

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

FRIDAY, 30 SEPTEMBER 1904

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4. Names of the private owners, and number in each case?

5. The number of privately-owned horses running on the same reserve, with names of persons owning them?

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. P. Airey, *Flinders*) replied—

The information is not yet available, but if fresh notice of the question is given for Tuesday next it will probably be ready by that time.

SUPPLY.

OPENING OF COMMITTEE.

The SPEAKER, in accordance with Standing Order No. 16, read to the House so much of His Excellency's Opening Speech as was addressed to the Legislative Assembly.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS, it was resolved that the House, at its next sitting, would resolve itself into committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to His Majesty.

ELECTORAL FRANCHISE BILL.

SECOND READING.

Mr. KERR (*Bawcoo*), who on rising was received with "Hear, hears," said: On rising to speak on the second reading of the Franchise Bill, I think there must be a feeling of satisfaction on the part of the older members of this House who have been advocating the principles laid down in the Bill for a number of years, both inside this Chamber and out of it, to know that the Government at last are determined to bring down a Bill giving adult suffrage. I had not the pleasure of listening to the mover of the Bill in his introductory speech; but I have had the opportunity of reading the speeches of those who criticised the Bill, and I also had the opportunity of hearing the hon. member for Bulloo when speaking on the measure last night. I was greatly struck, when the hon. member was speaking, by the crocodile tears that he appeared to shed for his dear coloured brother, and by the way in which he metaphorically took them to his bosom, and pleaded that the aboriginal native and the natives of Asia, Africa, and other countries, who are now debarred, should be allowed to have a vote. [Mr. J. LEAHY: I said they should be put into the same position as they are in the other States.] The hon. member supported the Government which brought down the Elections Bill of 1900, and in that Bill there is a clause which says—

No aboriginal native of Australia, India, China, or of the South Seas shall be entered on the roll, except in respect of a property qualification.

The hon. member believes in the representation of property. Speaking on the Electoral Reform Bill in 1895, he delivered himself in this fashion—

It is also true that a man who has property in the country has a great stake in it—perhaps a greater stake than the man with a family—and the whole tendency of legislation should be in the direction of giving every man in the State some interest in the State according to his property. I think that would be for the benefit of the colony.

We can quite understand the position taken up by the hon. member when he expresses his anxiety to see the franchise extended to the aboriginals of this State. The leader of the Opposition also pleaded that aboriginals should have a vote. We can fancy what would be the result if aboriginals had a vote in the Bulloo electorate, and how the managers of stations would round up the aboriginals to vote for the

FRIDAY, 30 SEPTEMBER, 1904.

The SPEAKER (Hon. A. S. Cowley, *Herbert*) took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

QUESTIONS.

LEASING LAND TO COLOURED ALIENS.

Mr. DUNSFORD (*Charlton Towers*), for Mr. Woods, asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

Has the Government any intention of introducing legislation to prohibit the leasing of land to Chinese and other coloured aliens?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. J. T. Bell, *Dalby*) explained that this question should be addressed to the Chief Secretary.

CATTLE ON BURUNDUR POLICE RESERVE.

Mr. TURNER (*Rockhampton North*), for Mr. Lesina, asked the Home Secretary—

1. How many head of cattle are there running on Burundur Police Reserve?

2. The number belonging to the Government?

3. The number belonging to private owners?

[*Mr. J. Leahy.*]

