

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**THURSDAY, 12 DECEMBER 1901**

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

THURSDAY, 12 DECEMBER, 1901.

The SPEAKER (Hon. Arthur Morgan, *Warwick*) took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

## PETITIONS.

## LICENSING ACT—SUNDAY TRADING.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. A. Rutledge, *Maranoa*) presented petitions from certain residents of Roma and Wallumbilla, praying that no alteration be made in the law with regard to Sunday trading.

Petitions received.

## QUESTIONS.

## ADDITIONAL CONTINGENTS TO SOUTH AFRICA.

Mr. ARMSTRONG (*Lockyer*), in the absence of Mr. Stephenson, asked the Chief Secretary—

In the event of its being decided to despatch an additional contingent of Australian troops to South Africa, will his Government take steps to secure the inclusion of some Queenslanders in the force?

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

Yes.

## RESUMPTION ON WETHERON HOLDING.

Mr. HARDACRE (*Leichhardt*) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

1. Is he aware that there is great dissatisfaction existing in connection with the Land Court's recommendation for the resumption of a certain area on the Wetheron holding, in the Gayndah district, as the one-fourth which may be resumed on this holding?

2. Will he cause to be laid upon the table of the House a copy of the Land Court's report, together with plans, maps, correspondence, or other papers in connection with their recommendation for the resumption of one-fourth on this holding?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. B. H. O'Connell, *Musgrave*) replied—

1. I understand that the Maryborough newspapers have expressed dissatisfaction with the intimation given by the Land Court of its intention in regard to recommending the resumption of part of Wetheron holding.

2. The Land Court's recommendation has not yet been received; but if the hon. member will call at the Land Office, all available information will be given him.

## PAPER.

The following paper, laid on the table, was ordered to be printed:—Various reports on the Gowrie, Mount Russell, and Durundur Estates for the purchase of which by the Government provisional agreements have been made by the Secretary for Public Lands.

## EXCHANGE OF LANDS ON TAABINGA RUN.

On the motion of Mr. KENT (*Burnett*), it was formally resolved—

That there be laid upon the table of the House Mr. Commissioner Watts's report on the proposed exchange of lands on Taabinga Run, Nanango district, for lands known as the Kingaroy paddock in the same district.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS laid on the table the return asked for, which was ordered to be printed.

## AGRICULTURAL BANK BILL.

## THIRD READING.

This Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council by message in the usual form.

## PROPOSED DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR.

## RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

On the Order of the Day being read for the resumption of adjourned debate on Mr. Jackson's motion—

That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable that a State Department of Labour should be constituted under the direct control of a responsible Minister, who should be known as the Minister for Labour—

Mr. BOWMAN (*Warrego*) said: The motion is one that I heartily approve of, and I am glad the hon. member for Kennedy has brought the matter under the notice of the House, seeing the experience the other colonies have had respecting the working of such a scheme. On the last occasion when we were discussing the motion, the hon. member for Kennedy clearly pointed out the benefits derived from such a scheme in New Zealand. He showed that it had been productive of good in that colony, and that it was the forerunner of similar legislation throughout the Australian colonies. We are indebted for the initiation of this scheme to the present Agent-General of New Zealand—Mr. Reeves—the late Minister for Labour in New Zealand. When initiating that scheme he clearly showed that where the Government were prepared to undertake a Department of Labour, advantages naturally came to men and women under the supervision of a responsible Minister. That has been proved to the satisfaction of many members of this House, if not to its entire satisfaction. In addition to being the initiator of the Department of Labour in New Zealand, Mr. Reeves was also the father of their Conciliation and Arbitration Act; and he wrote an introductory article to a book recently written by a Mr. Lloyd, entitled "The Country Without Strikes." I will just read a short paragraph from that introduction—

The object of the New Zealand Conciliation and Arbitration Act is not only to stamp out sweating and improve the workers' condition. These, indeed, were not its immediate aims, though they are consequences, and very valuable consequences, which have flowed from it. Its special and primary object was to bring about industrial peace; and, in so far as it has substituted orderly and methodical hearing and adjudication by impartial State tribunals for the loose, violent, and haphazard methods of the strike and lockout, it has succeeded in bringing about industrial peace.

That is the keynote to Mr. Reeves's article. The Conciliation and Arbitration Act and other labour legislation in New Zealand has followed from the creation of the Department of Labour, and their example has been followed in South Australia, Victoria, and New South Wales, New South Wales being the latest to adopt the principle. Those who are acquainted with labour conditions throughout Australia know very well that there have been in the past a great many conflicts between employers and employees. The Premier and the Secretary for Agriculture both stated, when this motion was last before the House, that they considered that there was no need at the present time for a Department of Labour—that there were a number of Ministers, all of whom were sympathetic towards the labouring classes in this colony. Well, I do not think that our Ministers have ever shown the same sympathy that has been evinced by Ministers in the other Australian States. True, we have had

legislation introduced by the Home Secretary that has done a great deal to relieve many people in Queensland, and particularly those who are not able to fight the battle against their employers as well, perhaps, as men—I refer to women, boys, and girls. I appreciate very much the efforts of the Home Secretary in bringing that about; but, as I have stated in previous discussions, I do not consider that that measure goes far enough, and does not give relief to a large section of the community. The Premier, when speaking against this motion, stated that he appreciated the address delivered by the hon. member for Kennedy, but that he could not fall in with the proposal, because it would naturally sever the relationship between one and another of the Ministers as they carried on their business at the present time. The hon. gentleman further said that there was a possibility of a rearrangement of portfolios being made, and that there might be a Minister for Labour or Industry.

MR. TURLEY: A Minister for Industry, not Labour.

MR. BOWMAN: A Minister for Industry. The hon. gentleman stated that there were eight paid Ministers at the present time, and that the Government could not see their way to pay an additional Minister. The hon. member for Kennedy said nothing about an additional Minister being paid, and I believe myself that one of the present Ministers could fill the office of Minister for Labour if it was created. I know that when Mr. Perry was Minister for Public Instruction in New South Wales he also carried out the duties of Minister for Labour in that colony.

MR. KERR: Do you expect that our Minister for Public Instruction would carry them out?

MR. BOWMAN: I suppose that if the majority of the House decide that a Minister for Labour shall be appointed, either that Minister or some other Minister will carry out the duties of the office. I do not think the Government could show their sympathy with the working classes better than by appointing a Minister who would come in contact with the workers and become thoroughly acquainted with their grievances. There are grievances and differences of opinion which men want settled. We have been told by hon. members opposite that we do wrong when we resort to anything in the form of a strike. But, as has been said by myself and others, that has been the only means of entering our protest in many instances where we have felt that a wrong has been done to us. Surely, in view of the experience of New Zealand in this matter, and in view of the fact that New South Wales is following in the footsteps of that colony, and that the Federal Premier, Mr. Barton, has promised to bring such a measure into operation in regard to disputes which extend beyond one State of the Commonwealth, we might very well adopt this motion, and appoint a Minister for Labour. The whole of the Australian colonies, so far as I have been able to gather, are favourable to having a State Department of Labour, and of having a Minister before whom those who are interested in certain callings can bring their grievances. The Government Labour Bureau in this colony has been the means of doing a great deal of good among the unemployed, particularly among those who are stranded, and have no place to go to. I have had occasion to go to the office of that institution on behalf of men who were stranded, and the officer in charge, Mr. Townsend, has shown the utmost possible sympathy with the men and endeavoured to give them relief. But we can have something better than that—we can have a State Department of Labour such as they have in New Zealand, where men

who are out of work can go and ascertain where employment can be obtained without feeling, as many do who go to our Labour Bureau, that they are going to what is practically a charitable institution. The Labour Bureau may have that appearance, but still it has been helpful to many men. But what I should like to see is a State Department of Labour and a system of registration such as they have adopted in New Zealand. The Secretary for Agriculture, in speaking on this motion when it was last before the House, seemed to be very sore about the actions of members on this side of the House, and he particularly took me to task for having addressed the bootmakers, and told them men in the same trade in New Zealand were able to get better conditions than prevailed in Queensland. Our Chief Inspector of Shops and Factories has, in his last report, made a comparison of the wages paid, not only in the boot trade, but in other trades in Victoria and Queensland, which conclusively proves the contention to which the hon. gentleman took exception. As the figures of that officer can be taken as authentic, I cannot do better than quote a few passages from his report. The chief inspector says—

The close of the year 1900, marking as it does the close of our existence as a colony with an entirely separate and independent existence, is perhaps not an unfitting time, in view of the impending changes in our interstate industrial relationships, to make some examination of future prospects by comparing conditions in at least one of the other States with which we shall shortly be in much closer contact than formerly.

The one dominant factor affecting the internal industrial relationships of the respective States is that of wages, and whether we derive satisfaction or otherwise from the comparison of the average earnings of operatives in these States with our own depends entirely upon the point of view from which the comparison is made. The report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Shops in Victoria for the year 1900 affords an opportunity of comparing the latest statistics of that State with our own.

Many conflicting statements have been made as to the success or otherwise of the principle of the minimum wage as applied in Victoria, but if, after experience of some years of its operation in six trades, they decide, as was done last year, to extend it to an additional twenty-one, there need be no doubt as to the opinion of the Victorian Parliament on the subject. It is impossible in such a report as this to compare all trades, but the figures in a few have been taken out on uniform basis for comparison.

In the bread-baking trade the average wage in 1896, in Victoria, was £1 12s. 5d. for men and boys. Last year it was £2 4s.; working hours, 48. In Queensland the average wage of men and boys last year was £1 19s. 8½d., and working hours vary from 48 to 70.

In the boot trade in 1896, in Victoria, males £1 16s. 10d., females 13s. 4d.; in 1900, males £1 14s. 5d., females 14s. 7d. In Queensland the average last year was—males £1 7s. 5½d., females 12s. 2½d.

In the shirt trade in 1896, in Victoria, 14s. 5d., and last year 14s. 8d. In Queensland, 11s. 9½d.

In underclothing last year, in Victoria, 12s. 7d. Queensland's average was 11s. 5½d.

In the clothing trade in 1896, males £1 15s. 3d., females 15s. 5d.; last year—males £2 2s. 4d.; females 18s. 1d. Queensland, last year—males £1 16s. 0½d., females 11s. 10½d.

The possibilities of future developments underlying these figures open up a subject which is not within the scope of this report to discuss, but it would

[4 p.m.] appear certain that important changes are impending requiring earnest scrutiny. Victoria will presumably very reluctantly relinquish her minimum wage. South Australia has already adopted regulations for the appointment of wages boards, and New South Wales seems to be moving in the same direction.

Will Queensland be forced to follow suit, or will Victoria have to recede from her present standard? It is, I think, obvious that, after the introduction of interstate freetrade, the two scales cannot continue to exist as they do now. If the statement of Victoria's Factory Department is to be accepted in full, no one seems to be conscious of having greatly suffered by having to pay more for the articles they require.

That is the opinion of our inspector of factories, and he shows by comparison that there is a marked difference between Victoria and Queensland. I know from my personal experience as an operative in Brisbane and Melbourne that there is a difference in wages. We were told by the Secretary for Agriculture that if we got wages increased it would simply mean increased cost of living. But the wages I received in Melbourne were higher than those paid in Brisbane, and yet boots were just as dear here and there was very little difference in the cost of living. The hon. gentleman has shown on many occasions that he is not in sympathy with giving protection by legislation to our operatives, but I think we may fairly judge by the experience of other colonies and see how the voluntary system has worked, and how the conditions have been improved under the operation of law. We have the evidence before us of the operation of the Conciliation and Arbitration Act of New Zealand, and one of the largest employers of labour, the manager of the Union Steamship Company, has declared that that Act is the best that has ever been passed in New Zealand. The Secretary for Agriculture, in speaking last week, said—

The fact is that if hon. members carried out their system the burdens of the people would go on increasing, but as they will not live to see the thing burst they do not trouble themselves about the consequences: they make hay while the sun shines, and other people can stand the consequences. But I am a family man, and I have children, and I do not want my children, or their children, to be ruined. I like to take an interest in the future. You can go on increasing your State employees until the time when the burdens on the people outside become so heavy that the majority will rise in revolt and overthrow this Trades Hall despotism which it is proposed to establish.

I suppose the hon. gentleman is not more fond of his children than we are of ours, and it is because we desire to see their conditions improved that we wish the State to step in and give them greater protection than they have at the present time. Any hon. member has only to read the report of the inspector of factories to see the conditions under which women and children work in the city of Brisbane, and the men who in the face of that report refuse to sympathise with the workers do not show at all events that they have any care for the children of the people generally. I do not see that by establishing a Department of Labour that the people must be employed by the State. That is not so in New Zealand or elsewhere. The paragraph which I have read from the observations of Mr. Reeves contains the kernel of the whole situation. He stated that the object of the Bill was to have industrial peace instead of industrial war, and that is the object of this party. The hon. gentleman quoted what was said by Mr. Seddon, but I have heard Mr. Seddon declare that the Arbitration and Conciliation Act was one of the best pieces of legislation he had ever placed on the statute-book of New Zealand. We recognise that men and women should come together, and have their differences settled in an amicable manner, and if that object can be accomplished in Victoria and New Zealand, surely it can be accomplished here. The Secretary for Agriculture also said that what we wanted was to set people at one another's throats. I deny that. The policy of the Labour party, as long as I have been associated with it, has been to conciliate. I do not know one strike that has taken place in Queensland in which we have not approached the employers with a view of bringing about a conference, so that the whole difficulty could be settled before a strike took place. Only last week a deputation waited upon the Premier in reference to this matter, and the hon. gentleman told them that he was in favour of arbitration,

but only voluntary arbitration, and the Secretary for Agriculture in his remarks seemed to think that it was out of all reason that we should compel employers to do what was right. Why, we do that at the present time under the operation of the Factory Act. We say that employees should not work more than a certain number of hours, and that the minimum wage should be so much for children. If the principle applies in connection with the limitation of hours, surely it applies also in connection with improving the conditions under which the people work in other directions. The object of the Labour party and the mover of this motion is that better relations should exist between employers and employees, and those who have had any experience in industrial struggles are satisfied that strikes should be things of the past. Some hon. members may say that we have not had any strikes of recent date. We may not have had so many, but still they are cropping up in various parts of the world, and I firmly believe that "prevention is better than cure." We have only to go through that report, and if there is one thing more than another that should appeal to hon. members, it is the conditions under which women are working. Why, talk about sweating, there is evidence of it as clear as possible, and any hon. gentleman can read where they are making clothing at the lowest possible price. How can they live under such conditions? I was speaking to a gentleman the other day, who occupies a prominent position in this city as an inspector, and he told me of an instance in which a woman was receiving 2s. a dozen for shirts, and she could not make a living at that rate, but had to receive relief from the Immigration Depot for herself and her little ones. These are facts which may be gathered in Brisbane to-day; and yet, when we talk about these conditions, or if we ask for the establishment of a Department of Labour or for legislation which will relieve these people, we are told by the Minister for Agriculture and others that we are interfering with the rights of the employers.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I never told you anything of the kind.

MR. BOWMAN: At any rate you inferred as much. The hon. gentleman showed that he had no sympathy whatever with the establishment of a Department of Labour, or the appointment of a Minister of Labour, because he himself did not consider that it was the duty of the State to interfere, because each one should fight his own battles. I ask the hon. gentleman whether he, or perhaps those who are dependent upon him, would like to have to fight the battles that some unfortunate creatures have to fight in this city to-day? That is the point which should come home to everybody—how would they like it themselves, or how would they like it for those who are dependent upon them?

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The main point is whether you do more harm than good in a certain direction.

