party, but who, from their convictions, do not belong to the Labour party; and I say they have not the right to vote as they think, from actual physical fear of what will happen to them. I say that, knowing absolutely that I am telling the truth. I do not say that there has not been some sort of coercion used—though not to my knowledge—on the other side; but this is a different and more dangerous kind of coercion. That used by an employer can only go this far—that a man might possibly lose his position; but used by the other party that man has to travel long distances along lonely roads looking for work, and never can tell whom he may meet; and when he has been what they call a traitor to the cause; he cannot tell what sort of a reception he will meet wherever he goes. In my early days out West men did pretty well as they liked, and there was a sort of hospitality and generosity, and a man was safe wherever he went and welcomed wherever he turned up. It is not so now, and in the last Western election in every case where the speaker was howled and hooted down and prevented from saying one word that was always done to a Ministerial candidate. I will defy any hon. gentleman to quote one case where a Labour man speaking was ever interrupted by more than interjections, and I can quote case after case where a man was not

allowed to say a word because he was a Ministerial candidate or speaking in favour of one.

MEMBERS on the Government side: Hear, hear!

Mr. STORY: If that sort of thing is to operate out in our district the fewer men get on the roll the better. I was always of opinion that every man who lived in the colony had a perfect right to a vote, but with that right he ought to have safety—and every man should have the right to stand up in a public assembly and give his views so long as he does not insult the people who are listening to him. But that right is not conceded, and I am sorry to say that there is an element of threatening and bullying that is destroying our Western districts, and if we are to add a greater number to the number already given to that sort of behaviour this Bill will not be the benefit hoped for by the hon. gentleman by whom it was initiated.

Mr. HARDACRE: They deprived you of speaking, and you deprive them of voting.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: What Western electorate are you talking about?

Mr. STORY: The Balonne.

Mr. ANNEAR (*Maryborough*): I believe the people of the country should have an opportunity of perusing the views of hon. members on a question of this kind, and for that reason, and as I am desirous of saying something in connection with this Bill and business compelled me to be late in arriving at the House this afternoon, I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. KIDSTON (*Rockhampton*): It is only just after half-past 8 o'clock.

Mr. ANNEAR: There is plenty of other business to go on with.

Mr. KIDSTON: I don't know whether this is done with the consent of the hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill or the Premier. If it is, and if it is the desire of the House, I have no objection to offer, but I think it is very unfair—

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Because he was not here this afternoon he wants the debate adjourned.

Mr. KIDSTON: There is plenty of time to go on with the debate, and I am sure that hon. members are quite willing to listen to the hon. member. If we adjourn the debate now it will not come on again for a week.

Mr. DRAKE (*Enoggera*): I think an adjournment of the debate at this hour would be unreasonable, and the reason given by the hon. gentleman will hardly hold water. He says it is desirable to adjourn the debate, so that the country may peruse the speeches delivered; and at some future time I presume the hon. member is going to give us his views. Then, according to the same reasoning, there should be another adjournment, so that the country may read his views. When is the debate going to finish at that rate? I regard this as the most important measure brought forward this session, and I cannot see any reason whatever for adjourning the debate at this hour when so many members are ready to speak.

Mr. DAWSON (*Charters Towers*): I certainly object to the adjournment of the debate at this hour. There is nothing to prevent the hon. member's speech being as fully reported as if he had spoken at 4 o'clock, and what more does he want? I think we are entitled to know whether the Government intend to accept the motion for the adjournment of the debate.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. R. Dickson, *Bulimba*): The motion of the hon. member for Maryborough came upon me as a surprise. There has been no arrangement whatever that the debate should be curtailed. The Government are prepared to leave it to the good sense of the House whether the debate should be adjourned

or not, but the hon. member was not in any way instigated by the Government to move the motion. I hope the discussion will be proceeded with, and that the debate will come to a conclusion to-night.

Motion for the adjournment of the debate put and negatived.

Mr. ANNEAR (*Maryborough*): I have forfeited my right to speak; but with the consent of the House I would like to say a few words.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. ANNEAR: During the short time I have been in the House I have noticed one or two signs, the same as I have witnessed this evening, and that was one of my reasons for moving the adjournment of the debate, so that hon. members, when they assembled again, might make up their minds and give expression to their views on this most important measure, and let the people of the country see what they think about it. But we see, Mr. Speaker, a conspiracy of silence on a great question of this kind, a question that I maintain should be submitted to a vote—what hon. members opposite call a referendum of the people.

Mr. JACKSON: Don't abuse us after giving you leave to speak.

Mr. ANNEAR: I have never abused any hon. member. I always speak in the most kind and mild language, and if I say anything unparliamentary I am sure that you, Mr. Speaker, will at once call me to order. No doubt the people of the country do take an interest in this matter. I may say that during the whole of the time I have been in Queensland—and that has been a long period—I have always been in favour of electoral reform, and have done a great deal to bring about the liberal franchise on which hon. members are elected to this House at present—the most liberal franchise in existence in Her Majesty's dominions.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Oh, oh!

Mr. ANNEAR: There is no mistake about that. Hon. members on the other side would like the country to think that they had forced this measure on the Government.

Mr. GLASSEY: Hear, hear! So they have.

Mr. ANNEAR: I trust the Government are going to conduct the business of this House in their own way, and in the way in which they have given the people of the country to understand they are going to conduct it, and not be forced into anything by hon. members opposite. The representatives of the majority of the people are on this side of the House, not on the other side.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: No, no!

Mr. ANNEAR: I think that when we are going in for electoral reform, we should let the country hear what hon. members have to say. I may say that one of the reasons why I moved the adjournment of the debate was because the people would like to hear the hon. member for Enoggera.

Mr. DRAKE: Hear, hear!

Mr. ANNEAR: The hon. member, we know, is a distinguished member of the Queensland bar, and the people would like to hear what he has to say on a question of this kind. We had a speech from the hon. member the other day, which the people read with great interest; and they would read also with great interest a speech from the hon. member on this important question, if he chose to deliver one. But the hon. gentleman has entered into the conspiracy, and is silent. (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. JENKINSON: Don't dictate to us what we should do.

Mr. ANNEAR: I agree with the hon. member for Cambooya. I am sure that the ladies of this city and throughout the colony, who advocate

electoral reform, will be very pleased with some of the declarations which have been made this evening by hon. members. If we are going to have electoral reform, let us have one adult one vote. I believe in giving the women of Queensland a vote.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

Mr. ANNEAR: And I will do my best when the Bill is in committee to bring that about.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: We will carry it this time. We will support you.

Mr. ANNEAR: This is a somewhat radical change, and why hon. members have departed from the doctrine they have so much upheld—that no change should be made in the Constitution of the country until it is submitted to the vote of the people—I do not know.

Mr. GLASSEY: It has been.

Mr. ANNEAR: I fully recognised that when I voted for federation. I also recognised that there could not be two forms of franchise in this colony.

Mr. GLASSEY: Hear, hear! That is exactly the position.

Mr. ANNEAR: That is that the State franchise would have to be the same as the federal franchise. That is one man one vote. I recognise all that. But why this change? Hon. members have told us scores of times that the referendum was the panacea for all the political ills from which we were suffering; but now they depart from that altogether. Of course I admit that the Premier pledged his Government to the adoption of this Bill during the federal campaign. I think there was no other course open to him when it was inserted in the Commonwealth Bill that one elector should have one vote and one vote only. Of course I know hon. members opposite live in the hope that this change is going to benefit them to such a degree that, after a general election, they will be able to come on to this side of the House; and, of course, occupy the Government benches.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

Mr. ANNEAR: But the history of the Australian colonies is all against that. The Labour party in New South Wales, when at its greatest strength—which was when one man one vote did not exist—numbered thirty members.