hon. member for Bulloo. (Government laughter.) They would be rounded up like cattle in a yard, and they would record their votes as the managers dictated. [Mr. J. LEAHY: I don't want them.] The hon. member says he does not want them, but he pleads very hard to get them on the roll. He wants to make out that the present Government in introducing this measure, and not providing for the giving of votes to aboriginals, are depriving them of something they have had previously—[Mr. J. LEAHY: No.]—or depriving them of something to which they have a right. The hon. member had an opportunity, when he was a member of a Cabinet which introduced a measure of electoral reform, to embody that principle in the Bill, and give a vote to aboriginals. But did he do so? No; hence these tears! We know the reason that he has raised this objection. He has no good or valid reason against this Electoral Franchise Bill, and he is not prepared to oppose it out and out; but he will endeavour to keep it from being passed into law as long as he possibly can. [Mr. J. LEAHY: I want to bring it into line with the other States.] The hon. member is very anxious to bring us into line with the other States. [Mr. J. LEAHY: It is your proposition.] No; it is not. The hon. member for Bulloo and the leader of the Opposition professed to be very anxious that aboriginals, Chinese, and other coloured aliens should have a vote, but they said nothing of their white fellow-countrymen being deprived of a vote because they are inmates of Dunwich. No, because they are of a certain brand in politics. But they thought that by giving aboriginals and coloured aliens a vote they might raise a cry which would get their support. [Mr. J. LEAHY: You cannot make a man a citizen, and then deprive him of all a citizen's rights.] The hon. member knows very well that a large number of the aliens in this State are not citizens of the State, and cannot be. [Mr. J. LEAHY: Quite so, and they cannot vote.] Only those who have been naturalised or are holders of property have been able to claim the franchise. The qualification in this Bill is the widest possible qualification—it is the qualification of residence, a qualification that has been advocated for years in this State and in this Chamber, and a qualification that the people believe in. As the Premier said last night, the party behind him are pledged to that qualification, and the party behind the leader of the Opposition were pledged to that qualification at the last general election. There is a unanimity on this question existing between the various political parties in the State, and it is held that the qualification for the franchise should be residence and residence only. Why then cavil at this measure, and endeavour to show that the Bill is taking from persons something that they had before, when we know that a large majority of the persons referred to are not citizens? The hon. member endeavoured to impress upon the House and upon the public that this Bill will deprive certain people of rights that they ought to have, whereas they enjoyed those rights only by reason of the antiquated elections laws we have had in the past. We have nothing to do with other States in this matter. When we have quoted New Zealand we have been told that Queensland is not New Zealand, and when we have quoted other States in regard to the attesting of claims and other matters in connection with electoral reform we have been told that we were dealing with our own State and making laws for our State, not for other States. We are now making a law for our own State. [Mr. J. LEAHY: And the reason you give for it is that it is the law in other States.] No, the sole aim and object of the party behind the Government and the people

who are behind the Government is that there should be only the one qualification of residence. [Mr. J. LEAHY: That is why I want to get rid of the restriction.] The hon. member wanted to show that he had more sympathy with his coloured brethren than he had with white men and white women. Then, again, the hon. member said that the franchise would not better the condition of the people. [Mr. J. LEAHY: I did not say anything of the kind.] I made a note of it at the time. Further on the hon. member said that people should realise the importance of casting their votes, that they ought to be able to cast their votes, and so forth. I do not hold—I do not think any man in this State is fool enough to hold—that the extension of the franchise is going to give the children of working men more clothes, or that it is going to provide them with more comforts than they enjoy at the present time; but we do believe that, by the extension of the franchise, the people of this State will have a voice in regard to the laws which are placed on our statute-book. We believe that the country will be governed for the betterment and not to the detriment of the people. We believe that better laws will be placed on the statute-book, and, if the members who are returned to this House are elected on the popular basis of a residence qualification, they will at least be able to say that they have been returned by a majority of the people of the State, and that the legislation that is passed will be the carrying out of the will of the majority of the people. The hon. member for Bulloo said it was quite easy to get on the roll. When he was speaking I interjected about an occurrence in his own electorate some years ago, and which was brought up in this House at the time—where over fifty men whose claims were passed by a revision court sitting at Eulo were prevented from getting their names on the roll through the court being shifted, before another court was held, from Eulo to Thargomindah. Those men, who had already complied with all the conditions of the law in regard to their claims, could not get on the roll unless they made a fresh application, and the difficulty was in getting the names attested by a justice of the peace, although they were still living in the electorate. It is quite true, as the hon. member pointed out, that a newchum who arrives in the State and settles down in Brisbane, Rockhampton, Townsville, or some other coastal town, has no difficulty in getting on the roll; but the hon. member will allow that, if everyone who has come to Queensland had settled down on the coast, there would have been no opening up of the back country. We require men to go out into the back country, and if these men, by reason of their nomadic habits, by their travelling about from station to station, are to be penalised as they have been in the past, then the electoral laws that existed in the past were very unfair in that particular. I give the hon. member credit for not sitting down in Brisbane when he arrived in Queensland. He went out back, and many others of us did the same, and we are to be penalised. No man knows better than the hon. member for Bulloo that there are natives of this State, some of them thirty and thirty-five years of age, who have never had their names on any State electoral roll, and the only opportunities they have ever had of recording a vote in the State were at the two federal elections. [Mr. J. LEAHY: Isn't it the same in the other States?] No, it is not. [Mr. J. LEAHY: It is.] In New South Wales, for instance, every man has his electoral right, and, if he moves into another district, all he has to do is to hand his electoral right to the electoral registrar in that district, and, after being there for a certain period, he can get a fresh electoral right. [Mr.

Mr. Kerr.]