MR. BOWMAN: If that is the point, we have tried for a considerable time the voluntary system, and how has it worked out? The conditions to-day are bad. We have certain restrictions in the Shops and Factories Act which minimise the evil to some extent, but they are not sufficient; and if it is thought advisable to restrict the conditions and the impositions that are being imposed on certain employees by their employers—and the House was practically unanimous in saying that certain restrictions should be placed upon them—why should not we desire to have that principle extended? I know myself that there are trades at the present time—in fact a deputation comprising the representatives of thousands of men waited upon the Premier the other day to ask him

to do that—which are particularly anxious to get the same principle carried out in the regulation of other industries. If the same principle has worked satisfactorily in the other colonies, as I believe it has, there is no reason why it should not work equally well here, and result in people obtaining shorter hours and improved conditions. The sweating evil which existed in Melbourne has been minimised to a very great extent by the Factory Act there. Why not copy the example of that colony? If it is good for one colony—if it has produced such grand results elsewhere—let us apply it here. I do not see what we have to fear. Take the recent experiment that has been made by the Minister for Railways in connection with day labour. We have had the report of the Chief Engineer printed in the newspapers, and he has pointed out that it has worked out with admirable results so far. I think that that is a very strong argument why we should create this particular department. Mr. Stanley states in his report that the system has had this advantage: that it has blocked imposition on the part of contractors; and I believe that hon. members are thoroughly satisfied, and, in fact, gratified, to see that this system of day labour has worked out with such satisfactory results, and we have every reason to believe it will continue to do so.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I hope it will, but we have not finished yet. It has done so far, we know.

Mr. BOWMAN: So far as we know, it has worked out satisfactorily. We have also the testimony of New South Wales, where they have carried it out on a much more extensive scale, and it has worked out there to the satisfaction of that colony. I think the hon. member for South Brisbane clearly pointed out in discussing the question of a minimum wage on Government contracts this year, and also last year, that the statistics show that in that colony it had effected a great saving. That, I think, is a strong reason why a Department of Labour should be instituted, and why we should have a Minister for Labour, who would concentrate his efforts more directly on the workers, or rather, I should say, upon those who are interested, whether employers or employees. It is the wish of every member on this side of the House that the industries of the colony should be carried on in a peaceful way. If it can be satisfactorily proved that this system has worked satisfactorily in other parts of Australia and in other parts of the world, I think we are justified in following the example, particularly when it has given the same satisfaction here, as we are told by the reports in the papers and also by the documents that we have. I trust under these circumstances that the House will pass this resolution in favour of the establishment of a State Department of Labour. I do not know whether there is much chance of that, seeing that the Premier is opposed to it, and also the one Cabinet Minister who has spoken so far, but I think that after what has transpired in other colonies something in this direction should be done. We were told twelve months ago by the Premier that it was inadvisable that we should interfere with arbitration, because that would be a matter which would be dealt with by the Federal Government, but now he states that it is wise to keep as much of our own domestic legislation in our own Parliament as we possibly can. We are perfectly satisfied with what the Federal Parliament will do, but what will emanate from that Parliament will only apply to disputes which extend beyond one colony; and I think hon. gentlemen who have seen the struggles in the past, and know the direful results of them, should throw in their vote with us on this occasion, so

that we may have legislation introduced which will try to elevate the conditions under which men and women have to work here. I know that some hon. gentlemen have even disputed that such a state of things exists, but there is the report to speak for itself. You cannot get anything fairer than that. The report shows that the conditions are bad, and while it states that there is no apparent sign of sweating, still the prices paid for certain clothing, I think, are enough to brand it as a disgrace on this colony, and we are entitled to institute a department that will be able to cope with this evil, and give, at any rate, to men and women and children their just deserts.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. Leahy, *Bullo*): As no other hon. member seems to be desirous of saying anything on this important question, and as there is plenty of time—this being private members' day, which usually ends by doing nothing—I may as well occupy the attention of the Chamber for five or ten minutes. In the first place, if the resolution is carried in the form in which it is now, it will not bind this House in any shape or form. It will simply be an expression of opinion by, perhaps, twenty-five or twenty-six members out of seventy-two. It will only be the expression of the opinions of the members present for the time being, and I am very doubtful whether it would always be the opinion of those hon. members, because many things may arise to cause them to change their opinions. But, perhaps I have no right to go further than to say it would be the expression of their opinion as indicated by their votes. I am sorry that I was not in the Chamber the whole time the hon. member for Warrego was speaking; but he gave us a lot of information from the report of the Inspector of Shops and Factories in Brisbane. I have not had time to read over the whole of that report, and I must say he gave us a condition of things from that report which is not at all to my liking. Whether the hon. member gave us extracts without taking into consideration the general context or not, I don't know; but I did expect the hon. member to show the connection between the things he has been referring to and the motion now before the Chamber. But assuming that this motion is carried—that the House pushed the matter to the extreme and insisted upon a Minister for Labour being appointed—the fact of having a Minister for Labour would not alter the policy of the Government or of individual members.

Mr. JACKSON: I sketched out the programme.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: But that programme is not part of this resolution now before the Chamber, and I am dealing with that resolution. The greater portion of the day labour in the colony is dealt with through my department, and I am doing my best in a legitimate way to see that those men are well treated, and so far they have not made any complaints to me or the department; they have made no such complaints as have just been referred to by the hon. member for Warrego. Even if we had a Minister for Labour, I don't set that that would alter my attitude or the attitude of any Minister towards those men. The fact of a Minister for Labour being appointed would not alter the policy of the Government at all.

Mr. BOWMAN: We have the experience of the other colonies in this matter.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Yes, but that is not part of the resolution, and even if the resolution were carried, the contention of the hon. member does not follow as a necessity. The hon. member was arguing that these things would follow as corollaries. How can the hon. member argue in that way? As far

as this motion itself goes, I don't see any particular objection to it. If a Minister for Labour is appointed, he cannot do more than the Minister for Works or the Home Secretary. My department has engaged 1,200 or 1,500 men on day labour, and none of these men have made any complaints to me or to the department. I don't think a Minister for Labour or any other Minister could have a better record than that. They are perfectly satisfied. I do not see any necessity for any change in the present system. Anybody who looks back for the last twenty, ten, or even five years, will see that there is a forward movement on what we call democratic lines under the Shops and Factories Act; we take greater care than formerly of persons who cannot take care of themselves. That is a good thing, and I hope it will progress, but it is possible to go too quickly in these matters. I do not say that we are going too quickly, but I say there is a movement going on slowly but surely. This forward movement is going on over the whole world. There is nothing in the argument of the hon. member for Warrego that New Zealand is a peaceful Utopia where there are no strikes. We have no strikes here.

Mr. BOWMAN: There were strikes in 1894 and 1895, and we were nearly having a big strike in Brisbane a few weeks ago.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Probably the hon. member has more knowledge of these matters than I have, and if he has this knowledge, I don't know where he gets it from, unless he originated it.

Mr. BOWMAN: You know that what I say is correct.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Well, the hon. member has knowledge which I do not possess. I do not want to take any credit for anything I do not possess. I give the hon. member, in conjunction with the Rev. Mr. James, credit for bringing about amicable relations between the two parties. It was a good result. But if this motion is carried, and a Minister for Labour is appointed, I do not think this would tend to alter the policy of the Government. It would only be the same policy carried out under another name. We have been told by some hon. members that this House should be guided by the opinions of the Government. We were told last night that the Government should take the responsibility of doing certain things, and the House would be guided by them. But I think the Government should be guided by the opinions of the majority of hon. members. Hon. members do not contend that the minority should rule over the majority. I do not mean to say that the majority may not sometimes be wrong, but at the same time the majority should rule, whether they are right or wrong. Although the majority may very often be wrong, still I cannot conceive any circumstances in

[4:30 p.m.] which a minority should rule, and so long as we have a majority in this House, the Government must endeavour to carry out the policy that they believe to be the best for all sections of the community, not for any particular section.

Mr. BOWMAN: That is what we want to do.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I do not think that is what the hon. member does want. If it is, then he should come across to this side of the House.

Mr. TURLEY: We doubt whether you want it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Of course the hon. member for South Brisbane doubts everything.

Mr. TURLEY: I do not doubt your standing there now.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I have heard the hon. member doubt things quite

as certain as that I am standing here. I have not risen for the purpose of offering any serious opposition to the motion beyond the fact that I do not think it is going to do any good. I suppose the time will come in Queensland when there will be a Minister of Labour—there seems to be one in every Australian colony; but I do not see, all the same, that Ministers of Labour make the other colonies better than Queensland. I have said that labour is as well paid in Queensland. The hon. member for Warrego referred to the treatment of youngsters. Well, it is well known that I have repeatedly in this Chamber referred to the fact that the youngsters of this country are not as well treated as I should like to see them treated, and I advocated very strongly the other day a scheme for giving their fathers a greater interest in the community. I wished to enable the fathers of those youngsters to see that legislation was passed that would insist on those youngsters that the hon. member for Warrego is so careful about being better treated at the hands of the State. I was saying that I do not think labour is better off in the other States than it is in Queensland. We have statistical evidence which has been supplied to us by the census which has recently been collected to prove that there are ten to one more men coming to Queensland from New South Wales and Victoria than there are going from Queensland to those colonies; and, unless we assume that those people are fools and do not know their business, seeing that they can get a second-class passage from here to Sydney for something like £1, I presume they will stop where they get the best wages and the best conditions. It is cheap enough to shift, and I am not inclined to think for a moment that the labouring classes in Queensland are deficient in intelligence. I think they have as much intelligence as any other class in the community. I worked among them for years, and I had as much intelligence then as I have now.

Mr. TURLEY: You had not as much knowledge.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Yes, I had. The hon. member was never capable of measuring how much knowledge I have got. I believe that I had a great deal more knowledge then in some things than I have now, and I certainly never pretended that I was superior to the bulk of men. I have known men with a great deal more ability and knowledge than I possess, and who were fit for any positions, but circumstances prevented them coming to the front. There is no doubt there is a great deal of latent intelligence and ability among the labouring classes, and that they are quite equal in those respects to the average person in the community. There are educated men—university men—among our working classes, and men who have held very good positions. Would those men remain here if the conditions were better in New South Wales, Victoria, or New Zealand? Is not the thing self-evident? Unless you are going to reflect on the judgment of those men, what keeps them here? We have heard a great deal about New South Wales. Of course, I got up to speak entirely without preparation, and without consideration—because I had no intention at all of speaking—except that every person who is interested in public questions must have a large amount of information on a subject of this kind; but I noticed in the telegraphic messages of yesterday that the Minister for Works stated that the only men in the Government employ who were receiving 5s. a day were old men. Five shillings a day is the minimum wage in New South Wales, but we have no men engaged on public works in Queensland who are getting as little as 5s. a day.

Mr. JACKSON: We do not employ old men.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: We have a great many in the Government employ who are over sixty years of age, and I think that men over sixty are old men for manual labour.

Mr. BOWMAN: Well, if they can work, they ought to get it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: As far as I am concerned, no man is going to be put out of employment because he happens to be over sixty or seventy years of age, if he is able to do a fair honest day's work; and if a man has given years of useful labour to the colony, and he happens to be sixty-five or seventy years of age, I would be inclined to keep him on if he could do anything approaching a reasonable day's labour.

Mr. JACKSON: I had a big fight with the Commissioner to get an old man back once.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That is the trouble of the Commissioner—that there are so many politicians coming to him to get this, that, and the other man on, and he cannot get rid of a man whether he is wanted or not.

Mr. JACKSON: This man was quite competent to do his work.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: There are hundreds of men who are competent to do work, but, sooner than keep on a man whom I cannot find remunerative employment for in a department I have control over, I would buy 160 acres on Gowrie and place him on it so that he might become a producing factor. It would be better both for the man and for the State to do that than to keep him at work that was not remunerative to the State. We are all desirous of raising the condition of the human race, but the condition of the race is never going to be as good as it ought to be, because there will always be men who take no thought for the morrow. I think that it is gradually improving, and the standard is higher than it was a few years ago, and I hope the standard is going to be still higher in the future.

Mr. JACKSON: You believe in progress, anyhow.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I do, but I differ from the hon. member, as I do not make any unnecessary professions about it. It is time for me to make professions when the time has come for action. I believe everyone believes in progress, but the question is what progress is. I do not know whether the hon. member is in the habit of going to races; but if he is, and he was inclined to back the winning horse, he might have the idea that one horse was going to win, and I might have the idea that another horse would be the winner. Both of us would want to back the winner, but we backed in different directions. Again, men may look in the same direction to see a certain star, but they may not all see the same star. Different men may believe in progress, but they may not have the same idea of progress. I am perfectly satisfied that the hon. member has an idea that it would be progress to establish a portfolio of labour, and that that would improve the condition of the working classes in the community. But on that particular matter there may be divergences of opinion. My idea of progress is something which is practical, something that will improve the condition of the workers of the country and make them happier and more comfortable, and not merely the establishment of a Minister for Labour or the adoption of something which we read about in "Looking Backward." All that we can do legitimately, having regard to the rights of other persons, should be done for the workers, and if I thought the adoption of this motion would have the effect of benefiting the workers I should have sat down long ago, and nobody would advocate it more strongly than I should do. I do not see any great objection to

it, but I do not think the appointment of a Minister for Labour would have the effect desired or anticipated by hon. members opposite. It is better that we should proceed steadily until the time comes for a change which will really be an improvement on the existing order of things, and not adopt a proposal merely because it has been accepted elsewhere.

Mr. BOWMAN: What effect has the appointment of a Minister for Labour had in other places?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The hon. member asks me what effect the appointment of a Minister of Labour has had in the other colonies, and my hon. friend, the Secretary for Agriculture, says, "No effect, but to send men here from the other colonies."

Mr. BOWMAN: It has had a good effect.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Does the hon. member dispute the fact that more persons come to Queensland from the other colonies than go there permanently from Queensland? What is the reason for that?

Mr. JACKSON: Look at the extent of Queensland!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The extent of the colony has nothing at all to do with the matter. The Pacific Ocean is of great extent, but people do not go to live there, and if this colony were five times as big as it is that would not make any difference in this matter. A man can only work in a certain place, and the extent of the colony does not affect the question. If the Western part of Queensland, or portions of the Diamantina, were cut off and cast into the Pacific Ocean, that would be just as good for Queensland as it is to have them lying idle as they were at the present time. It is not a question of the extent of the country; it is a question of conditions, and conditions are judged by the results which they give. If the hon. member can show that the establishment of a Department of Labour in other colonies, coupled with a sympathetic administration of that department, has made matters in the other colonies better than they are here, then I shall be prepared to concede that there is something in his argument.

Mr. BOWMAN: I gave instances showing that.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The instances which the hon. member gave were instances of youngsters.

Mr. BOWMAN: No; I gave the different hours of labour and the different rates of wages paid in Victoria and Brisbane.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The number of people working in shops and factories in Brisbane is very small indeed compared with the large body of workers in Queensland. I ask the hon. member to put the telegraphic summary which I read from the *Telegraph*, showing that the minimum wage on Government works in New South Wales is 5s. a day, against the figures which he quoted.

Mr. BOWMAN: There are men here getting only £1 5s. a week.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: There is no more connection between the figures the hon. member quoted and the proposition before the Chamber than there is between Ten-terden Steeple and Goodwin Sands. The hon. member argued that because an arbitration court and a department of labour had been established in New Zealand industrial peace had followed for five or six years. Well, industrial peace has existed here without a Minister for Labour.

Mr. TURLEY: It has existed for nine years in New Zealand.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: As long as we have the powerful influence of the hon. member for South Brisbane and the hon. member for Warrego directed in the channel of

commercial and industrial peace—as long as they, and those who think with them in politics, persevere on those lines, we shall never have a strike in Queensland, and our prosperity will increase.