Mr. GLASSEY: Thirty-six.

Mr. ANNEAR: Well, over thirty. I think they have a proper Labour party in New South Wales. I admire some of the men of that party. I ask hon. gentlemen to go down to the library, and take the Sydney *Daily Telegraph* and read the speech of Mr. McGowan, the leader of the party. It is a speech of which every loyal Australian should feel proud.

Mr. JENKINSON: Read Griffith's speech, too.

Mr. ANNEAR: Now, when one man one vote is the law in New South Wales, the Labour party in that colony numbers only eighteen or nineteen, and I believe one recanted the other day.

Mr. GLASSEY: Nineteen members.

Mr. ANNEAR: I trust that if this Bill becomes law the Government will cause a census of the colony to be taken, and bring in a Redistribution Bill, because there is no doubt that if we pass this into law we must have a redistribution of seats, and it should be based on one vote one value. If we are going to have one man one vote, we must also have one vote one value.

Mr. GLASSEY: That side of the House will suffer very much under that law.

Mr. ANNEAR: I am sure that if the hon. member could for one moment command his own mind and command himself he would not sit on that side of the House very long. (Opposition laughter.) I feel confident—and I say it in all seriousness—from what I have seen of the hon.

member for the last twelve months that he has qualified himself for a seat on this side. (Opposition laughter.) Especially during the last few weeks. I suppose there has been no year in the history of this colony where there has been so much work to be done by the Government of the country as this. We have had a general election; we have had the question of federation; and we have had the very important matter of the sending away of the contingent. All this naturally created a great amount of labour, not only for the Government, but for all members of this House. To-day is the 8th of November, and in my opinion there is no urgency whatever for introducing this measure this session. This Parliament will only be in existence twelve months from March next, and if it lives its three years we shall have two years to bring this in. Let the Government bring this in next session. There will be plenty of time to pass it, and we can go before the electors on it at the general election.

Mr. GLASSEY: "Now is the accepted time."

Mr. ANNEAR: I do not think it is urgent. There is more important business to be done.

Mr. GLASSEY: There will be a federal election next year.

Mr. ANNEAR: The Government might have gone on with more important business.

Mr. KIDSTON: The Public Works Committee Bill.

Mr. ANNEAR: It may be the Public Works Committee Bill. There are still the Estimates to be got through. There is no doubt that the people from one end of the colony to the other are calling out for an extension of our railways. I know they are in my district, and I dare say every hon. member has a railway in his pocket for the district he represents.

Mr. JENKINSON: The Premier pledged himself to bring in this Bill. He is only fulfilling his promise.

Mr. ANNEAR: Well, the Bill is now before the House, and I believe the people should have an opportunity to read this Bill and discuss it amongst themselves. There is no doubt it means a radical change, and the people should have a voice in that change. They could hold public meetings and place their views on the matter before their representatives. I am quite well aware that there will be no division on the second reading—that it will be passed on the voices—but I would like to know, and the people of the country would like to know, if *Hansard* is not going to be filled this evening with the speeches of hon. members on the other side. (Opposition laughter.) They would certainly like to know their views.

Mr. KIDSTON (*Rockhampton*): The hon. the senior member for Maryborough is not up to his usual form to-night. He is somewhat like the bashful young lady who first said she would, and then said she wouldn't. He does not know himself whether he intends to support the Bill or not. He tells us that this is a radical change, and then he says that the Bill does not go far enough for him, and that it should be put off to some future occasion. To my mind, the most refreshing part of the debate, so far as it has gone, was the healthy conservatism of the hon. member for Herbert. In an age like this, when a gentleman like the Minister for Railways poses as a democrat, it is very refreshing to hear the hon. member go bald-headed against one man one vote. He said that this reform had never been before the country, and he objected to it being introduced into the House now for that reason. I venture to say that there is no question which has been more before the electors of the country for the last ten years than this question of one man one vote. I venture to say that there are not 100 electors in the colony

who could not, right off the reel, tell you whether they were in favour of one man one vote or not. So I think the plea that this question has not been before the country, falls to the ground. The hon. member for Herbert blamed the Government for bringing in this Bill, and he seemed to think that the Premier had not used his own party fairly over the matter. Now, I would like to point out that hon. members on the other side—the hon. member for Herbert included—knew at the opening of the session that the Government had placed this matter of electoral reform in a prominent part of the Governor's Speech, and if they objected to the policy of the Government, their proper time to do so, was on the Address in Reply.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

Mr. KIDSTON: I hope that argument will convince the hon. member for Herbert, for it is his own.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: And the Minister for Lands.

Mr. KIDSTON: Yes, and the Minister for Lands. I listened very attentively to the Minister for Lands during the few minutes he was speaking, but upon my word, I could not tell whether he was for or against this Bill.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Call for a division, and you will find out.

Mr. KIDSTON: If it would have been in accordance with the rules of the House, I would have asked the hon. gentleman while he was speaking whether he was in favour of the Bill or not, but he sat down so suddenly that I had not the opportunity.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am in favour of the Bill, if you want to know.

Mr. KIDSTON: I am very pleased to hear that. One argument that has been seriously urged against the Bill, was that it should be put off because there was no urgency in the matter. I venture to say that if there is any question in the politics of Queensland which has been put off, and put off, and put off, it is this question of electoral reform.

Mr. ANNEAR: You want to put off federation.

Mr. KIDSTON: I want to put off the hon. member for Maryborough, but I can't do it. It has also been claimed that the passing of the principle of one man one vote necessitates a redistribution of seats and equal electorates. That argument was used evidently with the desire to frighten country members, who represent electorates where there are only small numbers of electorates. But I would just like to point out, that while I myself believe in equal electorates, as far as practical, there is no necessary connection between the passing of this Bill and the creation of equal electorates. As a matter of fact, they have one man one vote in New Zealand, but they have not got equal electorates there, and as far as I am aware it has not been proposed. Another objection raised was that if we have one man one vote the property qualification should be retained. Hon. members objected to the taking away of the property qualification—that men should be allowed to put themselves on the roll for residence or property qualification as they chose. When this was adopted in New Zealand, under one man one vote, it was found to be inconvenient, and three years after the system was introduced they went back to the principle embodied in this Bill. They did away with all qualifications except residence, and as far as I am aware there has been no proposal there to alter that. I think we might take some lessons from the experience of New Zealand, where one man one vote is in vogue, and where the only qualification is that of residence. It was also stated that the passing of this Bill would necessitate a general election. I do not see

any necessary connection between the two things. As far as I am concerned, if I was convinced that the passing of this Bill would necessitate a general election, it would not constitute any argument that would cause me to vote against the Bill. We ought to take the Bill on its merits, whether it will cause a general election or not. The hon. member for Herbert indicated very clearly to the Government that he meant to fight the principle of one man one vote in committee, and I would only say to those desirous of seeing this Bill become law, that it will be necessary to fight against that very strongly in committee, because there is no mistake about this: That if one man one vote is left out, it will kill the Bill. I have no intention of dealing at any length with this important question of one man one vote now. The time has almost gone past for discussion on that subject. As a matter of fact, in spite of all that has been said about this Bill being a corollary—a necessary sequence—to the adoption of the Federal Constitution, I believe that the real reason why the principle of one man one vote has been brought before the Chamber is the growth of public opinion in Queensland and Australia—that no Government in Queensland could much longer refuse to introduce this principle of one man one vote into our electoral system. The Bill, as has been already said, is not all we