J. LEAHY: They could not vote at all if they lost their electoral rights, even if their names were on the rolls. [Then, again, the hon. member spoke about attesting claims. He was very positive about New Zealand. [Mr. J. LEAHY: I was speaking of Australia.] In New Zealand the claims are only required to be attested by one elector—the same as in this Bill. The Government have gone on safe and sure lines in following the example of colonies or States that have had experience in the matter. Why should there be all this fear of people getting their names on the electoral rolls? [Mr. J. LEAHY: Then why do you try to disqualify them if you have no fears?] If the hon. member for Bulloo wants to represent his fellow-men, he is quite welcome to do so, but I do not want to be here as the representative of kanakas or Chinese. [Mr. J. LEAHY: Then don't naturalise them.]

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. KERR: I do not naturalise them. The hon. member's Government may have had something to do with their naturalisation, though. I heartily support the Bill, with this limitation—that it does not go as far as I would like to see it go. I believe there should be no restriction placed upon the inmates of a place like Dunwich. They should not be deprived of their votes because they are inmates of such an institution. [Mr. J. LEAHY: You will have to swallow it, all the same.] There is no getting away from the fact that a number of the people in Dunwich have done good pioneering work in this State, but through circum-

stances over which they have had no [4 p.m.] control they have been obliged to apply for admission to that institution.

I admit that there are objections to granting the franchise to the inmates of Dunwich. A great deal was made of this matter at the federal elections. One objection is that a large block vote coming from a place like Dunwich would be the means of swamping the State electorate that it might happen to be in. There is some truth in that. I believe Dunwich is situated in the electorate of Bulimba. [Mr. J. LEAHY: Why should it be a block vote? Why should they vote all alike?] The votes might be cast in such a way as would not suit some of the candidates. [Mr. J. LEAHY: That applies to every town.] But there is a way out of the difficulty I have referred to, and that is by inserting a special clause stating that inmates of an institution like Dunwich may cast their votes for the electorate in which they have been living. Most of them have passed nearly all their lives in some one electorate, and I do not see any difficulty about such a provision. When we notice the anxiety of the hon. member for Bulloo and the leader of the Opposition to get a vote for aboriginals and coloured aliens, I see no objection to advocating the granting of a vote to inmates of such a place as Dunwich. [Mr. FORSYTH: They might have lived in seven or eight electorates.] [Mr. J. LEAHY: Why do you not make the Government do it, instead of talking about it?] Then an advantage in having the Dunwich vote provided for would be that it would effect a great saving in the compilation of the rolls if we could simply adopt the federal rolls as they stand, especially as, having been compiled by the Commonwealth Government officials, they would be quite up to date. [Mr. J. LEAHY: Why should we copy the Federal Government in this matter, or anything else?] I do not know why the hon. member should have any objection to that. I remember he barked himself hoarse during the time of the election, and went about with a medal on him the shape of Australia, but now, apparently, he is ashamed of it and does not wear it any more. He is ashamed of federation. I, as one who voted

[Mr. Kerr.

against it, consider that I have been mistaken in regard to what federation has accomplished. [Mr. J. LEAHY: So was I.] We cannot expect to get all the sweets of federation without any of the bitter. [Mr. FORSYTH: Where are the sweets?] Well, we have had the question of black labour settled once and for all in Queensland. [Mr. FORSYTH: The Federal Government are giving exemptions to Japanese.] The Federal Government never entered into a treaty with Japan like the Nelson Government did. [Mr. FORSYTH: A very good treaty.] The Federal Government never encouraged Chinamen to lease land as members of the late Government did. [Mr. J. LEAHY: What has this to do with the question?]

The SPEAKER: Order! I must ask hon. members to refrain from these continuous interjections. They are leading the hon. member quite astray from his subject, and that in itself is very disorderly.

Mr. KERR: I am very sorry these interjections should have drawn me off. I notice that we have a wail in this morning's *Courier* about aboriginal natives of Australia, Asia, and Africa, as well as of the islands of the Pacific. The *Courier* says—

The Government have shown themselves alike ungenerous and short-sighted—

The SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order in quoting extracts from a newspaper on the question before the House.