Mr. TURLEY: And employers will listen to reason.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I am very pleased indeed with the reason which emanates from the hon. member for South Brisbane and the hon. member for Warrego. I have listened to their reasoning, and the Secretary for Agriculture has applauded me for the sympathetic hearing which I gave to the hon. member for South Brisbane and the hon. member for Warrego in the reasoning they offered to the House. I have very little more to say on this matter. I know that it will come up again. If anything is introduced in the other colonies that is thought to be a sufficient reason for introducing it here—in some instances. We are sometimes asked why do we not do what the other colonies have done; and at other times, if we introduce something new, we are asked, "Where was this ever done in any colony before?" It is considered to be wrong if it is not done somewhere else.

Mr. TURLEY: You always do a thing when it has failed somewhere else.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I do not say that a thing should not be done because it has failed somewhere else. A business man may fail in Brisbane, and another man may buy him out and make a fortune out of the same business. It all depends on the conditions under which the business is conducted. A system might be a failure in New South Wales; but it might be introduced here with success. We must take any system in conjunction with the particular circumstances and conditions under which it is carried out, in order to form a correct estimate of its success or otherwise, and we have heard nothing from the hon. member who has moved this motion, or from those hon. members who have supported it, to show that it is desirable that we should adopt it. We have merely had a lot of bald platitudes; but no reasons have been advanced in support of the motion. If members of the House think this motion should be carried, of course it will be passed, but even if it is passed I do not think there is any chance of a Minister for Labour being appointed this year. There is no doubt that if hon. members opposite go along the wharves, or among other working men, and tell them that they tried to get a Minister for Labour appointed, and that if such a Minister had been appointed every single man of them would get 2s. a day more, and I went among the same people and offered them only 1s. a day extra, and was able to pay them that 1s. a day, they would accept the position of the hon. member for Warrego with his patent process of giving everyone 2s. a day extra, which he could not carry out, in preference to the 1s. a day which I was able to pay them.

Mr. TURLEY: You do not give them credit for much intelligence.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I was speaking largely of the Western men, not of the class to whom the hon. member would address such arguments. I know that the working classes as a rule are intelligent, but I say that the best men in the community, the most intelligent men in the community, are sometimes dense, and have their best faculties dulled when a question of their own interest arises. There are certain things upon which we do not want any evidence. For instance, we do not want any evidence of the fact that the sun will set at half-past 6 o'clock this evening. But if we are asked when he will sit in Patagonia at a certain

parallel of latitude intersected by a meridian of longitude we should want an almanac to give us the exact figures. We have nothing before us in the nature of exact data on this subject from hon. members opposite, and I am quite sure that the Government, knowing that the people of the country have the fullest confidence in their wisdom and integrity, will not suffer any harm from the representations of hon. members opposite.

Mr. AIREY (*Flinders*): I am surprised to hear the Secretary for Railways say that no facts have been introduced upon which this motion could be fairly discussed, because I have a recollection that during nearly the whole of the speech of the hon. member for Warrego the hon. gentleman was out of the Chamber.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I said he did not establish a connection.

Mr. AIREY: How can the hon. gentleman say that when he was out of the Chamber? The hon. gentleman can see no good in this motion. The Government can never see any good in motions introduced on Thursday afternoons, and which emanate from this side of the Chamber. I believe the hon. gentleman would see no good in it no matter what facts were brought forward by the introducer of the motion. "No good can come out of Nazareth" according to the hon. gentleman. Then the hon. gentleman tells us that this is a dying Parliament, and therefore we have no right to do anything with this matter at this stage. Well, judging from the proceedings of last night, I should say we were a very lively Parliament, and that if the Parliament is moribund, it showed a very lively kind of moribundness. I quite agree with the hon. gentleman who introduced the motion, when he said that he objected to any additional burdens being placed upon the people. This is not a time when we should undertake any new burdens, and if I thought this would place any new burdens upon the people I should be inclined to oppose the motion. But I do not see, and I have looked into the matter pretty carefully, how any additional burden will be placed on the people by the establishment of a Department of Labour. I draw attention to the very subsidiary position which labour occupies in this colony. Everything connected with labour in any shape or form is relegated to a sort of sub-department, and is not considered of sufficient importance to be dealt with by a separate department by itself. I think it is quite time that labour was given some definite and recognised position. I have here the report of the Department of Labour in New Zealand, and I will read from it the first paragraph—

The unemployed difficulty has almost disappeared as a practical factor in the work of this department, thanks to the co-operative system used in the Departments of Public Works and Crown Lands. In the total number of 3,124 men passed through the books of this department, some 519 only should be considered as having been assisted as "unemployed" proper, these having been sent to private employment. The other 2,605 men were of those who wishing to be employed upon Government works as artisans or labourers, had to register under the Labour Department, and be provided with the means of transit to the locality in which their services were required. Of the 3,124 men, 1,798 were single, and 1,326 married—these latter having 5,432 persons dependent upon them.

So that there are practically no unemployed in that country at the present time, and I think we might be worse engaged than in considering how me might bring about that happy state of affairs in this country. Now, how is that state of things to be brought about? I maintain that it is to be brought about by a more intelligent direction of the forces of labour, directing it into the channels where it will be most useful, and generally extending a helping hand to it. It

seems to me that labour has been going about in this colony with its eyes shut, and it is our duty to open its eyes in order that it may be able to see as clearly as possible. That can only be done by the establishment of a department of labour, a necessity which seems to be recognised now in almost every civilised country in the world. Of course I know we can get reports. We can get sympathetic reports from sympathetic officers, and we can also get reports from clerks of petty sessions who take a delight in abusing every kind of white labour and only looking with favour upon the black man. I notice in the report of the Department of Labour in New Zealand, issued by Mr. Tregear, the secretary, we are furnished with a vast amount of information. We are told the amount of business carried on during the year, how much casual labour was employed, general statistics concerning the unemployed, decisions under the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, recommendations of the Conciliation Board, particulars concerning wages offered, exemptions under the minimum wage, and a great variety of other subjects which only a department of labour properly organised is capable of dealing with. I happened the other day to come across the report issued by the Department of Labour in France, which shows the position in which the labourer is in that country, the number of persons employed, the number seeking employment, particulars regarding disputes which had arisen during the year, what the decisions were, how many were given in favour of the employers and how many in favour of the employees, and a general summary of all labour troubles together with the way in which they were settled. I think we might with advantage go in for something of that sort in this colony, and in order to accomplish it there need be nothing more than a rearrangement of portfolios. I notice, by the way, that Mr. Peacock, the Victorian Premier, has taken upon himself the administration of the Department of Labour without any extra salary. We were told by the Secretary for Agriculture that there was hardly sufficient labour legislation in force in this colony to justify the appointment of a Minister. Well, judging by the operations which take place elsewhere, I should say that one of the principal functions of a Minister of Labour would be to initiate labour legislation, and when passed to carry it out successfully. We have in force in this colony a Shops and Factories Act, in connection with which an annual report is issued each year, and that would form an admirable foundation upon which to base a Department of Labour. If the Minister for Labour wanted advice and counsel I am sure the Labour party would be only too willing to assist him, and give him all the advice he could wish for, although the Government, I must admit, have not shown much disposition to follow the advice given to them from time to time by this party, and consequently at times have got into severe straits. On the last occasion upon which this motion was before the House we were told by the Secretary for Agriculture that it was no use initiating such a department because it would cost something, and the workers would have to pay the piper, the result being that they would be no better off. I would ask the Secretary for Agriculture what is the use of the Department of Agriculture? It costs something, and the result is that an additional burden is put upon the taxpayers.

Mr. JACKSON: Do the farmers get more for their cabbages?

Mr. AIREY: That is a very pertinent question. I do not think the argument of the hon. gentleman, if he looks into it, will stand very much examination. The hon. gentleman also told us that the raising of wages increased

the cost. The logical conclusion of that is that we should go in for the cheapest workers we can get. We should, according to the hon. gentleman's argument, exclusively employ Chinese, and by that means we should have more in our pockets, and be able to buy more commodities, and our savings would be very considerable. As a matter of fact one should hardly need to

dispute such a fallacy, because we  
[5 p.m.] all know that the raising of wages does not increase the cost of production at all. Take America, for instance. They pay the highest wages there of any country on the face of this earth, but at the same time the cost of production is smaller.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Give the rate of wages in America—you know that that is not right.

Mr. AIREY: Does the hon. gentleman think that I carry a whole volume about with me?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I say that you are entirely wrong.

Mr. AIREY: I say that the wages are very high in America, and the cost of production is very low. As a matter of fact the Americans say that they do not want cheap labour, because cheap machinery can cut cheap labour out any day in the week, but the presence of good machinery always implies an intelligent worker behind it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The lengthman in America gets 120 cents a day.

Mr. AIREY: I am not prepared to say whether that is so or not. If the hon. gentleman will give me figures I shall be very happy to check them. The Secretary for Agriculture said, and the Secretary for Railways to some extent repeated, that if you raise the wages of shoemakers, then you make it so much the worse for the other workers. Did anybody ever hear such an absurdity? If it be true, then the converse is true. If, in proportion as you raise the wages of shoemakers you make the position of other men worse, then it follows if you lower the wages of shoemakers you will make the position of other men so much the better. Of course that is an utter absurdity.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Then, if you give the shoemakers £5 a day it will not raise the price of boots.

Mr. AIREY: The hon. member, by way of variety, also told us that they were all Ministers for Labour. Well, suppose that they are all Ministers for Agriculture, and suppose they make a subdivision of their functions, we shall see how it will work out. Suppose one takes charge of wheat, and another takes the cane and the kanaka, and a third takes charge of the Chinaman and the cabbage. It is hard to see that all these branches would be properly administered, and as the hon. gentlemen opposite have never neglected the cane or the kanaka, or the cabbage and the Chinaman, they would probably put the white man in with the wheat industry, and my friend, the hon. member for Cunningham, would find that important industry in a much worse position than it was last Thursday afternoon, when it was most scandalously treated by members on his own side. We saw some indications of disruption on the other side then, and last night the hon. member for Dalby gave evidence of some further disruption.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. AIREY: Very well, Mr. Speaker, I will not proceed further with that subject. The real truth is that in this colony labour is not deemed of sufficient importance to be made a separate department of at all. In Victoria they have a separate department, in South Australia they have one, and in New Zealand they have one. Here it is not of sufficient importance. Queensland always comes behind in the rout, and, as far as I can see, Queensland will not advance until

she gets some very vigorous kick by some other power in the rear as she did recently with the Kanaka Bill. The Minister for Agriculture and the Minister for Railways all fall into the error of thinking that the institution of this Department of Labour would cause an indiscriminate rise of wages all the way round. Well, it would not mean any such thing. It would simply mean that this department would have arbitration boards, or perhaps wages boards, to settle any matters of difficulty or doubt about which there was a dispute or variance. These boards would settle the matter by looking into the question of the particular trade affected, and by examining the books connected with the particular occupation, and they would arrange things accordingly. At present on one hand you have lockouts, and, on the other hand, you have strikes, and these are the only ways they have of settling matters. Of course I do not mean to say that if a Department of Labour were established things would be very much better, or would always be better for the working class. It is a mistake to think it would only act one way. In the case of a rising market it would be better for the labourer, and in a falling market it would be worse for him. I think it would act both ways. Then the hon. member told us the other day that you cannot settle wages by legislation, and we have had the same thing echoed this afternoon.

Mr. FORSYTH : Do you think they can do it ?

Mr. AIREY : I do not think you can settle wages altogether by legislation ; but you can go a great deal in that direction. For instance, the Minister for Agriculture knows perfectly well that we have settled the wages of kanakas by legislation, and we have also settled the wages of members of this Assembly by legislation. And then we hear depreciatory references to the arbitration courts in New Zealand, because Mr. Seddon waxed a little impatient a few months ago and said something that perhaps he ought not to have said. As a matter of fact, the particular grievance appears to be that these courts are used very frequently. As far as I am concerned, I am glad to see that they are used freely. I think that is a proof of their utility, when people are glad to go to them. Previous to their institution, workers had to submit to injustices in silence. Now they have some tribunal to which they can appeal. They have some hope of remedy, and consequently they avail themselves of it, and, I am glad to say, very successfully too. I notice about a year ago the South Australian Government sent a Mr. Price to report upon the proceedings in New Zealand, and he reported that the system there was a great success ; and only the other day a similar report was made to the New South Wales Government, and I am glad to say the New South Wales Government have acted upon it and have introduced an Arbitration Bill, which was passed through the other day. I do not want to detain the House any longer, because I think nearly everything has been said that could be said. It appears that labour is in the position of being a big clumsy giant, with huge muscles, but, unfortunately, defective eyesight, and by means of these courts of arbitration we propose to supply that lack in the eyesight. The organisations of labour and the Department of Labour will be the eyes of labour, and by that means we shall tend to a more intelligent direction of affairs than we have had so far. I would like to draw attention, just for a moment or two, to one of the causes of low wages and high prices, about which nothing has been said in this Assembly. There is a great waste of labour that goes on, and a man who wants a job has to go tramping about for four or five days or weeks to find it, and the result is that when he

stops to add up his wages at the end of the year the average is very very low. On the other hand, when he does get a job he has to ask a high price for his services—he has to put a high value upon them to compensate himself for the time that he has wasted. I maintain that by the institution of a Department of Labour a great deal of that tramping about and waste of time will be saved, and we shall have a chance of getting labour at a fair price, and we shall also receive a fair price for commodities that labour produces.

Mr. STORY (*Balonne*) : I have passed a very pleasant half-hour in listening to the hon. member who has just sat down. I may say, with all sincerity, that I have listened to him with a great deal of pleasure, and I should not have spoken but for a remark which he made a few moments before he sat down. In reply to something that was said by the Minister, the hon. member for Flinders said that legislation fixes wages.

Mr. AIREY : I said not wholly.

Mr. STORY : He said that in part legislation fixes wages—that legislation fixes the wages of members of Parliament. It struck me, when the hon. member made that remark, that although legislation has done so-and-so, does legislation provide that a man can live on a certain wage? There is the difficulty. One man can live on a certain wage which would mean semi-starvation to another man. A single man who is steady, and who is saving money in order that he can make a start for himself later on, can live on a wage which a married man with a large family cannot live on—on which he could only half-clothe and half-feed his children—and has no chance of getting out of the groove he is in. This is a matter that every man must have thought of to a great extent, and I honestly think that if the Government made any attempt to regulate the wages of workers it would be a very dangerous departure. First of all, no Government could say to a man “ You must do so-and-so.” No Government can force a man to do anything that does not suit him. Of course a Government can prevent a man doing things he should not do. Supposing a Government interfered in these matters and told employers that they would have to pay their workmen certain wages, when they knew more than their instructors knew probably—having had more experience—why these employers would say, “ Well, at the rate you insist upon I don't think it is worth my while carrying on this business, and I will leave it.” That must occur in many instances. I know from my own knowledge—and I have a good deal of experience in these matters since I was a bit of a youth—that no man accepts from any other man less than he can make for himself. If he cannot start on his own account he takes work from another man at the price the other man can afford to pay. I know work that has been carried on during the last five or six years in the face of absolute loss month after month, and yet the wages of the men have not been reduced ; the usual and agreed-upon wages were always paid, although there was nothing but loss for the proprietors. Many of these employers have been employing men at an immense loss to themselves, and this will continue in a worse degree if present conditions are changed. Hon. members may easily understand that the whole of the accumulations of a man—the whole of the past savings in management—in the West, for instance—may be swept away at times, and that nothing but ruin would stare him in the face. There are many cases in which it is absolutely impossible to drop these things at once.