want; but I look upon it as a substantial instalment of electoral reform in Queensland. For instance, it gives one man one vote, and it takes away all qualifications but that of residence. It makes the one simple qualification of citizenship the one claim for political franchise. It also introduces a new principle—a very valuable principle, I think—of transfer from one electorate to another on change of residence, and by another provision it allows voters who are absent from their electorates on the day of polling to record their votes. That is a provision which I compliment the Minister in charge of the Bill on introducing, because I think it is very carefully and very well drafted. It embodies a very great principle, and not only secures to a man the right to vote, but it secures the secrecy of the ballot. I remember some five years ago proposing those last two reforms to Sir Horace Tozer, then Mr. Tozer, when he was at Rockhampton, and I remember the lofty manner in which he put them aside as utterly impracticable—as the vain imaginings of a mere political speculator and theorist—and it is a very pleasant duty for me to be able to congratulate the Government on the advance that they have made in those five years. Even the Secretary for Railways, who three years ago said he would perish fighting one man one vote, is, I suppose, a believer in it. He has got wiser as he got older, and I hope that, seeing the Government have come so far in the direction that we have for so long wanted them to go, they will learn by that to look upon the whole question of electoral reform with a much more generous eye, and will not cripple the Bill, which I think on the whole is a very good Bill, by refusing reasonable amendments. Much as is good in the Bill already, it would be enormously improved if the Government would consent to take the sense of the House on such amendments as the substitution of "person" for "man" on the 1st line of the 5th clause, thus providing not only for one man one vote but for one adult one vote; and if they would also agree to an amendment in clauses 107 to 110, insuring that all the ballot-papers at outside polling-places shall be returned to the chief polling-place before they are opened or counted. That is a reform very badly wanted in the scattered districts of the colony. There are thousands

and thousands of electors in Queensland who at every election practically vote openly. They have no protection of the ballot at all. Imagine a station where there are perhaps five hands employed, and where perhaps the station manager is presiding officer. He may be a very warm partizan of one of the candidates; he may have tried by all means that he knew of to induce all his hands to vote for the particular candidate he favoured, and when he opens the ballot-box containing six papers, one of which is his own, he finds his own vote cast for his candidate and five against him. The man knows quite well that everyone on the station has voted against him.

Mr. FORSYTH: You cannot help that.

Mr. KIDSTON: It is to help it that I am suggesting that an amendment be introduced in clauses 107 to 110. I admit that a great deal can be said on the other side.

The HOME SECRETARY: Hear, hear!

Mr. KIDSTON: It may be said that candidates would have to wait for a week perhaps before they knew whether they were elected or not, but I submit that we are providing a Bill in the interests of the citizens of Queensland, and not of the candidates, and if it can be shown that any such reform is in the interests of the community, it should be adopted. Surely the men in the bush, on these outlying stations, have just as much right to the protection of the ballot as men in Brisbane.

Mr. FORSYTH: What do you propose?

Mr. KIDSTON: I propose that all ballot-papers shall be returned to the central polling-place before being opened. The thing could be quite well and easily remedied, and I hope the hon. gentleman in charge will give the matter fair consideration in committee.

The HOME SECRETARY: I do not think it is practicable.

Mr. KIDSTON: We will argue that out in committee. I think it is practicable. Another matter is the amendment of clause 56, allowing all elections to take place on the one day. It has been said that the referendum on the federation question showed the Government that it was necessary to introduce a one man one vote Bill. Well, that same referendum may have shown the Government that it is quite practicable to carry out all elections on one day throughout Queensland, and it is very much to the interests of the citizens of Queensland that it should be so. It would not give the Government of the day the same chance of unfairly influencing the result of elections. I do not say that the present Government are any worse than other Governments have been in that matter, but there are a good many things that happened at the last general election which showed the extreme desirability of having all our elections at a general election on one day. Then there is the very important matter of attestation. I hope the hon. gentleman will be willing to look with a very generous eye upon any proposal to abolish this attestation altogether; in any case, that he will be willing to so amend the method of attestation as will minimise to a great degree the inconvenience that is unmistakably felt throughout the most scattered districts in regard to this matter. I would venture to say that there is no feature in our present electoral law that causes more harm or more ill-feeling than this very difficulty in regard to attestation. I hope the Government will, on some of those amendments about which I know a good deal can be said on one side and on the other, meet us in a liberal spirit. But, whatever they do in regard to such amendments as those, I hope there will be no difficulty in regard to other amendments, which are, perhaps, less matters of principle than matters of detail, but which are very necessary to make the Bill

anything like it ought to be. The Home Secretary himself, unless I mistake, called attention to the contradiction that exists between clause 49 and clauses 75 and 97, and I understand that when the Bill gets into committee the hon. gentleman will be prepared to assimilate those clauses, and to make three months out of the electorate the term which disqualifies a man from voting. Then there is the matter of the form of claim in clause 15. If anyone will compare it with clause 19 he will see that the directions which are here given for answering the questions as to the claimant's place of residence are altogether out of form. They are simply the questions from the old form of claim repeated here. The altered form of claim given under the present Bill almost necessitates an alteration. Indeed, the amendment I would suggest is already in the Bill in the form of claim for transfer. In answering the question, "What is your place of residence?" such a description is to be given of the locality of the place of residence as will enable it to be easily and clearly identified. I think that is all that is wanted in answering question No. 5 in the form of claim for enrolment. Indeed our whole system is unnecessarily cumbersome—both our form of claim and our system of registration. Repeated complaints have been made, both in this Chamber and outside, about the unnecessary cumbersome and difficulty of filling up our present electoral claims. I believe the late Premier, Mr. Byrnes, when he was Attorney-General, had a claim filled up by his own hand rejected because it was improperly filled up, and thousands of electoral claims are annually wasted because they are improperly filled up. In South Australia the whole thing is simplified to the last degree. A claimant filling up a claim has absolutely nothing to write except the name of the electorate for which he is claiming, his name, his place of residence, occupation, and then he signs with his usual signature. There is no attestation at all. If it is possible in South Australia, why is it not possible in Queensland?

The HOME SECRETARY: Because it may not be desirable in South Australia.

Mr. KIDSTON: They have worked it for years in South Australia. Then in New Zealand, although the claim is a little more extended than in South Australia, the whole thing is printed so that the claimant has only to fill in his name, his place of abode, and his occupation, and then to sign it with his own hand. The rest of the claim—which is the same for everybody—is printed in the body of the claim. When the claimant signs the declaration, it has to be attested by a registrar, a deputy registrar, a justice of the peace, a postmaster, or by one elector in the district for which the man is claiming. I have never seen the need for any attestation at all; but if attestation is to be retained, it should be put on such a basis that the man claiming will have the least possible amount of trouble in getting his claim attested, and the New Zealand provision, that a claim may be attested by one elector in the district for which the claim is made, seems to me to fill the bill. I hope the Home Secretary will favourably consider this matter when we get into committee. Then there is the question of simplicity of registration. In South Australia, you can put in a claim the day you take up your residence there, and six months afterwards—

The HOME SECRETARY: You have to be six months on the roll before you can vote.