Mr. KERR: No doubt the *Courier* is very sorry about this matter. I can quite understand its attitude on the Franchise Bill. It has no desire to see an Adult Suffrage Bill passed, and I never expected that paper to say anything in favour of it. Speaking on behalf of the party to which I belong, I think I can say that we are prepared to support a clause giving the inmates of charitable institutions a vote, if the Minister can see his way to introduce it, and we are quite prepared to allow the second reading of the Bill to go through, because it takes us a great distance on the way we have been travelling. We may in committee have something to say on the matter. If the Minister may not see his way clear to adopt the proposal I have suggested, then we may feel compelled to move an amendment in that direction to test the feeling of the House. [Mr. P. J. LEAHY: Is that a threat?] It is not a threat. The Bill, as I have clearly stated, goes in the direction we desire, but it does not go all the distance that we desire, and we have a right to express our opinion. We are not like the members sitting behind the Opposition, who, when they were sitting behind the late Government, had no voice in the measures brought down by the Cabinet. We had an instance of that when the Stamp Duties Bill was before the House, when member after member got up and protested against it because they knew nothing about it. The position is this: That if the Government are prepared to amend the Bill in that direction they will have the support of every member of the party I am connected with. But there is this to be said about it: If hon. members opposite think the members of my party are going to wreck this measure because the inmates of Dunwich are not in it they are very much mistaken. We are going to get all the electoral reform we can, and this measure, when placed on the statute-book, will at least have this effect: It will stop, in any future general election, the plural voting that now takes place. As an instance of that, we have the hon. member for Toowong, who represents the plural vote in this House. If there had been no property votes in Toowong, the candidate who opposed the hon. member would have been the member for Toowong at the present time. There were over 200

property votes in Toowong, and the candidate representing this side was only beaten by seventy votes. Therefore the property vote is responsible for the return of the hon. member for Toowong into this Chamber in the present Parliament. If this Bill is to have any effect it will at least affect the abolition of the plural vote; and the party I am connected with are going to support the measure and get it through in as good a form as we possibly can.

Mr. MACARTNEY (*Toowong*): I am afraid I am placed in an exceedingly responsible position. I feel that it might have been left to a more experienced member of the House to follow the practical leader of the other side. The Bill before the House is certainly one of very great importance, and is one that demands the attention of every hon. member, on whatever side of the House he sits. It affects not only the State as a whole, but it affects the various districts in different ways. It is one of those measures that should be looked at from every point of view before it is finally placed on the statute-book. Before dealing with the one or two points to which I particularly desire to address myself, I would like to say a word or two in reply to the hon. member who has just spoken. He stated that in the electorate I have the honour to represent there are over 200 plural votes, and that it is owing to those plural votes that I owe my return as the representative for that district. The hon. member is quite mistaken. It is true there are about 200 property votes on that roll, but a great number of those property votes represent many old residents of the district who prefer to have their names on the roll in respect of their freehold qualification rather than to alter it to that of residence. That is a fact, and I venture to say that if a calculation was made of the absentee proprietors—that is, those who are voters in respect of property who do not actually reside in the district—it would be found that the number would not exceed, well, anything between fifty and 120. And it does not follow that because there happens to be a few property votes on the roll that I received the whole of them. As a matter of fact, if the matter was gone into, it would be found that my opponent received a very considerable vote in addition to the vote usually cast in favour of a Labour candidate—that he received more property votes than I did. But, if the recent election had been fought on the lines proposed by this Bill, I say, without any doubt, that I should be in the same position. [Mr. McDONNELL: You were beaten by your opponent in every district.] When the hon. member speaks of every district he speaks of places not more than a mile and a-half removed from each other. The votes which were cast in Brisbane were not necessarily property votes, and the hon. member knows perfectly well that they were the votes of workers as well as of owners of property. However, I am not going to be drawn into a discussion of matters which are not before the House at the present time. I want to address myself to one or two features which I consider are of very considerable importance, and particularly to the effect the passing of this Bill will have without the simultaneous passing of the other measures of electoral reform which have been promised. This Bill is based on an agitation which has been going on in this State for many years for what we call adult suffrage. Originally, it was one man one vote; now it is one adult one vote; and it will be remembered that the late Sir George Grey, who was a great authority on the question, stated that adult suffrage was necessary in order to prevent the possibility of minority rule, and he proceeded to illustrate that by saying