The SPEAKER : Order !

Mr. STORY: Supposing there is a Department for Labour, and a Minister for Labour is appointed, and that it is insisted upon that employers should give a sufficient wage, what would be the result? It would probably mean that one man would have to give wages for the benefit of the men who received them, but in many cases that would mean ruin to himself. Hon. members have talked about what has been done in New Zealand, and I may say that I have an intimate knowledge of New Zealand, and, I ask, how have the labour conditions worked there? I am speaking about localities that I know something about, for I have lived there for some time; and the printed reports show New Zealand to be a sort of Paradise. That is to some extent true, owing to the nature of the country—for it is a beautiful country—but I do not know that the Government have made it any pleasanter than the Creator first made it. I was speaking to a gentleman who had lived there for a considerable time, and he said that life there was unbearable owing to the continuous troubles over the domestic legislation that had been introduced there. I asked this gentleman about the labour conditions, and he said I will give an instance:—"There were men working on day labour at a certain cutting; the overseer was a Government employee, and after the election was over some of those men were discussing politics, and the overseer said to one 'This sort of thing won't do. You are here to work certain hours and not to talk politics.' The man replied, 'I do not know that you have much to say about that.' The overseer then said, 'I will not allow this sort of thing, and if you don't go on with your work, you can leave.'" The man did not amend his ways, so he was discharged. He had been working hard for the member for the district, who was a Labour member. He represented his case to his member, who represented it to the Minister for Labour, and the overseer received a letter from the Minister instructing him to reinstate the man pending an inquiry. I said, "What was the result?" "Well," he said, "the result was exactly what you might imagine. All discipline was destroyed in the camp at once. The man came back and he said to the overseer, 'Well, you see, it was not very bad after all. I was only a few days away.' The overseer said to him, 'Look here, you can either smoke or sit down, and do as you like. I will have nothing more to do with you, and you can wait for the inquiry.'" I believe the inquiry never came to anything. It does not follow that, if we have a Minister for Labour, such things will occur any more than they are likely to occur without one. Still, in New Zealand they have a Labour Government and a Minister for Labour, as opposed to the previous idea of a Minister for Industry. If any man feels himself aggrieved there, he can appeal direct to the Minister against his employer.

Mr. BOWMAN: Both employer and employee can do that.

Mr. STORY: The employer can appeal to the Minister against the behaviour of a man, but, if the employment does not suit the man, he had better let him go. I do not believe in compulsory arbitration at all, and I am not sure that I believe in arbitration as a system. If a man does not like his employment, it is better to let him go. You can, by threatening to take legal proceedings, make him fulfil his engagement, but you have not got the same man who stayed there voluntarily and pleasantly. I can understand such a court as this might be valuable in populous centres, where the relations between employer and employee are not so intimate as they are in the country. I have no very

great objection to this; but, if such a Minister is to be appointed, I would rather have a Minister for Industry than a Minister for Labour, because I believe a Minister for Labour will be the natural outcome of the Labour party getting into power.

Mr. BOWMAN: It might be one of the present Ministers.

Mr. STORY: I do not see exactly how it can. Without intending in any way to say anything insulting to hon. members on the other side, I may say that they come into this House to champion the cause of labour, and their sympathies are generally with labour as against the employer.

Mr. TURLEY: Not necessarily against the employer.

Mr. STORY: They say they represent labour, and that is borne out by the name and constitution of the party. When a Labour Ministry sits on the Treasury benches, a Minister for Labour will be the natural outcome.

Mr. BOWMAN: Take Mr. See, in New South Wales. He has a Minister for Labour, and he is not a Labour man.

Mr. STORY: He may not be a Labour man, but still the Labour element is very strong in the New South Wales Parliament. That may account for it.

Mr. JACKSON: It is not as strong as it is here.

Mr. STORY: It is certainly stronger than it is here.

Mr. TURLEY: No.

Mr. STORY: When the Secretary for Works was speaking he said that it was well not to go too fast in these matters, and we have made a good many strides towards improving the conditions generally. But you are not going to make men happy or alter their condition to their own advantage until they are prepared to have it altered.

Mr. BOWMAN: What about the result of factory legislation in the past?

Mr. STORY: The hon. member may get closer to that result than I can; but I have never thought that the result that is apparent on the surface is necessarily the real result. We were talking on another matter some little time ago, and we had the results of woman suffrage quoted. Those hon. members quoted what they see in the streets; but a man wants to go a lot deeper than that to find the real result. I am not going to talk the question out, and I should not have spoken at all but that that sentence of the hon. member for Flinders started a train of thought in my mind as to whether, when legislation has fixed the rate of wages, it has done very much for the men, because they cannot show that it is going to be sufficient for men to live upon.

Mr. JACKSON, in reply, said: I will not keep the House more than a minute or two while I say a few words in reply, because there is a good deal of business on the paper, and, as a general practice, members moving resolutions do not care to take up time in reply, because they are only too anxious to get a vote on the question. But I would just like to say that Ministers and members on the other side who have spoken on this motion seem to have misunderstood my position, at any rate, whatever other members on this side may have said in the course of their remarks. The position I take up is this: I do not think that the establishment of a Department of Labour, with a responsible Minister, would result in any increase of wages for the

working men of the colony. Ministers seemed to have assumed that that was the position we took up on this side.

Mr. AIREY : Wages might come down.

Mr. JACKSON : It is just possible, as the hon. member for Flinders says, that wages might come down, because wages are controlled by economic laws, and probably the Department of Labour would not have a great deal of influence over those laws. My position generally is that the establishment of a Department of Labour would undoubtedly result in better conditions for the labouring classes. It might result in better sanitary conditions for workers in factories and shops ; it might result in shorter hours ; and if those improvements were brought about I am sure it would not result in any injury to the employers. I was very sorry that the Premier stated that he would have to oppose the motion, although he gave a sort of hint that it is possible a Minister of Industry may be appointed during the recess. I do not know why the Government should be ashamed of the name of labour. I see no reason when other colonies have established Departments of Labour why we should strain at the name. The Premier, in the course of his short reply, seemed to think that I had forecasted too great an amount of work for any Minister for Labour to undertake. I do not think that I did that. I briefly indicated certain sub-departments under the control of various Ministers that I thought ought to be placed together under a Minister for Labour, if such a Minister were appointed. If I shocked the Premier with that suggestion, I might, I suppose, shock him still more if he was in the Chamber when I indicated that if a Minister for Labour is established in Queensland it might be found desirable to even place under his control the work of railway construction. The hon. member for Warrego, Mr. Bowman, referred to the report of Mr. Stanley, which shows that day labour in the construction of railways, so far as it has been tried in Queensland, has been a great success. Although it may seem a very big contract, it appears to me that if a department of labour is established under a responsible Minister work of that kind should be placed under the control of the Minister for Labour. Some hon. members may argue that it is the province of the Railway Department to control such labour, as that department has the supervision of the construction of railways, but I think it is a debatable point whether that should continue. At the present time day labour is an experiment and it has been carried out under the Secretary for Railways. But when we look at the magnitude of our railways, which have a total length of nearly 3,000 miles—a mileage which will be considerably increased in future years—we must see that they will entail a tremendous amount of work on the Minister and on the Commissioner for Railways. The Secretary for Railways and the Commissioner will in time have quite enough to do to supervise the management of railways already constructed, without undertaking the construction of new railways ; and it will probably be found in the future, when we get a Department of Labour, that functions such as I have indicated should be transferred to that department. I do not think it would require such an enormous amount of ability to supervise a department such as I have indicated. However, I do not intend to take up the time of the House at any length on this matter. I am sorry that the Government cannot see their way to accept the motion, and I hope that the appointment of a Minister for Industry will be a step in the right direction, but I should prefer to see a Minister for Labour appointed, though the former is better than nothing at all.

Question put ; and the House divided :—

AYES, 16.		
Mr. Airey		Mr. W. Hamilton
" Barber		" Hardacre
" Bowman		" Jackson
" Browne		" Jenkinson
" Burrows		" Kerr
" Dibley		" Mulcahy
" Dunsford		" Ryland
" Givens		" Turley

Tellers : Mr. Bowman and Mr. W. Hamilton.

NOES, 26.		
Mr. Armstrong		Mr. Hamran
" Barnes		" Keogh
" Bartholomew		" Leahy
" Boles		" Lord
" Bridges		" Macartney
" Cowley		" McMaster
" Curtis		" Newell
" Dairymple		" O'Connell
" Forsyth		" Petrie
" Fox		" Rutledge
" Foxton		" Stodart
" Grimes		" W. Thorn
" J. Hamilton		" Tooth

Tellers : Mr. Boles and Mr. J. Hamilton.

Resolved in the negative.

#### REPORT ON MULGRAVE CENTRAL SUGAR MILL.

On the Order of the Day being read for the resumption of the debate on Mr. Stodart's motion—

That there be laid on the table of the House the report, dated 25th September, 1901, from the manager of the Mulgrave Central Sugar Mill to the Department of Agriculture, and any correspondence connected therewith—

which stood adjourned at 7 o'clock p.m. on Friday, 1st November—

HON. A. S. COWLEY : I have no intention of delaying the passage of the motion, but I rise to say that since speaking last I have taken steps to verify all I have said. I have a considerable amount of written information on the subject, and more especially as to the character of the men who were taken up to Bundaberg to work. I can assure the House that from information which I have received the men who were taken there were a fair sample of labouring men.

Mr. BARBER : They were boys.

HON. A. S. COWLEY : No, some of them were over the age of twenty-one years.

Mr. BARBER : Most of them under eighteen.

HON. A. S. COWLEY : Some of them may have been eighteen years of age, but the great majority of them were over that age.

Mr. BARBER : I know of three who were under eighteen.

HON. A. S. COWLEY : Can the hon. member give their ages ?

Mr. BARBER : One of them told me he was under seventeen.

HON. A. S. COWLEY : My information is to the effect that none of them were under eighteen, and some of them considerably over that age. We know what boys of eighteen in this country are. Many of them are quite as far advanced and capable of doing a fair day's work as men who are more advanced in years. A great deal has been said upon this question, and I would not have spoken at all had it not been for the bitter attack made by the hon. member for Cairns upon a man whom I know as a most honourable and upright man in every respect ; not only a capable man in the particular branch of work in which he is engaged, but a thoroughly reliable, honourable, and straightforward man. I know of no man who answers that description better than Mr. Davids, the manager of the

Mulgrave Central Mill, and I have much pleasure in testifying to his capabilities and integrity.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. B. H. O'Connell, *Musgrave*): I happen to have known Mr. Davids, whose name has been mentioned during this debate, and I have very much pleasure in bearing out all that has been said by the hon. member for Herbert. Mr. Davids bore the highest possible reputation in Bundaberg for being a thoroughly capable mill manager and engineer, and I have always thought it a great pity that he was taken away from our district. Of course it was promotion to him, and one cannot resent his accepting the position of manager of the Mulgrave Mill. That he would willingly make any statement that was not absolutely true I am convinced nobody who knows him would believe. The man was altogether above such a subterfuge, and I am quite satisfied that with the knowledge he had of labour he was not at all likely to employ others than his own countrymen, or people of European descent, if he could get that labour to do the work.

Mr. GIVENS: That is not the case.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member may differ from me in my opinion, but from my personal knowledge of Mr. Davids, I can say that that is the opinion I have formed of him. I know he is a thorough business man, and I know he would not consent to employ any class of labour unless it would give him satisfaction. If the men did not do the work required of them, he would get rid of them, and would be perfectly justified in doing so. There is nothing of more importance in a sugar mill than that the work from beginning to end shall be kept going. You cannot break down one portion of it without stopping the whole of the mill, and Mr. Davids as a business would know that if he allowed the cane-carriers to cease working, the whole of the hands would be thrown idle. If the carriers are not fed with regularity, then in a very short time the mill hands would find that there was nothing for them to do, and they would have to stop work altogether. I remember many years ago, when I was immigration agent at Bundaberg, a lot of fine young men came out in one of the immigrant ships and were engaged by the owners of Fairymead Plantation at £1 5s. a week, which was really the wage paid to old and experienced hands in the district. The practice in those days was to give newcomers a smaller wage than the men who had had experience in the mill. In this case, however, Messrs. Young, of Fairymead, did not think it desirable that these men should be paid a less wage than the old hands. They were a healthy lot of men, capable of doing any amount of work, and as I say, they were given the full rate of wages. Well, the result was something very similar to what has taken place at the Mulgrave mill.

Mr. GIVENS: How do the other central mills work?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am quoting a case in which white labour was faced with the duty of feeding the carrier, and to prove that it is not such an easy job as some people seem to think. After a short period these men refused to go on with the work. Whether it was too hard, or whether it was distasteful, or whatever may be the reason, I do not know; but the fact remains that these men, who were a fine, capable body of young fellows, refused to continue the work of loading the carriers. Now, what took place at the Mulgrave mill? Men were employed by contract. They found that the work was so arduous and distasteful that they would not carry it on. If there is anything which ought to induce men to undertake distasteful

work it should be the contract system, because they get the full benefit of their efforts during the term of their work. They are in a very different position to men who are engaged on day labour. I understand from the Secretary for Agriculture that since this matter has been brought under the notice of the House letters have been written to the manager of the Mulgrave Central Mill asking him as far as he can to do the work about the mill by means of white day labour. That the employment of coloured aliens should be done away with so far as these central mills are concerned there is not the slightest doubt. I remember very well that when the Bill was put through it was the expressed opinion and desire of both sides of the House that the work at the central mills should be done by white labour. I do not go back on my expression of opinion then, because I think it is undoubtedly desirable that the work in the mills subsidised by the State should be done as far as possible by white labour. The Minister for Agriculture, I understood, has written again to the manager of this mill pointing this out, and I think Mr. Davids will be thoroughly in accord with it; but he is bound to keep his mill going, otherwise he will have to bring the whole thing to a standstill. Unless he can get the cane crushed he cannot keep the mill going; and the question is whether it is not better that he should employ any kind of labour—Hindoo, Chinese, Japanese, or whatever class of labour may be at hand—to keep the mill going in order to keep the remainder of the hands employed in it occupied than he should stop. The men employed in the mill, of course, are Europeans. If the cane carrier cannot be served by white men, and it can be served by Hindoos or Chinamen, then I think it should be served, and the mill should not be stopped, and the whole of the white men, who are inside of the mill, lose their employment for the time being.

Mr. GIVENS: Every other mill in Queensland can keep going with white labour.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The farmers in the district also would be the losers by the stoppage of the mill, because their cane would not be taken off, and the hon. member for Cairns knows very well that in his district there are a large number of people who, owing to the climate, I suppose, must get their cane off at a certain period of the year, because if they wait until the wet season, they cannot possibly get it off, and it will have to go until next year. It is not like it is in the Southern portions of Queensland, where the cane will stand quite easily for twelve months; but up there, owing to the heavy rainfall, I understand cane is very much deteriorated. So far as I can learn, if cane is allowed to stand for over a year in the Cairns district, it is likely to be very much damaged; it is not likely to be of very much value at the next crushing. You must take into consideration whether you would sooner stop the mill being worked, or carry on with any labour you could get, in order that the crops may be taken off, that the men in the mill may continue to get their wages, and the business of the mill be carried on as successfully as possible. In my own district I have known friction to take place with regard to this question of labour at the carriers; and where the mills are in a particular district, where labour cannot be easily obtained, they have had to put on kanakas or anybody they could possibly get, temporarily, pending sending into the town and getting someone else. This has caused a lot of friction.