Mr. KIDSTON: You have to be on the roll six months before you can vote, but it dates from the time you hand in your claim to the registrar. It puts a man in this position: That he has not to

wait months and months after he has qualified before he is entitled to a vote. In New Zealand it is not quite the same as in South Australia.

The HOME SECRETARY: It is not nearly so satisfactory as our system.

Mr. GLASSEY: Far more.

Mr. KIDSTON: There is a great deal to be said in favour of the South Australian system.

The HOME SECRETARY: A great deal to be said against it.

Mr. KIDSTON: At least this can be said—that the fact that you have the man there when he makes his claim, and that he is in the electorate at the end of six months to exercise his right to vote is incontestable evidence that he is there or thereabouts.

The HOME SECRETARY: If he is there, of course he is there.

Mr. KIDSTON: And if he is not there he does not vote, of course. In New Zealand there is also a much more speedy system of registration than we have, or than is proposed in the Bill. On the receipt of the claim the registrar has fifteen days to satisfy himself that the claim is valid. He can call upon the claimant to prove that his claim is a valid one, and if he fails to prove it he is liable to be punished. If the registrar is satisfied, he places the name on the roll fifteen days after the claim is made. Now with us a man has to be a year in the colony, and three months in the one electorate, and he may be three or four months after he makes his claim before that claim matures, so that he has actually to be twenty-one months in the colony.

The HOME SECRETARY: Oh, no!

Mr. KIDSTON: If he never misses a day, he may be twenty-one months in the colony before he is entitled to vote at all.

The HOME SECRETARY: Nonsense! Not at all. Within fourteen months from the day he lands in the colony he can be on the roll.

Mr. KIDSTON: This is a matter in which a great deal of improvement can be made in the Bill, and I hope the hon. gentleman will help to make it as perfect as possible. There is another very great improvement in the Bill; at least the intention, or what I took to be the intention, is a very great improvement—that is, the matter of a transfer from one electorate to another. I very much regret that the hon. gentleman, when speaking last night, did not seem to understand what he was putting that principle into the Bill for. The hon. gentleman seems to think that disfranchisement will smell sweeter if it comes in the guise of a transfer than if it comes under the guise of making a new application to get on the roll.

The HOME SECRETARY: A man will save two months by taking a transfer.

Mr. KIDSTON: He is disfranchised.

The HOME SECRETARY: Well, we can get over that.

Mr. KIDSTON: I take it that the intention in introducing that principle into the Bill was to prevent an elector from getting struck off one roll before he had the qualification to get on to another roll, and I do not know any other reason for introducing the principle at all; there is absolutely no other reason. If we cannot carry out that, the whole thing may be struck out altogether, because it is only a pretence.

The HOME SECRETARY: In any case he will save two months.

Mr. KIDSTON: He need not lose any time at all, and when I saw this principle in the Bill I thought that was what the hon. gentleman was trying to accomplish. When I saw in clause 23 that instructions were to be given to the electoral registrar to strike off the name of a man making a claim for a transfer, I thought that was an

inadvertence due to hasty drafting. It did not occur to me that the hon. gentleman had the intention of disqualifying a man at once the moment he asked for a transfer. Why, if a man does not ask for a transfer he can live out of the district for three months before his name is struck off the roll, but under this provision the moment a man asks for a transfer he is knocked off the roll. I will show the hon. gentleman that that is not necessary.

The HOME SECRETARY: Can't we leave that for committee?

Mr. KIDSTON: Very well, I prefer myself to leave it until we get into committee. I should not have referred to it now only the hon. gentleman asked me.

The HOME SECRETARY: I have got an amendment drafted already.

Mr. KIDSTON: The hon. gentleman has got an amendment drafted, and yet he told me that it was impossible to do what I suggest.

The HOME SECRETARY: I did not say it was impossible; I said there were some difficulties in the matter.

Mr. KIDSTON: I rejoice to agree with the hon. gentleman in this matter. There are a number of other small amendments that I should like to see made in the measure; but I shall not allude to them in detail. I will, however, refer to one amendment I should like to see adopted, and that is an amendment for the protection of justices attesting claims. If the hon. gentleman is going to retain the attestation of claims, I think it is necessary and proper that we should insert a provision in clause 18, indicating that no justice or other person attesting a claim shall be considered blamable if he has made the claimant take an oath or make a solemn declaration as to the truth of the matters set forth in the claim, and has seen the claimant sign such declaration with his own hand. As a matter of fact, that is the intention now; but I think it would be well to state it in plain language, so that there should be no fear in the minds of those attesting claims that they would run the risk of incurring any penalty in attesting a claim. I hope also that the hon. gentleman will be particularly generous in permitting amendments in the temporary provisions in the last five clauses of the Bill. Those provisions are doubtless inserted with a good intention, and so far as large towns are concerned, I do not think they will do much harm, but unquestionably in the more sparsely populated districts, these clauses, if they go as they are, will disfranchise thousands of persons who are in every way entitled to be on the roll. I do not see that any good purpose will be served by destroying the whole of the electoral rolls we have to-day. The whole purpose that is sought to be served is the striking off of a few names of persons who are on for free-hold qualifications. The fact that the whole of the rolls have been purged for some years back ought to be fairly good security that there are not a very large number of persons with residential qualifications improperly on the rolls, and if it is only the property qualifications that it is desired to get rid of that can be effected by a very small amendment in clause 155. If that clause were amended so as to read that the electoral registrar shall send a notice to every person whose name appears on the roll for any other qualification than that of residence, etc., that would remove any danger of a large number of persons being struck off the rolls who are quite entitled to be registered. As a matter of fact, if those clauses are allowed to remain as they are, it will be more difficult for a man to get his name on the roll during the first three months of next year, than it will be for him to change his name to a new roll altogether. This is

a special occasion, and I hope the hon. gentleman will make a special effort to deal generously with this matter. I heartily support the second reading of the Bill. If it is not all that we want, it is a very great advance on our present electoral law, and I trust that a number of the errors and imperfections that have been indicated in the course of this discussion will be remedied in committee, and that the House will honestly try to make the Bill as perfect as possible. If effect is given to the more important amendments that have been suggested, the hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill will do himself as much credit in reforming the electoral laws of the colony as he did a year or two ago in consolidating the land laws.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put and passed; and committed of the Bill made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

LEGITIMATION BILL.

FIRST READING.

This Bill, received by message from the Legislative Council, was, on the [9.30 p.m.] motion of Mr. DRAKE, read a first time, and the second reading made an order for Friday, 24th November.

ABORIGINALS PROTECTION AND RESTRICTION OF THE SALE OF OPIUM BILL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning this Bill with an amendment, in which they invited the concurrence of the Assembly.

Ordered to be taken into consideration in committee to-morrow.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

HOME SECRETARY'S DEPARTMENT—DEPARTMENT SALARIES.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. F. G. Foxton, *Carnarvon*) moved that £3,650 be granted for salaries in connection with the department. There were certain increases totalling £400. There was one new appointment at £130, found necessary owing to the increase of work, and two juniors at £70 each. The other increases were increases of £20 each, recommended by the Public Service Board. He would be glad to give any information which hon. members might want, but he could assure them that those who obtained increases on the vote richly deserved them. They were all doing very good work, and had sometimes to work very hard indeed.