Mr. GIVENS: They were not put on temporarily at Cairns at the Mulgrave Mill.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: As far as I can understand, these men were put on as a substitute for a gang of white men who failed to carry out their arrangements, and there

was no available labour in the district. I do not wish to prevent the motion being carried, and I think I have now said all I wish to say.

Mr. NEWELL (*Woothakata*): I have got here a statement made by a contractor named August Johnson, who is pretty well known in the Mulgrave, and is a man you can rely upon. He was a contractor for supplying cane to the carrier.

Mr. BARBER: It is one of those statements faked up for the occasion.

Mr. NEWELL: I think the hon. member for Bundaberg must know that I am not in the habit of getting up with any faked-up statement about this or anything else.

Mr. BARBER: Why, it has been put into your hands to read.

Mr. NEWELL: I will just read this. There is not much time, and, if hon. members will permit me, I will read as much as time will permit—

At the commencement of the season the Mulgrave Mill Company called tenders for the feeding of the cane carrier.

Several tenders were received by them, amongst which myself and another only complied with the terms of the specification, the other being a Japanese.

The tender was given to me, and I commenced work at the start of the mill.

The wages I paid to my men at first was 22s. 6d. per week, and, later on, 25s. per week and food of the very best found; the value of the food I placed at 10s. per week.

On the sixth day after starting I asked to be relieved of my contract, as I found it utterly impossible to get white men to do the work. During that time eleven men have thrown up their work.

The mill gave me every assistance, supplying me with men whenever I was short of labour, even to making exchanges of qualified mill hands, with inconvenience to themselves.

During these six days the feeding of the carrier was very irregular, and was the cause of constant complaint from the mill authorities.

In some cases some of the men employed by me only worked for a few minutes.

I asked the manager to endeavour to procure men from Cairns, without result, although a few men have turned up the conditions have not altered.

Finally, on the nights of the 9th and 10th July, 1901, I was compelled to ask the manager to supply any available labour, as I could not secure any Europeans, although I searched the neighbouring hotels. He being short of Europeans, had to send to the field for a gang of Indians.

On the ninth morning I reported to the manager that I could not get reliable white men and would have to fall back on aliens.

He, however, advised me to struggle on with Europeans, and that he would assist me as much as possible.

By this time I was compelled to come to the conclusion that I could not carry on my contract, and therefore asked the manager to release me of same as soon as possible, which he did on the eleventh evening.

AUGUST JOHNSON,

Contractor for Cane Carrier.

11th July, 1901.

*At 7 o'clock the House, in accordance with Sessional Order, proceeded with Government business.*

## LOCAL AUTHORITIES BILL.

### COMMITTEE.

Clauses 1, 2, and 3 put and passed.

Mr. RYLAND (*Gympie*): As he had mentioned on the second reading, he wished subsection 2 of clause 13 of the Valuation and Rating Act of 1890 to be repealed, with a view of inserting the following subsection:—

In the case of land held under goldmining lease, the value of the land shall be deemed to be a sum equal to twenty times the amount of the annual rent payable under the lease at the time when the valuation is made, together with one-half of the value of the buildings thereon, or used for or in connection therewith, but without regard to the value of any other improvements made or work done upon the land, and without regard

to any metals or minerals contained or supposed to be contained in it.

He objected to the existing provision because it was an injustice in connection with goldmining tenures. If subsection 2 was omitted there would be no provision made as to goldmining leases, and they would have to be valued as freeholds. Subsection 1 of clause 13 read—

Except as hereinafter otherwise provided, the value of any rateable land shall be estimated at the fair average value of unimproved land of the same quality held in fee-simple in the same neighbourhood.

This section would then apply to residence areas and homestead areas, and they would be valued as if they were held in fee-simple. There would be no distinction between mining tenures and freehold tenures. He might say that all the members of the Royal Commission which sat in 1896 to inquire into local government matters had agreed to his proposal. After hearing evidence on goldfields they came to the conclusion that the present system of rating was most unjust. When the Mining Bill was going through committee in 1898 a clause was inserted placing all kinds of holdings on goldfields on the same footing as lands held in fee-simple, but it was omitted in the other Chamber on the ground that a Mining Bill was not the proper place to deal with valuations. When the Bill came back to the Assembly the present Premier moved that the amendment of the clause be agreed to, and, in reply to the hon. member for Kennedy, he stated that the question would be dealt with in the Local Government Bill which would be introduced the following session. That was three years ago, and the people on the goldfields were still suffering under this injustice. When the Mining Bill was going through, the municipal council of Gympie sent down a deputation to interview the Secretary for Mines, but the night before the interview was to take place the Assembly inserted the clause. It was fully intended at that time to remove the anomaly, and it was certainly not right that the goldfields tenures should be penalised.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. F. G. Foxton, *Carnarvon*): He stated on the second reading that the Government were not prepared to accept amendments involving new principles. He did not object to an amendment on any clause in the Bill, or, possibly, additional clauses in the way of modification of clauses which at present found a place in the Bill; but this clause introduced an entirely new principle, and therefore he could not accept it. He was not going into the merits of the clause for that reason. It opened up the whole question of valuations, because, if the clause were admitted, it would lead to several other clauses being proposed which were also dealt with in the report of the Royal Commission affecting other classes of tenure. It would open up the valuation of agricultural farms, grazing farms, agricultural purchase lands, and other lands. It would open up one of the largest questions, which would have to be dealt with ultimately whenever a comprehensive Local Government Bill was introduced, and that discussion alone would certainly occupy the remainder of this session. For those reasons he was not prepared to discuss the merits of the new clause, and he would recommend the hon. member to withdraw it. If he did not, he hoped the Committee would negative the clause.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Leahy, *Bulloo*) asked for the ruling of the Chairman as to whether the new clause were in order. The title of the Bill was "A Bill to amend the laws relating to local authorities in certain particulars." Those certain particulars were given in the Bill, and whatever might be said in favour of the new

clause, he submitted that it was not in order, inasmuch as it introduced a new principle. He might say that the intention in framing the Bill as it stood was that no new principles should be introduced into it.

The CHAIRMAN: Before I put the new clause to the Committee I did not observe that the provisions of this Bill were limited to certain particulars which are set down in the Bill. The new clause evidently introduces a new principle in regard to valuation, and I am of opinion that it is not in order to insert it in this Bill.

Mr. BROWNE (*Croydon*): Clause 4 deals with valuation and rating, so that the new clause was not a new principle at all.

On clause 4, as follows:—

Section twenty-nine of the Valuation and Rating Act of 1890 is repealed, and the following section is inserted in lieu thereof:—

No general rate made in any one year shall exceed the amount of three pence in the pound of the value of the rateable land upon which it is made.

Mr. BROWNE: The Chairman had just ruled that anything dealing with the Valuation and Rating Act was outside the four corners of this Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No; anything which deals with principles not contained in the Bill.

Mr. BROWNE: The Secretary for Railways raised a point of order to the effect that the new clause was introducing a new principle into the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: It is rather late now to discuss the point of order. I have stated a new clause.

Mr. BROWNE: He was speaking on clause 4, which distinctly amended the Valuation and Rating Act of 1890. The hon. member for Gympie had moved a new clause, which was ruled out of order.

The HOME SECRETARY: It was an amendment with regard to a principle not contained in this Bill.

Mr. BROWNE: Clause 4 distinctly said, "Section 29 of the Valuation and Rating Act of 1890 is repealed, and the following section is inserted in lieu thereof." That was one of the principles of the Bill, and it altered the Valuation and Rating Act of 1890. The present Premier and Secretary for Mines pledged his word in 1898 that in the very first Bill which was introduced amending the Local Government Act this clause should be inserted. That was a promise made to the whole mining community, and it had been broken by the Secretary for Railways raising a point of order, very likely for purposes of his own, which the Committee would recognise. He should like to know if clause 4 were in order, seeing that the new clause proposed by the hon. member for Gympie had been ruled out of order.

The PREMIER (Hon. R. Philp, *Townsville*): Clause 4 did not alter the principle of the valuation at all. It only altered the rating, which was an entirely different thing from that proposed by the hon. member for Gympie.

The CHAIRMAN: I understood the leader of the Opposition to ask me whether clause 4 was in order. Of course it is in order, because it is one of the particulars of the Bill which was remitted by the House to the Committee for consideration.

Mr. PLUNKETT (*Albert*) thought that 3d. in the £ was too high a maximum rate to allow, and he moved that the word "three" be omitted with the view of inserting the word "two."

Mr. FOGARTY (*Drayton and Toowoomba*) was in perfect sympathy with the [7:30 p.m.] amendment. Why should the local authorities be saddled with an additional 33 per cent. on existing rates? It was

well known that persons got on to boards who had no permanent interest in the locality, and it was immaterial to them what debts they incurred. They might create a fictitious term of prosperity, but the unfortunate freeholders would have to bear the burden. Even at the present time the maximum of 2d. was a very considerable tax upon those owning property, and he was surprised at the Government attempting to place an additional 33 per cent. burden upon the people. There was certainly no necessity for it at the present time. If it was done at all, it should have been done in the early days when the higher endowment was received. The Government now proposed it at the eleventh hour without giving any additional financial assistance to the local bodies, and the next thing they would be doing would be to stop the small pitance now given in the shape of endowment. What with the maximum of 3d., and special sanitary, water, and lighting rates, it would be much better for the freeholders to hand over their properties to the local bodies altogether. He hoped the amendment would be carried.

Hon. A. S. COWLEY: There is no necessity for the amendment. Negative the clause.

Mr. BARTHOLOMEW (*Maryborough*): Like the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba, he also objected to the clause, and he had drafted an amendment which he thought might meet the views of the Committee. He proposed that the maximum in the case of municipalities should be 2½d. in the £, and in the case of divisions 2d. in the £. In the case of municipalities that would be an increase of one-quarter, and in divisional boards of one-third. No matter how large the rate which local authorities were allowed to levy, it was generally found that they would go up to the maximum. That was so in the town he came from; and he thought if municipalities had their rating powers increased by one-fourth, and divisional boards by one-third, it would be a very fair advance. He hoped the member for Albert would accept this suggested amendment in lieu of that which had been moved.

HON. G. THORN (*Fassifern*) agreed with the proposal of the hon. member for Albert. He did not believe in increasing the rate either in municipalities or divisional boards. He would much rather reduce the rate. He did not believe in giving the local authorities power to tax the settled population of the colony to that extent, and he was astonished at the Government bringing down a clause like the one under discussion. The freeholders of the colony would be wiped out of existence. The intention of the Government was very plain to his mind. It seemed to him they were giving that increased rating power so that they could take away the endowment altogether. Municipalities, shire councils, and divisional boards, as pointed out by the hon. member for Toowoomba, had not only the power to levy a general rate, but special rates in the shape of loan rates, lighting rates, health rates, sanitary and water rates, and the additional power proposed to be conferred upon them now would bring the rate up to 7d. or 8d. in the £. He knew of one small municipality which rated up to 9d. in the £. If he had his way he would reduce the rating power and compel the Government to pay out of the consolidated revenue a fixed subsidy of £ for £. It was never intended that the endowment should be done away with. It was always understood that municipalities and divisional boards should get an endowment of £ for £, and the Divisional Boards Act would never have passed into law if it had been contemplated to reduce the endowment below £ for £. The Government of the day promised that the main roads as well as the bridges should be kept in

order, as they were in Victoria, but that arrangement had been departed from. He was astonished at any hon. member suggesting a compromise. He did not own any property himself, but he would like to see fair play. At times people secured positions on boards who made ducks and drakes of the money collected. They brought ruin and stagnation to the districts, and drove property owners out of the colony. He knew of a case in which the rating had been so excessive that the progress of the town had been absolutely blocked.

Mr. STEPHENS (*Brisbane South*) was rather surprised at the member for Albert moving a reduction in the amount. He thought the corner of the House in which the hon. member sat was the democratic corner, and that hon. members sitting there were prepared to tax property; but it seemed that if they owned a little property themselves they were as conservative as other people, and liked small rates. This matter of rating was not what it appeared on the face of it. One would think, by what hon. members said, that a local authority could not rate up to 3d. in the £; but, if he was made chairman of any local body, he would undertake to rate up to 1s. 6d. in the £ under the existing law. All the clause said was that the Government would give endowment upon more rates than they had hitherto been endowing. At present they only gave endowment up to 2d. in municipalities and 1½d. in divisions. Now they would come along and say, "We will rate you 3d. all round." They could still impose a separate and special rate for any amount they liked, and there was nothing to stop them from imposing a special rate for any purpose that they liked. The only effect of this clause would be that the Government would allow endowment upon a higher rate. So far as the general rating powers of local bodies were concerned, he could not see that it would make any difference at all.

Mr. FOX (*Normanby*) pointed out that as the ratepayers elected the members of the boards, and as the members would act according to circumstances in fixing their rates, this clause would make very little difference. They could strike any rate they pleased. He did not know whether it mattered very much about this clause standing in the Bill as it was, but if it was to be amended he preferred the amendment suggested by the hon. member for Maryborough. The clause only increased the powers of the boards; it did not say they were to exercise those powers. It left the matter entirely in their own discretion, and as they taxed themselves so would the Government subsidise them.

Mr. DIBLEY (*Woolloongabba*) was astonished at the proposal of the hon. member for Albert to omit 3d. with a view to inserting 2d., because that really meant that the divisional boards would have the power to increase their rating by ½d. in the £; but the towns would not have any increased rating power at all. He thought the hon. member would do well to withdraw the amendment. He did not think it mattered very much, because if the municipalities were short of money they could always increase their values, and that would mean more rates. He intended to vote for the clause in the Bill; but at the same time he did not think there was much in it, because municipalities and divisional boards had the matter in their own hands.

Mr. FOGARTY: He was astonished at the argument of the hon. member for Woolloongabba when he said that if more rates were required the values should be increased. He forgot that the value was made on oath, and that the valuator had to make a solemn declaration.

The HOME SECRETARY: As to his opinion.

Mr. FOGARTY: The valuator had to make a declaration that to the best of his knowledge the value of the property which he gave was its

actual cash price. He thought the hon. member for Albert had made a mistake. He understood the hon. member, in moving the amendment, to say that it was his intention to leave the rating power as it was at present—that was, 1½d. for divisional boards and 2d. for municipalities and shire councils.

The HOME SECRETARY: The way to do that is simply to negative this clause.

Mr. FOGARTY: He did not think they had sufficient voting power to negative the clause. So far as the special pleading of the hon. member for Brisbane South, when he said that if they gave additional rating power the local authorities would in consequence get additional endowment, was concerned, the hon. member knew very well that this was the thin end of the wedge to remove endowment altogether. The hon. member was quite sensible of that fact; and why he should make such an assertion as this, he was quite at a loss to understand. He thought the local authorities had sufficient rating power at the present time. It was well known that it was the intention of the Government, no matter what Government might be in power, that at no distant date the endowment would be withdrawn altogether. It would be very wrong if it was withdrawn, and, notwithstanding the protests which were made by himself and others, who had the true interests of local authorities at heart, he was sadly afraid that their exertions would be in vain. It was quite possible for a local body to levy a rate up to 2s. 6d. in the £, but then the burden of the taxpayers would become too great, and in that case the Government might step in and attempt to collect the excessive rate, and the only remedy would be a release by this House, and that would mean a loss to the general taxpayers. He knew of one case where a man owned a small allotment, and he was called upon to pay £14 and some shillings in rates for the privilege of living in that municipality. Surely that was ample taxation! He hoped the hon. member would alter his amendment in the way he (Mr. Fogarty) had indicated.

Mr. STEPHENSON (*Ipswich*): If the argument of the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba was carried to its logical conclusion, it would have precisely the opposite effect to that he intended it should have. The hon. member argued against any increase on the maximum amount in the general rate and in favour of the amendment moved by the hon. member for Albert, and he gave the extraordinary reason for supporting the amendment that it was well known that the Government endowment was about to be abolished, and therefore they should reduce the maximum amount. If the hon. member took the trouble to look at the matter dispassionately, he would see that his action would not advance the cause of local authorities. He did not think this clause was nearly so bad as it appeared to be on the face of it. If the maximum amount of rates was raised, the ratepayers would be the gainers. It was all very well to cut down the maximum rate to 2d. or 1½d., but it was well known that local authorities were very clever in devising all sorts of rates—such as lighting, sanitary, and other rates—by which ratepayers might have to pay 6d., 7d., 8d., or 9d. in the £. Was it not better that the ratepayers should know what they were liable to pay? If the rate was increased to 4d., the ratepayers would be the absolute gainers, as the Government subsidy would be paid on the increased amount. Personally he had not had time to consult members of local boards or municipalities; but he felt inclined to move an amendment that the amount should be increased to 4d. As far as he could gather, the bulk of the hon. members who had spoken were members of municipal councils, and

it was admitted that it was not advisable to put a very heavy rate on shires and divisions; but they should have regard to the interests of the ratepayers as well as to the interests of the local authorities.

Mr. BROWNE: He was very much of the same opinion as the hon. member for Woolloomgatta, and intended to vote for the clause as it stood. Hon. members had talked about high and low rates, but old members of boards knew what had been done and what was being done. He remembered a big conference of local authorities being held in Brisbane six years ago, at which he and other hon. members attended, and there were all sorts of schemes put forward with regard to making differential rates to remedy the injustices which existed. One suggestion was that the Government subsidy should be paid on the maximum amount raised. He could not agree with what the hon. member for Ipswich had said about the taxpayers being the gainers if the rates were increased.

HON. G. THORN: Neither the hon. member for South Brisbane nor the hon. member for

Ipswich knew what they were talking about. There could be no increase in the endowment, because

there was no money in the Treasury for the purpose. It was nonsense to say that municipalities would get a higher endowment if the rate was raised to 3d., and the matter might be left to be dealt with when a comprehensive Local Government Bill was introduced. He rose principally to say that he would like to hear the views of the junior member for Gympie, Mr. Mulcahy, who had been mayor of Gympie for some time. His opinion would be just as valuable as that of the mayor of South Brisbane, although he admitted that the borough of South Brisbane was not badly managed. At the same time, they did not rate up to the maximum in South Brisbane.

Mr. STEPHENS: Yes—2d.

HON. G. THORN: It had only been raised to 2d. very lately. He hoped that the amendment would be withdrawn and that the clause would be negatived, leaving the rating at 2d. in the case of municipalities and shires, and 1½d. in the case of divisional boards.

Mr. FOGARTY: It would have been much better if the hon. member for Ipswich had refrained from addressing the Committee, seeing that he had no knowledge of the question under consideration. He had never heard a more illogical speech than that delivered by the hon. member.

Mr. STEPHENSON: Oh, yes. Your own knocks spots off it.

Mr. FOGARTY: The hon. member clearly demonstrated to the Committee that he knew no more of local government than he knew of electricity. The reason why he anticipated the complete withdrawal of the endowment was his knowledge of the past. When local government was first introduced, assistance was given by the Government to the extent of £2 for every £1 raised by divisional boards by way of rates, and that £2 had dwindled down—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I must remind the hon. member that the question of endowment is not before the Committee. The question before the Committee is the omission of the word "three."

Mr. FOGARTY: The hon. member for South Brisbane had pointed out, as a reason why the 3d. proposal should be accepted, that it would carry additional endowment. Surely, if the hon. member was allowed the privilege of discussing the matter of endowment, an equal privilege would be accorded to him! The £2 had dwindled down to 6s. 8d., or to even less than that, and it was quite possible that the endowment would be withdrawn entirely.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. gentleman will confine himself to the question before the Committee.

Mr. FOGARTY respectfully submitted that he had never wandered one iota from the question. He was simply replying to statements which had been made. He believed that it was proposed to increase the maximum rate to 3d., with a view to putting a stop to financial assistance being granted by the Treasury. He trusted that the hon. member for Albert, with the permission of the Committee, would amend his amendment in the direction of giving relief to divisional boards as well as to municipalities and shires. In the event of the amendment being defeated they might rely on another attempt being made to do justice all round.

Mr. CURTIS (*Rockhampton*): The reduction proposed by the hon. member for Albert would be too great, but the suggestion of the hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Bartholomew, would be a reasonable compromise. It would be an increase of 25 per cent. in the case of municipalities, and 33½ per cent. in the case of divisional boards, and that would be a sufficient increase in taxation to put upon property at the present moment. He knew from personal experience that property-owners and the tenants of property-owners were not in a position to bear any largely increased burden of taxation, owing to the depreciation in the value of property. He hoped that this depreciation in value was only temporary, but he was afraid that it would be accentuated if higher rates were levied. The Government had unfortunately found it necessary to reduce the endowment to local authorities. That was one of the results of the incorporation of this State in the Commonwealth at the present time, and they would find that they would have to pay for their whistle, as before very long they would probably have to go in for taxation of another kind. He should suggest to the hon. member for Albert that he withdraw his amendment in favour of the amendment of the hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Bartholomew.

Mr. SMITH (*Bowen*) doubted whether there had been any general desire on the part of local authorities for increased powers of taxation. If the object in making this proposal was to give relief to local authorities which were far removed from centres of population, the best way to accomplish that object would be to introduce a scheme of differential endowment. Giving local authorities increased powers of rating would not increase the Government endowment. There was a certain sum placed on the Estimates every year as endowment to municipalities and divisional boards, and what was wanted was a larger grant from the general revenue as endowment to be divided proportionately among all the local authorities of the colony, rather than an increased power of rating. Of course, it was not compulsory that local authorities should rate up to 3d. in the £—it was only permissive—but he contended that the power to levy this higher rate would enable the rich municipalities especially to absorb a greater amount of the Government endowment than they were entitled to, and that was unfair to the poorer divisional boards in the outside districts of the colony which could not afford to levy a high rate. He should support the amendment of the hon. member for Maryborough.

Mr. KEOGH (*Rosewood*): From the views which had already been expressed by different members who had addressed the Committee, he thought it would be better for the hon. member for Albert to withdraw his amendment. The consensus of opinion among outside people was decidedly in favour of an endowment to municipalities, and particularly to divisional boards, which had

certainly not been treated as they should have been. Divisional boards had not only to maintain their own roads, but had to keep any number of roads in the colony which were driven over by a number of people who did not reside within the division, and they should therefore be granted a higher subsidy.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is now addressing himself to the question of endowment. The question before the Committee is the omission of the word "three" with the view to inserting the word "two."

Mr. KEOGH: He had no doubt that the Government, at the time they contemplated reducing the subsidy to municipalities and divisional boards, were looking at the large deficit of £500,000. But, seeing that they had recently got news of such a satisfactory contribution from the Imperial Government as £126,000, he thought the Government could not do better than devote that to the endowment of local bodies, especially as the Premier said that, as far he knew, there was no call upon the Imperial Government to refund the large expenditure undertaken on account of the brave fellows who went to fight in South Africa.

The CHAIRMAN: I would ask the hon. member to address himself to the question before the Committee.

Mr. KEOGH: If he had transgressed he apologised. He wished merely to say that that sum of £126,000 could not be devoted to a better purpose than that which he suggested.

The CHAIRMAN: I again ask the hon. gentleman to confine himself to the question before the Committee.

Mr. KEOGH said he had nothing further to say, and he hoped the Government would adopt the suggestion he had made.

Mr. HARDACRE (*Leichhardt*): The clause was carrying out the financial policy of the Government so far as endowments were concerned, and so far as making the municipalities and divisional boards contribute something to the deficit which had been incurred. He pointed out, when they were discussing that question, that the increased rate was going to fall more heavily on the outside districts than upon the centres of population, and that would be pretty evident to everyone who remembered that the maximum allowed in municipalities was 2d. and the maximum in divisions and shires 1½d. Now it was proposed to make a uniform general maximum of 3d., and as they had made a distinction in the past he did not see why that distinction should not be continued.

Mr. SMITH: We will get a larger endowment.

Mr. HARDACRE: No, he differed from the hon. member. He did not think it was going to affect local authorities from that point of view, because while an increased maximum was being fixed, yet it would never be levied in municipalities.

Mr. RYLAND: Yes, Gympie levies 4d. in the £ as separate rates.

Mr. HARDACRE: He was speaking of general rates.

Mr. MCMASTER: The general rate is 2d. in South Brisbane.

Mr. HARDACRE: If members would look over the list they would find that the rating amounted to about 1d. in the £, and in some places as low as ½d. Whilst the rate would fall to a large extent on the unimproved value of freehold, yet there was another kind of land on which the rate would fall. It fell on leasehold not assessed on the unimproved value, but assessed in an arbitrary way at twenty times the annual rent. An agricultural farm paying 3d. an acre, and paying in rates 3d. in the £, would have to pay half as much again as it was now paying to the Crown. The land itself had

really no unimproved value such as was given to land near a township. It might be a long way from a railway or township, and yet because it paid 3d. an acre it would have an artificial assessment value of 5s., which would mean another 1½d. per acre.

Mr. TOLMIE: 3d. in the £ is only ¾d. in 5s.

Mr. HARDACRE: Yes, the hon. member was right. When he took 3d. an acre, that was rather under the average value of agricultural farms. In that way the burden would fall very heavily on the country districts—much more so than upon the towns. They had practically adopted a principle that in municipalities, which consisted mostly of freehold, the maximum general rate should be more than in the country districts, where a large proportion of the rates fell upon land leased from the Crown. He thought they ought to adhere to that distinction. If there was going to be a higher maximum rate at all, the rating should be increased to a higher amount in municipalities than in divisions.

Mr. STEPHENS: That is not what you want.

Mr. HARDACRE: Yes it was. If they were going to increase the rating, they should increase it more in one case than in another.

Mr. RYLAND: We are not increasing rating.

Mr. HARDACRE: Yes, they were increasing the maximum rate from 1½d. to 3d. in the case of divisional boards, and from 2d. to 3d. in the case of municipalities. If they increased it by a 1d. in each case, that would mean 3d. in the case of municipalities, and not more than 2½d. in the case of divisional boards.

Mr. PLUNKETT: After listening to the hon. member for South Brisbane, it seemed to

him that this clause was not necessary at all, because it appeared that they had the power to strike any rate they chose. If the amendment moved by the hon. member for Maryborough was generally more acceptable to the Chamber, that was to fix the rating for municipalities at 2½d., and for divisional boards at 2d., he was prepared to withdraw his amendment. To prevent any further discussion, and with the consent of the House, he would withdraw his amendment in favour of the amendment of the hon. member for Maryborough.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. BARTHOLOMEW moved, after the word "shall" on line 4, the words—"exceed the amount of 3d. in the £ of the value of the rateable land upon which it is made"—be omitted, with a view to inserting—

In the case of municipalities not exceed the amount of 2½d. in the £ on the value of the rateable land upon which it is made, and no such rate made in any one year, shall, in the case of divisions, exceed 2d. in the £ of such value.

Mr. STEPHENS thought it would be much better, in the interests of the outlying districts, if they allowed the rates to be uniform in both places. This Bill was introduced to enable the divisional boardsmen and the aldermen to govern these places, and if they allowed the municipalities to rate up to 2½d. and the divisional boards to rate only up to 2d., they would infer that the requirements of the towns were greater than those of the country. If they admitted that principle, when the time came to divide the amount of the subsidy provided for local authorities it would be necessary, in order to be logical, to apportion the greater amount of endowment to the towns. He did not think that that was what the country members wanted at all. He advised the country members, if they wanted an equal share in the endowment, or a little more than the towns, to take up the position that their requirements were, at any rate, as great as those of the towns. To do that, they must claim the

right to rate as high as the municipalities. The fact that the clause gave them that power did not mean that they must use it. It simply meant that they might use it if they chose.

Mr. W. THORN (*Aubigny*): He could not agree with the remark of the hon. member for South Brisbane when he said that if the municipalities had greater rating power than the divisional boards they would get a greater amount of endowment. He must bear in mind that Brisbane had always had the lion's share of the subsidy. If he went out into the country where new lands had been thrown open by the Government he would find that the divisional boards got only very small rates from the homestead selectors. In his opinion the divisional boards should get double the subsidy that the municipalities received. If they allowed the divisional boards to tax up to the same extent as the municipalities they would be expected to use their rating power, and if they went to the Home Secretary for a loan they would be asked if they were rating up to the full amount, and if they were not they would be told to exhaust their own means before they came to the Government.

Mr. RYLAND pointed out that the clause did not make it imperative to strike this rate. It only gave the local authorities the power to strike such a rate should they think it necessary to meet their requirements. He did not think they should be curtailed at all. They should be allowed to strike whatever rate they liked, and if the ratepayers did not approve of the conduct of their representatives on the different bodies, they could elect some other members in their places when the election time came round. His views ran on the same lines as those of the hon. member for South Brisbane. He thought it was altogether in favour of the outside districts that they should be allowed to strike a higher rate, and in that way get greater endowment. At the present time endowment was only given to municipalities up to the first 2d. in the £, and to divisional boards to the first 1½d. All the rates above that received no endowment at all. If they were allowed a higher limit it followed, of course, that they would get more endowment. He thought that the hon. member for Albert was going against the interests of his constituents in this matter. In Nerang they had a 1½d. general rate, but in order to get revenue to meet their requirements they had to pile up other rates to 4½d. in the £, and they only got endowment upon 1½d. If this Bill went through they would get the endowment on 3d.—twice the amount that they got under the present Act. And still the hon. member stood up in his place in the House and opposed that which was going to give a double amount of endowment to this local authority than it received last year. He wanted to see local authorities that were in destitution, and had to strike those high rates, get endowment on the full volume of the rate, and not be treated as they were in Gympie. The Granville Divisional Board, the Widgee Divisional Board, and the Clermont Municipality were in very much the same position. Under the Bill they could have struck a 3d. rate and got endowment on it. If hon. gentlemen would only look at this question in a rational way, they would not reduce the amount as proposed in the amendment. He was speaking for the poor local authorities which had been deprived of their rights in the past, and the amount had been scooped by municipalities such as North Brisbane and South Brisbane and other portions of the colony which should not have got any endowment at all.

Mr. ARMSTRONG (*Lockyer*): The argument of the hon. member for South Brisbane, that to biological the rate should be the same in both the

municipalities and the country districts, was a sort of thing that might be useful to draw a red herring across the trail of South Brisbane, but was absolutely useless in this Chamber. If the hon. gentleman had any knowledge of the working of local government he knew that endowment was given in country districts on the capital value in the first place, and on a very much larger area of Crown land for the purpose of opening up roads and otherwise making it fit for settlement. That was one of the reasons why, if the State could give a larger amount of endowment to one body rather than the other, it should be given to divisional boards. He said that distinctly, speaking for a district which he had a fair knowledge of—he had been chairman of the board for some years. The bulk of the revenue raised by farmers in his district had been expended in making roads on Crown lands so as to be suitable for close settlement and improving the conditions of their industry, and the Stanley district was in the same position. The bulk of Queensland, after all, was State land, as shown by the fact that out of 427,000,000 acres there were 410,000,000 acres of Crown lands, and it was to improve the roads in those lands that they were given a larger endowment.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is wandering away from the subject.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: If an hon. member was allowed to make certain statements, surely hon. members should be allowed to refute them. The great difficulty was that country divisional boards and town and city municipalities had been treated differently. If a certain amount of rating was to be allowed to cover the requirements in certain municipalities, it should be laid down what were special services and what were not. If the interest and redemption in the case of municipalities or divisional boards was going to be paid out of revenue, the amount of the rates would have to be increased to the maximum amount mentioned by the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Stephenson. There was where the screw had been loose in the past in these matters. It was never contemplated that the amount raised for special purposes should be endowed by the Government. In country districts, before a special rate was struck for special purposes, they had to take a vote of the people interested; but it was different in towns. They had heard objection taken to the large amount of endowment given to metropolitan municipalities, and then they had paid for special services out of revenue, and they had received endowment on that. Let the local authorities tax themselves to the amount of 3d., or whatever amount was decided upon.