Question put and passed.

PRINCIPAL ELECTORAL REGISTRAR.

The HOME SECRETARY moved that £830 be granted for the Principal Electoral Registrar. That was, of course, a new vote. He did not think he could say too much in the expression of his satisfaction that that appointment had been made. He was perfectly satisfied it would tend, quite irrespective of the Bill now going through the House, to revolutionise the methods which had hitherto obtained with regard to the administration of electoral matters. There would now be uniformity. Mr. Boyce was the right man in the right place. He thoroughly understood the work, and he had given many very valuable suggestions.

HON. G. THORN (*Fassifern*) noticed that there was no amount down for contingencies and travelling expenses.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Yes; £50.

HON. G. THORN: The Principal Electoral Registrar would have to travel to put registrars in different parts of the colony right, and £50, though it might be used for other contingencies, would not be enough for travelling expenses if the registrar was to do his work satisfactorily.

The HOME SECRETARY: He might mention that if the £50 was not found to be sufficient to enable the registrar to travel—and that might become necessary—there would be no difficulty in providing for it out of the general vote for contingencies for the department.

Mr. STEWART (*Rockhampton North*): When that appointment was first proposed he was against it, and he had not had any evidence since that it had been of the slightest value. His own opinion was that they were simply squandering about £1,000 a year on an unnecessary official, with his clerk, his messenger, and his travelling expenses. The appointment itself was a reflection upon all the clerks of petty sessions and electoral registrars throughout the colony. As far as he had heard, there were no complaints.

The HOME SECRETARY: That is new.

Mr. STEWART: Of course there were complaints, but they were not such that the appointment of that particular officer was likely to remedy. The grievances complained of were owing to maladministration of the law. The instructions from the Home Office were differently interpreted by the electoral registrars, and occasionally electoral registrars had been found guilty of the most flagrant dereliction of duty. Yet he had never heard that the hon. gentleman had visited one of those persons with his displeasure, or shown that he was dissatisfied with the manner in which the electoral laws were administered. What he wanted to know was, would the appointment of that officer increase the efficiency of the administration of the electoral law, what were his duties, could not those duties be performed without the expenditure of £1,000 of public money, and was it desirable that that particular officer should be retained?

Mr. STORY (*Balonne*): The appointment of an electoral registrar was a very necessary one, inasmuch as it made one man responsible and accountable for any dereliction of duty on the part of returning and presiding officers. It would also have the effect of preventing charges being made in the House as to partiality and unfair play in the conduct of elections, made by members who knew very little about the circumstances, and involving other people in their accusations who for a considerable time were prevented from justifying themselves, and had to lie under serious imputations. Those remarks would serve as an introduction to a case which, he thought, came very fairly under that vote. What he referred to was the matter connected with the election at Bonna Vonna.

Mr. DAWSON: This is the wrong place.

Mr. STORY said he would ask the Chairman's ruling on that point, because whenever he had attempted to offer an explanation on the matter he had been told by the other side that it was the wrong place or the wrong time. The proper time to right a wrong was immediately the wrong was done.

The CHAIRMAN: If the matter the hon. member wishes to bring forward touches the electoral registrar he will be in order. If it has reference to an election it will be more convenient to refer to it when we come to page 37, "Expenses under Elections Acts."

The HOME SECRETARY was of opinion that the vote under discussion opened up the entire field, and he did not mind when the discussion took place.

Mr. DAWSON: Nor do I, but I think it would come better when we get to page 37.

The CHAIRMAN: I have not ruled the hon. member out of order. I only say it would be more convenient to deal with this particular matter when we come to page 37.

Mr. STORY: As the matter was one of considerable longstanding, and as he had been the

victim of misrepresentation to a certain extent, he would ask the permission of the Committee to give his explanation now.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. DAWSON: Then I suppose all other electoral grievances can be ventilated under this item.

Mr. STORY: It had been supposed for some time past that the mere mention of Bonna Vonna put him out of temper, and gave him a vague desire to fight somebody. (Opposition laughter.) Hon. members opposite might make a joke or a laugh about the matter; he left that to their good taste. His only desire was to give an actually truthful explanation of what occurred and how it occurred, after which he should have nothing more to say on the subject. If he had been silent on this question it would have been taken as a tacit acknowledgment that there was some unfair play in which he was concerned. The leader of the Labour party had said that the Government put their heads together, and the result of that little manipulation was that he (Mr. Story) stood in the House instead of Mr. Clowes, who would have won it had the election been conducted fairly. He also said that he was generally looked upon as an honest man, and, therefore, he congratulated himself that there was a considerable difference between them. There were certain degrees of honesty. He had heard of a man who claimed to be an honest man because he had not robbed a till, and he could understand the satisfaction of the hon. member at the new sensation of being considered an honourable and honest man. He did not think that either honour or honesty consisted in judging a thing before he knew the facts, and making statements he could not substantiate. Now, he would explain exactly how the affair occurred. A poll was to be taken at Bonna Vonna, which was reached by mail from St. George to Yuelba by coach, by train to Morven, and then from Morven to Bonna Vonna, which was the terminus of that service; so that it was three sides of a square. Postal matter had to go from St. George to Bonna Vonna, and letters were generally addressed "Richard Heness, Bonna Vonna, *via* Morven," but Bonna Vonna had been so long known that Bonna Vonna should be enough for any postmaster. The ballot-box and the roll, and the other papers, with the exception of the declaration of the presiding officer, were sent in one parcel and addressed "Richard Heness, Bonna Vonna, *via* Morven," and they went to their destination. The declaration he had to sign was addressed "Richard Heness, Bonna Vonna," and that went from St. George to Bollon, and from Bollon by the Barrington coach, and that letter was left at Murra Murra station, nine miles below Bonna Vonna and Mr. Heness did not get that until Friday, 24th March. On Thursday, the 23rd March, Bishop Stretch was at Bonna Vonna with Mr. Ryrie, the manager of Bendeena. The box was there and the rolls, but the declaration was not there. He had this from Bishop Stretch himself. Mr. Heness was so concerned about this declaration not being there that he asked the help of Bishop Stretch, who stayed there that night. The Bishop looked through the Act to see if he could find a form of declaration which he could write out, and Heness could sign before himself or Mr. Ryrie, and he said in St. George afterwards that he was unable to find that form of declaration there. The returning officer, Mr. Morgan, said, "My Lord, it is there; it is in the Act." The Bishop said, "I looked carefully through it, and I am perfectly certain that it is not there." Mr. Morgan reiterated his assertion that it was. Then the Bishop said, "If it is there, and I missed it after carefully looking for it, I am a more stupid man than ever

I thought I was." The election took place on Saturday, and that declaration was not sent up from Murra Murra before Friday night, and on Friday night there was neither magistrate nor anybody else to sign the declaration for Heness. He had never conducted a poll before, and he was afraid to take the poll because he had not signed the declaration. The people who would have voted at Bonna Vonna, went to Bonna Vonna, and he told them the position he was in, and said, "Now we are all here we will all go together to Clifton and vote there, and no harm will be done"; and this was exactly what they did. The leader of the Labour Opposition might be able to find the amount of dishonesty mixed up in that affair, but he had not been able to find any. If Mr. Heness had not been so conscientious, he might have taken the poll first, and signed the declaration afterwards; but he did what he thought was best for the men who went there to vote, and for himself too, in asking them to go with him to Clifton to record their votes. He was talking of the election that was to take place on the 25th March.

Mr. DAWSON: Why was there a poll at Bonna Vonna subsequently?

Mr. STORY: Because there was no poll taken at Bonna Vonna, and it had been advertised as a polling place.

Mr. DAWSON: You say they all went to Clifton.

Mr. STORY: Certainly they did; but their votes should have been recorded at Bonna Vonna. There was another place he had not heard mentioned by any of those hon. members on the other side where no poll was taken, and that was Brenda, on the border. The deputy returning officer took the box with the papers in it to the mailman who went from St. George to Brenda, and said, "Will you take a certain box for me to Brenda to-morrow?" The man asked him the size and probable weight, and he told him, and the mailman said he would take it. The deputy returning officer—for the returning officer himself was ill—sent the box to the office of the agent that acted for this mailman, and he sent his storeman over the next morning to find if the box had gone, and the storeman came back and said the box and the papers had been sent. That was on the 20th March, five days before the election. On Friday afternoon, the 24th March, they got a wire in St. George from the presiding officer at Brenda to say that neither box, roll, nor anything else had come. The returning officer immediately went to make inquiries, and he found that the box and the papers had remained in the agent's office in St. George from the 20th to the 25th, and were there the night before the election.

The HOME SECRETARY: How far is Brenda from St. George?

Mr. STORY: One hundred and thirty miles. So it was impossible to send a messenger down. If he were capable of imputing motives, as they had been imputed to him, he might call attention to the fact that the mailman who ran the Brenda mail, the agent who received the parcels, and the man who told the returning officer that the box had gone, were all strong Labour supporters.

Mr. DAWSON: There is no imputation of motives there.

Mr. STORY: He was quite willing to believe that it was put there and forgotten, but if it had been the other way, no excuse of that kind would have occurred to the hon. gentleman. It would have been said that it was a manipulation between the Government and their candidate to prevent the poll being taken, so as to give them

more time to get their forces together. A wire was sent that no poll would be [10 p.m.] taken at Brenda. He believed there were only three men there, and that two of them would have voted for him. The box containing papers was in the agent's hands for five days, and he never told the returning officer they had not gone. The mailman went to Brenda and never told the manager of Brenda, who was the presiding officer, that he had promised to take a box but he had left it behind, and he never told anyone, on his return to St. George, that he had left it behind. Out of these queer coincidences hon. members could draw what inferences they liked. That was the reason the poll was not taken at Brenda. That brought them up to the date of the night before the poll. The poll was taken on the 25th of March. As hon. members all knew, it was an immense district, and the voting papers did not come in for a considerable time. But telegraphic reports, of which he had a copy, came to hand, and he (Mr. Story) was two ahead of his opponent. He knew, of course, that no poll had been taken at Bonna Vonna and Brenda, and was under the impression that, as the men had voted at Clifton, at any rate there was no necessity for a further poll. He stayed in St. George from Saturday, the 25th of March, until Saturday, the 1st of April, and returned to Brisbane, *via* Cunnamulla, arriving here on Tuesday, the 4th of April. It should be borne in mind that he was under the impression that he had won the seat; the voting papers had not been received in St. George. He waited on the Home Secretary and the Attorney-General on the 4th of April, and saw the Premier either that day or the next. He claimed—he would ask the Home Secretary to corroborate his statement—that he had won the election and protested against any further election being held, because it had been a long and expensive election. He also said that no fair man could hold him responsible for the mistake made by the postmaster in one respect and the mailman in the other for not sending the papers and the boxes in the right direction; and, therefore, the thing was at an end. He saw the Attorney-General, and that gentleman was of opinion that another poll must be taken at those places. He (Mr. Story) quoted clause 57 of the Act that it was lawful, but not obligatory, to order the returning officer to appoint another date for a poll to be taken.

Mr. DAWSON: You were not ahead on the official figures.

Mr. STORY: The official figures had not come in. He was dealing with the 4th of April now. He saw the Attorney-General the next day, the 5th of April, and he gave his decision, which was that another poll should be taken at Bonna Vonna and Brenda, because if it was not taken the election could be upset, if anybody liked to move in the matter, without the shadow of a doubt.

Mr. DAWSON: In the meantime you knew you were behind.

Mr. STORY: He did not. He was going to give the dates. That was the way hon. gentlemen talked—without knowledge. He waited on the Home Secretary on Wednesday, the 5th of April, and wired to his committee on that day—he had copies of the wire—that another poll would have to be taken at Bonna Vonna and Brenda, and that he was returning to St. George. On Thursday, the 6th of April, he was waiting here. Friday, the 7th of April, was the first time he heard his opponent was ahead. He had a copy of the *Comet*, in which they quoted a wire which came there on the 7th that Mr. Clowes was one or two ahead. Until the 7th he had not the slightest idea that he was not ahead. Not until after he had seen the Premier,

the Home Secretary, and the Attorney-General, and not until it had been decided that another poll would have to be taken, did he know that his opponent was ahead. So how the arrangement could have been made to postpone it, so as to give him another chance, the hon. member might explain, but he was unable to do so. The Home Secretary could not even give the returning officer instructions to hold another poll, and he would not do it.

Mr. DAWSON: Did you still protest when you found your opponent one ahead?

Mr. STORY: It was too late then, as arrangements had been made to take a poll at Bonna Vonna and Brenda. The hon. gentleman tried to make out that the whole affair was manipulated so that he should have another chance; and he was trying to show that the whole arrangements were made while he was under the impression, and while the Home Secretary and the Attorney-General were under the impression, that he had won. So his interests were not considered in the slightest degree. In fact, they were altogether ignored. He protested so strongly that he said he was not inclined to go back and fight at all—that it was not worth his while to return and fight again for a seat, having won it once. It was on Friday, the 7th of April, that he knew Mr. Clowes was one or two ahead. He arrived at St. George on Sunday night, the 9th April. The hon. gentleman had tried to make it appear that a long time was given him in order to allow him to get his forces together. The election was arranged for the 25th of April, and he arrived at St. George on Sunday night, the 9th of April. Monday would be the 10th of April. So there would then be a fortnight to do all he had to do. He did not go to Cunnamulla at all. He stayed at St. George from the time he arrived there until the vote was taken on the 25th of April. He mentioned this because some hon. members had an idea that these men came from Cunnamulla at his invitation. He did not go to Cunnamulla—he stayed at St. George, and he did not know the name of a single man who was coming from Cunnamulla to vote. With regard to the men who went to Bonna Vonna to vote, a great deal had been said about his having rendered them considerable assistance. It had been actually reported in one of the Labour papers that a scandalous misappropriation of public funds had taken place, inasmuch as Cobb and Co. had been paid by the Government for taking electors to Bonna Vonna. He would not say anything more about Cobb and Co. except that if the leader of the Labour Opposition found that Cobb and Co. directly or indirectly received one sixpence for what they did for him at that election, either from himself or from the Government, he would place his resignation in the hands of the Speaker and let him decide whether the hon. member had made out a good case or not. To show what influence he had he might state that he had a letter from one of the largest shareholders in Cobb and Co., asking for a remission of a certain fine; he took it to the Secretary for Lands, who gave a distinct refusal—said it could not be done.

Mr. DAWSON: Are you not the agent for Cobb and Co.?