Mr. FORSYTH (*Carpentaria*): The arguments of the hon. member for Gympie were perfectly sound. There was not the slightest doubt that, if they rated on the basis of 3d., they would get the benefit in the endowment, while, if the local authorities reduced their rates, they would have to impose special rates in order to get the revenue they required, and on those special rates they received no endowment. He had always advocated a differential rate in favour of the outside boards, because, as a rule, the money spent in municipalities was entirely in connection with private property, while out in the country the divisional boards had to spend their revenue in making roads and bridges almost entirely for the benefit of Crown lands. That was a remarkably good reason why divisional boards should get more endowment than municipalities.

The HOME SECRETARY: When you speak of a differential rate, you mean a differential endowment?

Mr. FORSYTH meant a higher rate of endowment.

The HOME SECRETARY : That is not before the Committee.

Mr. FORSYTH : The question had been raised. In any case, he intended to adhere to the original proposal.

Mr. McMASTER (*Fortitude Valley*) was quite sure that the Government were laughing quietly in their sleeves at some of the arguments that had been used. The statements of the hon. member for Gympie and the hon. member for Ipswich should open the eyes of other hon. members as to what their intentions were if the endowment was reduced. The hon. member for Gympie complained bitterly every opportunity he had that Gympie was only levying 2d. and that they were only receiving endowment on that 2d., while other municipalities were getting a much larger endowment. Probably he would get the endowment if it was paid on the 3d., but to his mind this was the thin end of the wedge for the abolition of the endowment altogether.

Mr. ARMSTRONG : There is no Government ever game to do it.

Mr. McMASTER : They could not take money out of the Treasury unless it was first put in. It was going down to keep those fat men in Melbourne. (Laughter.)

The CHAIRMAN : Order !

Mr. McMASTER : He had a great deal of sympathy with the 3d., as far as the metropolitan municipalities and divisional boards were concerned, because they were simply rate collectors to pay precepts to other boards, and had to raise a very large amount of revenue. Notwithstanding the statement of the hon. member for Carpentaria and the hon. member for Lockyer, he contended that municipalities were in greater need than divisional boards. The hon. member for Ipswich dropped a word that should make the Government careful. The hon. member said that, instead of levying special rates for lighting, water, and sanitary works, they would levy a general rate on which they would get endowment. He could understand the hon. member saying that with regard to water, because the waterworks at Ipswich were in the hands of the municipality, but no Government had the right to pay endowment on sanitary works, because that was for services rendered. Hon. members were injuring their own cause in making such statements. They were not going to get a larger endowment from the Government, even if the rate was increased to 3d.; but he ventured to say that next year the endowment would be very much less, in spite of the increased power of rating. He could not see his way to vote for the amendment owing to the large amount that the municipalities and divisional boards around the metropolis had to find for precepts to keep other boards going. He regretted to see so many precepts, because the ratepayers were very much overtaxed, and it was rather dangerous to put powers into the hands of many of the men who were trying to become members of local authorities now and who had got into them.

Mr. CURTIS : Why ?

Mr. McMASTER : The hon. member must know what he meant. Those men were incapable of managing the affairs of the local authorities, and they had no stake in the country. A great many of them did not pay more than 6s.

[9 p.m.] or 7s. a year in rates, and it did not matter to them whether the maximum rate was 2d. or 3d. in the £. He hoped that if municipalities got the power to rate up to 3d. in the £, they would not take advantage of it. The Brisbane Municipal Council had for some years levied a rate of only 2d. in the £, notwithstanding that they had

the power to make it 2d. in the £, and he trusted that they would continue to pursue the same reasonable policy.

Mr. FOGARTY : The hon. member for Gympie had argued that if a local authority struck this proposed maximum rate of 3d. in the £ they would be able to get an additional amount by way of endowment from the Government, but the hon. member was entirely mistaken in that view. Considering that the amount voted for endowment to local authorities last year was £105,000, and that this year it was reduced to £60,000, he did not think there was much chance of their receiving further financial assistance from the Government. On the contrary, they would probably receive less endowment. But even if a larger sum than that voted on the Estimates this year were granted next year, and the maximum rate was struck by municipal councils, shire councils, and divisional boards, the endowment would be divided into three parts, and each local body would get 6s. 8d. in the £ as they did at the present time. It was all very well for the hon. member for South Brisbane to say that he believed that the principle of increasing the power of rating was a good one. It was a notorious fact that when the hon. member was connected with the Woolloongabba Divisional Board they illegally obtained rates under the Health Act, and that from that time to the present they had never returned the money to the Treasury. That was the only case on record where any local authority had obtained endowment under the same conditions, and the action was not creditable to those concerned.

Mr. STEPHENS : You know absolutely nothing about it.

Mr. FOGARTY : He made a statement, and he asked the hon. member if it was untrue. If the hon. member challenged it he should prove it through the Press.

Mr. STEPHENS rose to a point of order. The hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba stated that the Woolloongabba Divisional Board received money illegally from the Government. He (Mr. Stephens) denied that most emphatically. The Government would not give any money illegally. The money that board received was given in accordance with the Act; and the Act had to be altered afterwards.

Mr. FOGARTY : He said that the Woolloongabba Board had received endowment under the Health Act.

The CHAIRMAN : I would remind hon. members of Standing Order 258, which reads—

When a clause or amendment is under discussion, a member speaking shall confine himself to the matter of that clause or amendment.

The question of the legality or illegality of the endowment to South Brisbane is not before the Committee.

Mr. FOGARTY : Then he would simply point out that the hon. member for Gympie, who had occupied the position of mayor, was entirely mistaken if he imagined that in the event of the extended rating power being given to local authorities that would mean additional endowment.

Hon. G. THORN thought that there should be a difference between the rating powers of boards and municipalities. As had been stated by the hon. member for Lockyer, divisional boards had far more to do in proportion to the revenue they received than municipalities. Where there was fresh settlement taking place in the country they had to make and maintain roads to those settlements, and yet they had obtained no revenue, comparatively speaking, from the lands, as they had been previously Crown lands. With regard to the endowment, the probabilities were that there would very soon be no endowment, but even if there was a larger

endowment the greater part of it would go to the metropolitan municipalities and the big towns of the colony, and divisional boards would receive a very small proportion of it. He trusted that a differential rate would be adopted with regard to divisional boards.

Question—That the word “three,” proposed to be omitted (*Mr. Plunkett*), stand part of the clause—put, and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 37.

Mr. Airey	Mr. W. Hamilton
„ Annear	„ Hauran
„ Armstrong	„ Jackson
„ Barber	„ Lesina
„ Barnes	„ Macartney
„ Bell	„ Mackintosh
„ Bowman	„ McDonnell
„ Browne	„ McMaster
„ Burrows	„ Malcahy
„ Cowley	„ O’Connell
„ J. C. Cribb	„ Philp
„ T. B. Cribb	„ Rutledge
„ Dalrymple	„ Ryland
„ Dibley	„ Stephens
„ Dunsford	„ Stephenson
„ Forsyth	„ Stodart
„ Foxton	„ Tooth
„ Givens	„ Turley
„ J. Hamilton	

Tellers: Mr. Forsyth and Mr. Stephenson.

NOES, 13.

Mr. Bartholomew	Mr. Maxwell
„ Bridges	„ Plunkett
„ Curtis	„ Smith
„ Fogarty	„ G. Thorn
„ Hardacre	„ W. Thorn
„ Jenkinson	„ Tolmie
„ Lord	

Tellers: Mr. Bridges and Mr. Maxwell.

Resolved in the affirmative, and clause put and passed.

On clause 5, as follows—

When any rates made under the provisions of the Valuation and Rating Act of 1890 have remained unpaid for a period of twelve months from the date on which the same first became due and payable, such rates shall bear interest thereafter at the rate of five pounds per centum per annum, calculated at simple interest, and such interest shall be recoverable in the same manner as rates are recoverable under the provisions of the said Act and of this Act:

Provided that all rates due and payable to a local authority at the commencement of this Act, and which have remained unpaid for a period of not less than twelve months, shall bear interest as aforesaid from the commencement of this Act, and not sooner.

Mr. ANNEAR (*Maryborough*): He felt sure that hon. members would agree with him that there were a great many persons who borrowed money on property who took no trouble to pay the rates. That was not fair, in his opinion, to the mortgagee. Could the Home Secretary devise some means by which the mortgagee could be informed from time to time that the rates on the property were unpaid? The question was one which was agitating business men outside, some of whom had asked him to bring the matter under the notice of hon. members.

The HOME SECRETARY: The question the hon. member asked was whether any provision could be made for the local authority to notify the mortgagee that rates were not paid. He was afraid that any such provision, quite irrespective of the inequity of it, would be impossible to carry into effect. The mortgagee knew always that rates were payable on every property. He knew where the divisional board office or the town hall was, and he knew that the rates had to be paid. The local authority, on the other hand, did not know as a matter of course whether property was mortgaged or not. There might or might not be a mortgage upon it, and it was not every mortgage which was a registered mortgage. There were such things as equitable mortgages, and if the hon. member’s

suggestion were carried out it would be necessary to define what sort of a mortgage was meant. That would be quite impracticable. The mortgagee always knew, when he took a mortgage, that so far as the prior encumbrances of rates was concerned his was a second mortgage, and he had to see that the rates were paid. Under the clause he had power to pay the rates and charge them to the mortgagor with 5 per cent. interest, and he thought that was sufficient protection. This matter had already been discussed by representatives of banking institutions; and though they would, perhaps, like to have seen some provision like that mentioned by the hon. member for Maryborough, they were satisfied, after he had discussed the matter with them, that such a provision would be impracticable. There really could be very little hardship in the clause as it stood.

Mr. KEOGH thoroughly agreed with the views expressed by the hon. member for Maryborough. He was aware that, as far as mortgagees were concerned—particularly banks—that all they cared about was getting the interest on their money, and they did nothing to keep the property in repair. He thought there should be something to compel them to keep the property in the same good condition as it was in when they accepted the mortgage.

Clause put and passed.

On clause 6—“When land may be sold”—

Mr. FOGARTY moved the omission of the word “five,” on line 28, with the view of inserting “seven.” The measure was retrospective, and hence all the relief necessary would be given even if the amendment were accepted. As far as Toowoomba was concerned, he knew there were properties on which the rates had remained unpaid for twenty years. Efforts had been made to lease them, but without success. This Bill would enable the local authorities to sell properties on which the rates remained unpaid for a certain number of years, and he thought the period of seven years was not too long to allow. He hoped the amendment would be accepted.

The HOME SECRETARY did not feel inclined to accept the amendment. He had been strongly urged to reduce the term to three years, and, on the other hand, he had been asked to extend it to seven, and even to ten years. He thought five years was a very fair period to allow. If a man had neglected to pay rates on a property for that period he deserved very little consideration. He had been doing an injustice to those people who had been paying their rates all that time.

Mr. FOGARTY: He might not be able to pay.

The HOME SECRETARY: If it were an ordinary debt, another year would enable him to evade payment altogether.

Mr. CURTIS: He had already expressed the opinion that this provision was too drastic. He knew cases where men had paid large sums of money for unimproved land; there had been great depreciation in value, and the payment of rates and taxes, in addition to other obligations, caused them great embarrassment. In Australia there were times of great depression and times of buoyancy in real estate, and if a local authority had power to sell land on which the rates remained unpaid for a period of five years, it would be robbing a man of a reasonable chance of recouping himself the large amount he had probably spent in its purchase. It was too great a power to place in the hands of local authorities—to sell land by auction for a mere song simply because the rates were unpaid for that period. He was under the impression that the late Hon. T. J. Byrnes was asked to bring in a provision of that kind, and expressed great dislike to doing anything of the kind; and other

Ministers of the Crown had expressed a similar objection. He thought the amendment was a reasonable compromise.

Mr. BROWNE agreed with the Home Secretary that the period of five years was long enough. It was all very well for hon. members like the hon. member for Rockhampton to plead the cause of the poor man who had a lot of bits of land on which he could not pay [9.30 p.m.] the rates. Not a word had been said about the man who owed an ordinary debt. If a man who had only got a roof over his head and a few bits of furniture got into debt, and was allowed a little time to recover, he might be able to pay up. But if he did not pay he was liable to have his things sold over his head. He was not allowed five years in which to pay his debt. Seeing the local authorities protected absentees' property, and removed nuisances from it, if the owner, after being allowed five years did not pay up the rates, it was no hardship on him that the property should be sold. He did not think a question of a year or two was of very much importance, but there was a difference of opinion on the matter. Some hon. members asked that ten years should be allowed, and some business men who had spoken to him were in favour of it being cut down to three years. He had heard of an instance where the owner of some allotments had been resident in a place for years, and had issued garnishees and sold people off who were indebted to him, but by having his allotments registered in the name of some relative who was out of the colony, he had been able to laugh at the local authorities in their efforts to collect any rates. He thought that any man who had property, but did not pay his rates after being allowed five years' grace, could not complain if that property was sold. In fact, the sooner he got rid of it the better for himself and the better for the country.

Mr. CURTIS: He felt indifferent whether the limit was fixed either at five or at seven years. His experience led him to think that five years was too short; seven years would be a reasonable compromise. He did not think that the case cited by the hon. member for Croydon was at all analogous, because in this case, though they extended the time of payment, the security still remained, and the money could not be lost, because it was always a charge upon the property, and must be paid some time or other. If they allowed the owner a little time he might be able to recover himself and pay his rates, and become comparatively well off; whereas, if they sold the property, although it might have cost the owner a large sum of money, it might be sold for a mere song. The extension of time did not jeopardise the security at all.

Mr. MULCAHY (*Gympie*) rose to support the five years. It had been pointed out what hardships the absentees might suffer, but what about the people who were living in their houses? They very often had very little money, and it took them all their time to pay their rates; and yet the hon. member for Rockhampton said it was not fair not to give the absentees seven years in which to pay their rates when they pressed the poor man who was on the spot to pay his.

Mr. CURTIS: I did not say anything about absentees.

Mr. MULCAHY: Well, he would apply his remarks to the owners of unimproved land. Many of them were holding out with a view to getting the benefit of the unearned increment, and the local authorities had great trouble in collecting rates from them. In nine cases out of ten, he thought the Home Secretary would inflict no hardship if he reduced the time to four years.

Mr. DIBLEY: If the argument of the hon. member for Rockhampton meant anything, it meant that he wanted to protect the speculator; but the majority of the speculators were not good men to have in a municipality, or in the country at all. He considered that five years was ample time. He knew cases in South Brisbane where it was difficult to find out who the owners of properties were; but if a man left his property for five years, and did not look after it, it was pretty evident that he did not care much about it. If persons did not pay the rates on their property within a reasonable time, because they wanted to wait until their properties became more valuable, the sooner they were sold up the better.

Mr. KEOGH regretted very much that the Home Secretary could not see his way to accept the amendment of the hon. member for Toowoomba. On his own showing it was a very reasonable amendment. The hon. gentleman said that several parties had waited upon him, and that some said that the period should be three, some five, and some ten years.

The HOME SECRETARY: There was only one who asked for ten years.