Mr. STORY: He was the manager of that firm, but what had that to do with the matter? It had been claimed that Cobb and Co. had been paid by the Government for what they did for him, but he wished to be allowed to put a case: Mr. Clowes did not own a horse or vehicle; yet he and his friends went to Bonna Vonna from Cunnamulla—and how did they get there? What Mr. Clowes's friends did for him, his (Mr. Story's) friends only did for him.

The HOME SECRETARY: And why not?

Mr. STORY: Nothing more.

Mr. LESINA: What about the absentees who came from Sydney—Nick Willis, M.L.A.?

Mr. STORY: He never had been within miles of the place, and he never voted for him at Bonna Vonna.

The CHAIRMAN: I would ask hon. members to allow the hon. member for Balonne to speak without interruption.

Mr. DAWSON: He has had a good show, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: We are in committee now, and other hon. members will have an opportunity of speaking afterwards.

Mr. STORY: McMicking, Wippell, Linton, and Bignell brought men to Bonna Vonna to vote. It was not a cavalcade made up by Cobb and Co. A number of men came from Cunnamulla; twenty-four men came to vote for Mr. Clowes; but he did not say that he (Mr. Clowes) was in the slightest degree blamable. If Mr. Clowes had brought ten men more than he (Mr. Story) had done, not a word would have been said about it. He had now explained the matter as well as he could. He had pointed out why the poll had not been taken at Bonna Vonna and Brenda; how the poll had been taken there afterwards; where he was and what he had been doing. He had nothing more to say. He had been determined to make this explanation, and he thanked the Committee for giving him the privilege. He would end the matter by saying this: They had often heard that if dirt was thrown some of it would stick if the aim was straight enough; but he would call hon. members' attention to this—and he would call the attention of the leader of the Opposition particularly to it—that although the throwing of the dirt might bespatter the victim it always dirtied the thrower's hands. And if the hon. gentleman would wash his hands and his soul by apologising for the insinuations he had made he would have a much higher opinion of that hon. gentleman than he had at present.

Mr. DAWSON: I don't want your opinion.

The HOME SECRETARY: It is worth having.

* Mr. KERR (*Barcoo*): While they were on election matters he would like to bring one matter up which had occurred in his electorate. Before the last general election, there were two men on the Barcoo electoral roll—James Paxton and Joseph Drysdale—who had been removed from the Barcoo roll, and who had never been outside the district for a number of years. They communicated with the hon. member for South Brisbane, and that hon. member brought the matter under the notice of the Premier, who at that time had charge of that business. The electoral registrar at Isisford made the statement that he sent a notice to these men that they had been struck off, and also that he sent a notice to the electoral registrar at Barcaldine to place the names of these men on the roll for that division. It was a curious thing that these men got the notice that they were struck off, but the electoral registrar at Barcaldine never got the notice to place their names on the roll for that division. There was a report received by the department from Mr. Boyce, who was the principal registrar, and who was at that time the police magistrate at Muttaborra, who had been appointed to make inquiries into the matter. He wanted to know what the result of those inquiries were. These men had never been out of the electorate to his own knowledge for something like fifteen years. They were on the Isisford roll, and the registrar there was the policeman in charge, who was a very strong partisan, a man who had taken a lot of trouble, and the man who had advised the bench at that

famous revision court at Isisford, where the police magistrate distinctly stated in court—and the evidence was read at the Full Court—that he would not believe certain men if they were placed in the witness-box. He also intimated to the solicitor who appeared for these men that he would not believe them, and that the bench had made up their minds. Now, if they were to have electoral matters conducted in that manner what chance was there of fairness for members who represented Labour constituencies?

Mr. ARMSTRONG: It cuts both ways.

Mr. KERR: It only cut one way in a Ministerial candidate's election. He would give an instance: In one case there were 112 men struck off the roll, and two of them had to go to the expense of obtaining a mandamus to have their names restored. Mr. Paxton and Mr. Drysdale were well known to be strong supporters of his, and, because of that, the police officer acting as registrar refused to take action to restore those names. Now, if electoral registrars and police officers were allowed to disfranchise persons in that way, it was very easy to see how they could secure seats for Government candidates. He drew the attention of the Home Secretary by letter to the action of the police magistrate, who was returning officer at Blackall, and he also acted as electoral registrar. It was that gentleman who was sent specially by the Government to Isisford, and who had made the statements he mentioned from the bench. If police magistrates were going to decide cases before they heard the evidence, they could come to no other conclusion than that justice would not be administered. In the capacity of returning officer, that gentleman refused a ballot-paper to an elector named Richard Minns, simply because by accident in copying the names an "i" had been inserted between the "n" and the "s." He could only assume that the ballot-paper was refused because it was pretty well known that the elector would record his vote for him (Mr. Kerr). Richard Minns, when refused a ballot-paper, offered to make a sworn declaration that he was the person whose name was on the roll, but the returning officer refused to allow the declaration to be made, because he said he had no chance of verifying the fact that this man was the person he claimed to be. As a matter of fact, he could have obtained the proof in two minutes by going into his office, where the original electoral claim was kept. Now, when they found public officers in high positions acting in that way they must conclude that they were not fit for their positions. He said that in his place in the House, and was prepared to say it to the face of Mr. Taylor, the police magistrate.

The HOME SECRETARY: You are very brave.

Mr. KERR: That officer had acted in a most prejudiced manner, and was one of those old fossils whom the Government foisted on people in the West. If public officers showed such disgraceful bias as had been shown by Mr. Taylor, then those who suffered could only adopt the best means they had at their command to let the public know what was going on.

The HOME SECRETARY desired to say a few words in reply to the somewhat heated and malevolent speech of the hon. member, and in palliation of the very serious offence which he alleged had been committed by a public officer. The hon. member took advantage of his privilege in Parliament to abuse in unmeasured terms a public officer.

Mr. KERR: I would say it outside.

The HOME SECRETARY: That was the proper place to say it. In his opinion there was something very unmanly in attacking a person

who could not reply for himself. He did not know Mr. Taylor, but he did know that he was a very old public officer, and he presumed was a man of considerable experience. Most people were liable to make mistakes, but from the tone of the hon. member for Barcoo he presumed that he was one of those who never made mistakes. Unquestionably Mr. Taylor made a mistake in that particular instance. It was perfectly correct that the hon. member had written a letter to the Home Secretary and made a complaint about the matter. The hon. member might have done him the courtesy of letting him know he was about to bring the matter on, but, fortunately, the officers were present, and he was able to deal with it. The matter was submitted. It was a little matter, although

very likely an important one to [10.30 p.m.] the individual who was deprived of his vote. It appeared that the name was misspelt, and on that account Mr. Taylor refused to allow him to vote. According to the opinion of the Attorney-General—with which he entirely concurred—Mr. Taylor was in error, and had been so informed. Nothing more could be done. He had himself had to complain at various elections which he had gone through of votes being disallowed which would probably have been recorded for him, but he had never turned round and abused those men who had made the mistakes, and imputed motives to them. Hon. members would consult the dignity of the Chamber more if they would endeavour to restrain their feelings when dealing with public officers, who were in the unfortunate position of not being able to hit back. With regard to the case of Paxton and Drysdale, it was true that the Principal Electoral Registrar inquired into the matter, and he understood from Mr. Boyce that he had satisfied himself thoroughly that the notices were sent from Isisford to Barcardine, but so far as could be ascertained they did not reach Barcardine. He understood that notices that they had been struck off had also been sent to the electors themselves. Notwithstanding that, the hon. member had descended—if he would allow him to say so—to a very considerable amount of abuse of an individual who in Mr. Boyce's unbiased opinion did his duty.