Mr. KEOGH: He thought seven years was a fair compromise. He thought it would be a nefarious act to sell a man's property at the termination of five years owing to his rates being in arrears. Many people may not be in a position to pay rates, and he was decidedly opposed to that power being put into the hands of boards or municipalities. It was quite sufficient that the power of leasing should be given. He would certainly call for a division on the amendment.

Mr. BOLES (*Port Curtis*) was favourable to the Bill as a whole, but he thought it was too drastic to introduce all at once. There was no doubt that five years was a short period, and he thought seven years was more reasonable. In the majority of cases the leasing system had been successful.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No, no!

Mr. BOLES: He was more particularly referring to local authorities in the Central district. He thought the period under that system should be extended to seven years. No one could take the land away, and it was carrying interest along with it. He was going to vote for the seven years' period.

Mr. FOGARTY was very sorry that the Home Secretary could not see his way to accept this amendment, for it was a reasonable one. The primary object of the Government in introducing this sort of legislation was to enable local bodies to deal with lands the rates on which were in arrears for a number of years, and that object would be attained just the same if this amendment was accepted. The term of five years was rather short. Supposing rates on a certain property had been in arrears for three years, and the bread-winner died, the widow might be left penniless. It was her intention, when she was in a position, to pay the rates on the freehold her husband held prior to his death. Perhaps her only son able to earn anything might be three years on a station before he was in a position to send sufficient money to his widowed mother to meet the demands of the local authority. Would it not be a hard case if the money came to hand just after the limit of five years had expired, and the roof had been sold over the head of the widow, with perhaps a family of helpless children? An extension of time by two years might make all the difference in the world in such a case. It must also be remembered that arrears carried interest at the rate of 5 per cent., and as rates were a first charge on land the local body was perfectly safe. There were few pieces of land in the

colony that were not worth more than the amount of rates due upon them unless the rates had been unpaid for thirty or forty years. He hoped the Home Secretary would accept the amendment.

Mr. BARNES (*Bulimba*) said the entire trend of the argument of the hon. member seemed to be that shire councils and divisional boards should finance people who were in difficulties. It frequently happened that there were people who owned property which fell into the hands of mortgagees. The local authorities were being asked to finance them, while other people whom they could get at had to pay their rates.

Question—That the word proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause—put; and the Committee divided:—

Ayes, 36.	
Mr. Airey	Mr. Hanran
.. Annear	.. Hardacre
.. Armstrong	.. Jackson
.. Barber	.. Jenkinson
.. Barnes	.. Leahy
.. Bowman	.. Lesina
.. Bridges	.. Macartney
.. Browne	.. Maxwell
.. Burrows	.. McMaster
.. J. C. Cribb	.. Mulcahy
.. T. B. Cribb	.. O'Connell
.. Dalrymple	.. Rutledge
.. Dibley	.. Ryland
.. Dunsford	.. Stephens
.. Foxton	.. Stodart
.. Givens	.. Story
.. J. Hamilton	.. Tooth
.. W. Hamilton	.. Turley

Tellers: Mr. Bowman and Mr. Ryland.

Noes, 14.	
Mr. Bartholomew	Mr. Lord
.. Bell	.. Mackintosh
.. Boles	.. Plunkett
.. Curtis	.. Smith
.. Fogarty	.. Stephenson
.. Kates	.. W. Thorn
.. Keogh	.. Tolmie

Tellers: Mr. Boles and Mr. Curtis.

Resolved in the affirmative.

The HOME SECRETARY moved the omission of subsection (7), with [10 p.m.] the view of inserting the following:—

The registrar shall execute a proper deed of bargain and sale or transfer of the land to the purchaser, and the purchaser shall thereupon be entitled to be registered for an estate in fee-simple in the land free of any encumbrance, or, in the case of land held under any less tenure, or under any tenure peculiar to gold-fields or mining districts, for the entire estate or interest of the owner or occupier in default free of any encumbrance.

Amendment agreed to; and clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 7, 8, and 9, put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with an amendment; the report was adopted; and the third reading made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

## LIFE ASSURANCE COMPANIES BILL.

### COMMITTEE—COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

On clause 4—"Interpretation"—

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. A. Rutledge, *Maranoa*): The Council proposed to insert in this clause the following definition:—

"Indefeasible Policy"—A policy which upon the face thereof and in accordance with a recited contract between the company and the assured states that neither it nor any bonus additions or other accretions thereto nor any interest therein shall in any way during the currency thereof be capable of being assigned, sold, encumbered, surrendered, disposed of, or in any way diminished or impaired.

He did not know whether there were any such policies taken out, but he did not see any serious objection to the amendment, and he therefore moved that it be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

On clause 5—"Companies to deposit securities with the Treasurer"—

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved that the amendment of the Council inserting after "policy-holders" the words "upon the winding up of the company" be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The Council had introduced a new clause, which now stood as clause 6 of the Bill, and was as follows:—

6. No friendly society, unless it has complied with the provisions of section five of this Act, by which compliance it shall thereby become a company, shall, whether by one or more policies, contract in respect of the life of any one person for life assurance exceeding in the aggregate one hundred pounds; and every person who makes, issues, delivers out, signs, seals, or in any way avouches any policy, writing, or contract in contravention of this section shall be liable to a penalty of not less than twenty nor more than one hundred pounds.

By the provisions of the Friendly Societies Act friendly societies were entitled to insure their members up to £200, and he had it from the Registrar of Friendly Societies that one society had already adopted rules for providing assurance up to that limit, and to provide that a friendly society availing itself of the provisions of the law now in force should be obliged in order to have that privilege to deposit £10,000 seemed to him verging upon the unfair, not to use a stronger term. He therefore moved that this amendment be disagreed to.

Mr. RYLAND (*Gympie*) agreed with the views expressed by the Attorney-General, but thought that the object of the clause was to deal with an assurance society which was not a friendly society, though it had adopted the name of friendly society.

Question put and passed.

On clause 17—

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The Council had substituted twelve months instead of six as the time within which, after the passing of the Act, a company must be registered. It seemed to him that six months was a very reasonable time. He did not know whether the object was to enable a company that could not readily lay its hands on £10,000 to comply with the conditions of the clause, but he should like to have some good reasons for accepting the amendment. He moved that it be disagreed to.

Question put and passed.

On clause 22 (now 23), line 41, adding the following: "as calculated in accordance with the answer to the ninth question contained in the statement as prepared by the company in the form of the eighth schedule to this Act"—

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL did not know that there was any reason why the amendment should not be agreed to, though he understood that the secretary of the Australian Mutual Provident Society considered that in calculating the surrender value according to the statement in the form of the 8th schedule a great deal of difficulty would be experienced. He moved that the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

On the omission of clause 25—

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It would be remembered that the original clause provided that notice should be required to be given before an industrial policy was forfeited, and a definition was given of "industrial company." It was pointed out after the Bill left the Chamber that that would be productive of injustice to some companies who did industrial business. For example, there was one society called "The Citizens' Insurance Company," which did a large business in issuing policies up to £1,000 and over, and it also issued policies for small amounts, the premiums of which were made payable in instalments. Because they issued

those policies they would be regarded, according to the Bill as it left the Chamber, as an industrial company, and they would be placed at a disadvantage as regarded policies of larger amount. The new clause proposed to be substituted did away with the limitation imposed on such a company by reason of it being partly an industrial company. By limiting the provisions of the clause to an industrial policy rather than to an industrial company, no injustice would be done. He moved that the omission of the clause be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved that the Legislative Council's amendment substituting the following new clause be agreed to—

A forfeiture of an industrial policy issued by any company shall not be incurred by any person assured thereunder by reason of any default in payment of any contribution or premium until after—

- (a) Notice stating the amount due or payable at the date of the notice, and informing him that in default of payment by him within a reasonable time, not being less than thirty days from the date of service of the notice, and at a place to be specified in such notice, his policy will be forfeited, has been served upon him by or on behalf of the company, either personally or by leaving the same at his usual or last known place of abode or business, or by sending the same by post addressed to him by registered letter at such usual or last known place of abode or business; and
- (b) Default has been made by him in paying his contribution or premium in accordance with that notice, together with any additional contribution or premium which has become due or payable up to the date of payment.

In this section the expression "Industrial Policy" means one policy only, issued on any one life, for a less sum than one hundred pounds; upon which the contributions or premiums payable by the assured are, by the terms of such policy, made payable at intervals of less than three months, or are contracted to be received, or any one or more of which have actually been received by means of collectors.

Mr. RYLAND thought it would be better if such policies only came under the clause after they had been in force for twelve months or two years. There was no vested interest in a policy until after twelve months, and he knew the companies endeavoured to keep such policies going for two or three years. A lot [10.30 p.m.] of trouble and expense in connection with sending out notices would be saved by limiting it to policies that had been in force not less than twelve months.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL understood that a similar amendment was proposed in the other Chamber, but was not adopted.

Mr. TURLEY: It was withdrawn.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He did not think there was much danger in leaving the clause as it stood.

New clause agreed to.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The Council had also inserted the following new clause—

Upon proof to a company that the person upon whose life a policy was effected has overstated his age in his application for the policy, the company shall, at its option, either—

So increase the amount payable under the policy that it shall bear the same proportion to the original amount of the policy as the annual premium payable thereunder bears to the annual premium which would have been payable if the true age had been stated according to the premium table of the company in use at the date of the policy; or

Pay to the assured in cash the amount of all such overpayments, together with compound interest at the rate of five per centum per annum.

Personally he had no objection to the clause with the exception of the provision relating to the payment of compound interest at the rate of 5 per cent. They knew very well that companies were lending money—and he was glad

that such was the case—at very low rates of interest, and it would be very unfair to require that a person who had overstated his age should be entitled to overpayments together with compound interest at the rate of 5 per cent.

Mr. KERR: It is the same rate in the clause dealing with the understatement of the age.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That was if it was discovered that the age had been understated.

Mr. KERR: It is discovered when the person dies and a claim is sent in.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: When a man was a native of some other country, if the company had not discovered, up to the time of his death, that he had understated his age, the relatives would not give the company time to send all over the world to find out whether it had been understated or not. If the claim was not paid when it fell due, they would very soon issue a writ. If a man overstated his age he was guilty of negligence at least, and the company should not be made to suffer. Besides, nineteen-twentieths of those who overstated the age would avail themselves of the other provision contained in the clause.

Mr. RYLAND: It is at the option of the company.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: There would be no injustice to the man in either case. The man who had overstated his age should not be entitled to more than would put him into the position he would occupy if he had properly stated his age. He therefore moved that the Council's new clause 27 be amended by the omission of all the words after the word "overpayments"—

Together with compound interest at the rate of 5 per centum per annum.

Mr. RYLAND thought the amendment of the Council was a reasonable one. He did not see why the assurer should get the advantage of a man having overstated his age any more than if he understated it.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: If he understates it he does a great wrong to the company.

Mr. RYLAND: But he might do it in ignorance. He did not believe that any man who insured his life ever made a mistake in his age purposely. If a man overstated his age, the company had the option of either increasing the amount payable under the policy or of paying the assured in cash the amount of the overpayments; and he did not see why, if they availed themselves of that alternative, they should not also pay 5 per cent. interest. The same protection should be given to the man who overstated his age as the man who understated it.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the new clause—put and negatived.

New clause, as amended, put and passed.

On the motion of the ATTORNEY-GENERAL, the Council's amendments in clause 31, and verbal amendments in clause 40, were agreed to.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The next amendment of the Council's was the insertion of a new clause at the end of clause 40. He moved that the amendment be agreed to, because it was desirable that moneys under an indefeasible policy should be paid to the persons entitled to receive them no matter what happened.

Question put and passed.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The next amendment of the Council's was in the sixth schedule, and he moved that it be agreed to, because it was very desirable that information should be given as to the policies issued in Queensland, and also with regard to the policies issued by these companies elsewhere.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had disagreed [11 p.m.] to some of the amendments of the Legislative Council, had agreed to others, and had agreed to one with an amendment.

The report was adopted; and it was ordered that the Bill be returned to the Legislative Council with the following message:—

MR. PRESIDENT,

The Legislative Assembly having had under consideration the Legislative Council's amendments in the Life Assurance Companies Bill, beg now to intimate that they—

*Disagree* to the proposed new clause to follow clause 5,—*because* under the provisions of the Friendly Societies Act of 1894 it is competent for a friendly society to issue policies of assurance up to £200. And one friendly society has already legally adopted rules providing for assurances up to that limit, and since that limit cannot be exceeded it seems inconsistent with this privilege which friendly societies have hitherto enjoyed that they should be required, as a condition of its exercise, to deposit cash or securities to the value of ten thousand pounds.

*Disagree* to the amendment in clause 17,—*because* there does not seem to be any good reason why the requirements of this section with respect to registration should not be complied with within the more limited period.

*Agree* to the new clause 27 with the following amendment, viz.:—On lines 3 and 7, of page 9, omit the words “together with compound interest at the rate of five per centum per annum.”—in which amendment they invite the concurrence of the Legislative Council.

And *agree* to all other amendments in the Bill.

## PUBLIC SERVICE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

### COUNCIL'S FURTHER MESSAGE.

#### COMMITTEE.

The PREMIER (Hon. R. Philp, *Townsville*) said that the Council had sent the following message relative to this Bill:—

The Legislative Council having had under consideration the message of the Legislative Assembly, of date the 4th December, with the Public Service Act Amendment Bill, beg now to intimate that they further insist upon their disagreement with the amendments made by the Assembly to the Council's amendments in the Bill—

*Because* the amendments of the Legislative Council are in conformity with the spirit of the Public Service Act of 1896, in giving an accused officer a distinct hearing, and also an appeal.

*Because* it is the intention of the Council's amendments that each Minister should constitute a separate board, and that at the hearing by him of a charge against an officer of his department the accused officer shall be present personally or by his representative, and that the evidence against him shall be reduced to writing, and forwarded to the Cabinet with the Minister's report and recommendation, all being in terms of section 42 of the Act, so far as that section can be applied to the altered circumstances of the case.

*Because* the Council presume that at the consideration of such report by the Cabinet the Minister would take no active part, beyond explaining such portions of his report as might require explanation.

*Because* while the Council fully recognise that each Minister is and should be responsible for the administration of his department, the Council is of opinion that the Public Service Act was passed to protect the rights of public servants, and that to hand them over for trial to the Governor in Council, at whose deliberations they cannot be present, to use the words of the message of the Legislative Assembly, “involves anomalies and possible injustice.”

*Because* the right of appeal to the “Governor in Council” from the decision of the “Cabinet” is illusory, as the “Council” and the “Cabinet” are practically identical, and that no personal interference by His Excellency the Governor could take place for the protection of a public servant without leading to the same results as in the case of Benjamin Kitt in the year 1888.

The reason of the Council for sending that message was, apparently, that the public servants would not be protected. With all due deference

to the members of the other House, he contended they were fully protected under the Bill the Assembly had sent to the Council. Ministers took every responsibility. They had taken on their shoulders the responsibility of the Public Service Board, and they thought that their clause was a better one than that of the Council. He therefore moved that the Committee further insist upon their amendments upon the Legislative Council's amendments, to which the Legislative Council had disagreed.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported the resolution; and the following message was ordered to be sent to the Council:—

MR. PRESIDENT.—The Legislative Assembly having had under consideration the Legislative Council's message, of date 11th instant, relative to the Public Service Act Amendment Bill, beg now to intimate that they further insist on their amendments on the Council's amendments to which the Legislative Council have disagreed, because all the Legislative Council are contending for is already provided for in the Bill as amended by the Legislative Assembly.

The House adjourned at twenty-one minutes past 11 o'clock.