Mr. KERR: You cannot produce any proof.

The HOME SECRETARY: He was not going to ask Mr. Boyce to produce any proof. The hon. member would next impute improper motives to the Principal Electoral Registrar.

Mr. KERR: No!

The HOME SECRETARY: When a public officer was asked to make an inquiry, he had his reputation at stake, both as an officer and as a gentleman, and the hon. member should be content to take the report which that public officer made, after having duly inquired into the matter. The argument of the hon. member for Rockhampton North with regard to the non-necessity of the appointment of a Principal Electoral Registrar had been amply met by the speech of the hon. member for Barcoo, because if ever there was a speech which indicated that there were irregularities—designed or otherwise—it was the speech of the hon. member for Barcoo. Of course, any man was liable to error, and he was quite sure that returning officers and electoral registrars were not exceptions to that rule. He had had to make complaints himself. The hon. member for Barcoo interjected—and so did some other hon. member—that that sort of thing did not happen when hon. members on the Government side were concerned. Hon. members on the other side might be highly amused if they heard what the Attorney-General had to say with regard to

his treatment by the electoral registrar for Brisbane North. According to his colleague's idea, he had been most improperly removed from the North Brisbane roll.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: I was also struck off for North Brisbane.

Mr. GIVENS: That shows the electoral registrar is impartial.

The HOME SECRETARY: Of course that showed that he was thoroughly impartial. It was a common thing to be struck off, but people generally took those things quietly. They did not make a fuss and have wool flying about like the hon. member for Barcoo. He would have been very glad if the hon. member had been courteous enough to intimate to him that he was going to broach the subject, although, fortunately, he was in a position to give an explanation.

Mr. KERR said that he had not notified the hon. gentleman of his intention to bring the question up, because he understood that the discussion would be taken when they came to page 37 of the Estimates.

The HOME SECRETARY: I am quite satisfied.

Mr. KERR: He had told Mr. Taylor to his face in Blackall what he thought of his action. He was never ashamed or afraid to say to any man what he thought of him. As to Mr. Taylor's ability, it was well known that he had been removed from St. George because he was not considered good enough for that place. Blackall was a more important place than St. George, and they ought to have a little better police magistrate than Mr. Taylor. It might be said that he did not represent the most influential electors in the Barcoo district, but at any rate he represented the majority of them, and he spoke on behalf of that majority. Those whom he represented thought it was time they had a change.

Mr. STEWART: The Home Secretary pointed out that the speech of the hon. member for Barcoo was an absolute reply to his criticisms upon the necessity for the office of Principal Electoral Registrar. He was not able to agree with the hon. gentleman. The speech of the hon. member for Barcoo certainly did show that there was some necessity for a better administration of the electoral laws, and perhaps for putting their administration into more capable hands, but it certainly did not show that the appointment of that particular official was going to make matters better. He stated his opinion of the appointment at the time it was proposed—that it was simply a device to create a new billet into which some person could be pitchforked. If the department over which the hon. gentleman presided was a little more anxious that the electoral laws should be fairly administered, they would very soon find that out, and would be a little more careful of their actions. He was very much astonished at one doctrine enunciated by the hon. gentleman. He rebuked the hon. member for Barcoo for bringing up a grievance against a public official, because that public official had not the right of reply.

The HOME SECRETARY: Pardon me! I did not say that.

Mr. STEWART: What did the hon. gentleman say? That was the meaning of what he said.

The HOME SECRETARY: No, you misquote me.

Mr. STEWART hoped he had not only misquoted the hon. gentleman, but that he had misunderstood him.

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes, you have.

Mr. STEWART: Where were hon. members to bring up their grievances if that was not the place where grievances should be discussed? It was not proper that members of Parliament should go to a public official and beard him in

his office regarding the performance of his duty. That would be an utterly indefensible proceeding. The proper way to deal with public officers who did not do their duty was to make a complaint to the head of their department, and then, if redress could not be obtained in that way, Parliament must be the final court of appeal. The hon. member for Barcoo should not be blamed for bringing his complaint before that Committee.

The HOME SECRETARY would be the last man in the Assembly to even suggest that hon. members should not bring up their grievances in the House, no matter whether they were against a public officer or against a Minister, but he thought it was not desirable that public officers should be subjected to language which, if applied to hon. members, would be distinctly unparliamentary. All he had said with reference to the hon. member for Barcoo was that the language he had employed with regard to those public officials went beyond the bounds of fair criticism; he did not protest against his bringing his grievances before the Committee.

Mr. GIVENS (*Cairns*): There was an impression abroad among the public that while very little care was exercised in striking the names of persons having a residential qualification off the roll, men who had possessed a property qualification had been left on the roll, in many instances where it was notorious that they had lost their qualification, and it was understood by the public that special instructions had been issued by the Minister to electoral registrars that they should not be too ready in striking off the names of voters who were on the rolls for a property qualification. He should like to have some information from the Minister on that point, because he knew of his own knowledge that electoral registrars in some portions of the colony, particularly in some of the Northern portions of the colony—he was not alluding to his own electorate—had given that as an excuse for leaving on the roll the names of persons who it was notorious had lost their property qualification. He had heard that himself, and would like some explanation of the matter from the Minister.

The HOME SECRETARY now formally asked the hon. member, as a public man charged with a public duty, to furnish him with the names of the electoral registrars who gave him that information. He demanded that, and was justified in doing so.

Mr. McDONALD: Don't get excited.

The HOME SECRETARY: He was not excited, but he demanded that the hon. member inform him of the names of those electoral registrars, because either they were lying or somebody else was lying. The hon. member should follow the lead of the hon. member for Barcoo, and bring his charge against the officers concerned, in order that they might be brought to justice, because so far as he was able to ascertain the statement was absolutely false, for no such instructions had been given by the department.

Mr. GIVENS: You won't get the names from me.

The HOME SECRETARY: Then he left it to the House and the country to judge between those men and the hon. member.

Mr. GIVENS wished to know how it was, if no such instructions had been issued, that men who had notoriously lost their property qualification were allowed to remain on the roll.

The HOME SECRETARY: Ask the registrars you have referred to.

Mr. GIVENS: He had asked them.

The HOME SECRETARY: Well, give me the names, and I will inquire into the matter.

Mr. GIVENS: He would give the hon. gentleman a little more information than he bargained for in a short time.

The HOME SECRETARY thought they could allow that matter to drop. He was satisfied, and he believed that the electoral registrars would be satisfied also. He understood that it was desired to have a little more conversation on that very interesting subject, and as hon. members did not desire to sit late, he moved that the Chairman leave the chair, report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported progress, and the Committee obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. R. Dickson, *Bulimba*): In rising to move the adjournment of the House, I desire to express my regret that owing to the large amount of work we have to do, and the shortness of the time at our disposal, I am unable to ask the House to adjourn over to-morrow. I hope, however, that it will not be taken as a precedent for future years, but I think hon. members on both sides will agree that under present circumstances it is undesirable that we should lose any time. The business for to-morrow will be the Estimates. I beg to move that the House do now adjourn.

Mr. DAWSON: Can you give us an idea when we will reach the Committee stage of the Elections Bill?

The PREMIER: I cannot say yet.

Question put and passed; and the House adjourned at ten minutes to 11 o'clock.