that if a number of persons had more votes than one they might perchance command a majority, and so rule the country—a state of things which it was held would be subversive of the entirely democratic principle that the majority should rule. That is the basic principle upon which the idea of adult suffrage was founded, and hon. gentlemen have been going through the country for years pointing out that a number of men in Brisbane—always the property-owners—had a large number of votes, and ruled the situation—[Mr. BOWMAN: That is true.]—and that the time is coming when every man should have equal votes and equal rights—that everybody should be equal. [Mr. KERR: Your partner has seventeen votes.] It has nothing to do with this question as to how many votes the hon. gentleman or any other hon. gentleman has. [Mr. BOWMAN: Of course it has.] That is not the question here. I am quite prepared to admit that the object of this Bill is to wipe out property or the plural vote; but if this plural vote is to be wiped out, and any other plural vote exists in any form, that other plural vote should be wiped out as far as it is practicable to do so. That is a necessary corollary. I am not going into details in connection with the electorates of the State—we can take any which the hon. gentleman likes, say the Bulloo or the Burke. In the case of Bulloo there are 500 or 600 voters, and in the case of Burke something like 400 or 500. In my electorate at the present time, with the male suffrage, there are about 2,500 voters, which practically means that the man in Bulloo or Burke has equal to six votes against every vote that is possessed by persons residing in the electorate which I represent. I ask hon. gentlemen if that is not a plural vote? Does it not lead to the very same result? Does it not mean that a smaller number of men representing a minority may dictate to the majority, and so rule the country? Is not that a breach of the principle of adult suffrage? I think that must be unquestionably admitted, but since hon. gentlemen on the other side have found that to do justice in that direction to all is likely to affect themselves then they are against it. That is certainly clearly the position as it affects the principle upon which this Bill is founded, and I say it would be an unrighteous and an undesirable thing, in face of the pledges which were given to this country by the Premier at the recent election, if this Bill is going to be passed without the measure which is necessary to do that justice and to bring about a just state of things being provided at the same time. I do not know that there is anything particularly out of the way in connection with the present franchise. The gentleman who opposed me at the recent election joined with me on every platform in stating that he did not think the plural property vote made the least bit of difference. I quite agreed with the gentleman, because if a man happens to be possessed of a large property, and is what is called “the moneyed man, the property man,” he has only got one vote for his property. On the other hand, the working man—whose support hon. members on the opposite side claim to have—who have small properties—necessarily the most numerous—worth £100 each, are regarded as property-owners; and there are large numbers of working men in this State who have more than one vote—oftentimes two, three, or four, according to the way they progress. I do not think, taking it all round, it makes any very great difference; and, as I have said, in connection with the district I represent, the property votes on the roll do not by any means necessarily represent plural voting. In June, 1902, just after the last general election but one, a return was issued by the

Mr. Macartney.]

electoral registrar. I take that period because I do not think there has been any period for a year or two before or after that date when the rolls were as complete as they were then. The rolls have certainly become very much more disorganised since, and I think the figures at the present time would not be anything like so reliable. I think that agrees pretty well with the position taken up by the hon. the Home Secretary last night with respect to certain other figures. At that time the Philp Government was in power, and from the return I have extracted the number of electors represented by the parties on each side of the House. At that time the Opposition represented 46,351 electors. The Opposition numbered 30, which gave an average of 1,545 electors. The Government party at that time numbered 42, and they represented 65,009 electors, which gave the average of 1,548 represented by each member; so that the Government members at that time represented in each case an average of three more electors than the Opposition party. A change having taken place during last year, I extracted another set of figures. At the time of the last dissolution we had 36 on that side of the House, and 36 on this side, which, worked out, showed that 36 gentlemen on the one side represented an average of 1,561 electors, while the 36 on the other side represented 1,533, or only a difference of something like 30 per member. I think it must be admitted that there was no very great inequality in connection with the representation under the present franchise, speaking generally; but I am inclined to think that under the alterations which this Bill makes there will be a very large difference. What will be the position when the women are added to the roll? We shall simply find that in the large centres of population the rolls will be doubled—probably more than doubled in some cases—whereas the outside electorates will, by reason of the absence or the non-existence of a proportionate number of women, remain pretty much the same, and the result will be that the difference will be very largely exaggerated—probably more than doubled. I do not think that that will be arriving at that state of things which hon. members on the other side have been advocating for so many years. I would like to say now that I have no objection whatever to adult suffrage. I have spoken in favour of it from the time that I became a candidate for Parliament. But what I want to see here is adult suffrage, not something else under the name of adult suffrage. Let us have equal political power; let every man in the country whatever his state be, whether he be a wealthy man or a poor man, have equal power, and then we will have what is called adult suffrage. I think until we get that we are only going away from what hon. gentlemen call an inequality in one direction to a greater inequality in the other. Before we can allow this Bill to go through, the gentlemen who represent the populous electorates hold a duty to those electorates; they will have to see that they give nothing away that those electorates are entitled to until they get that which they are entitled to as against the others. The Premier, when speaking at Warwick and extending his manifesto, was very pointed in saying that never in the history of Queensland had we such a country Government as we had at the present time. He drew a distinction between the country and the centres of population. In view of that statement I say that every man who

[4.30 p.m.] represents a populated electorate is in duty bound to see that the centres of population are protected as against what may be termed the interests of the country electorates. What I want is absolute fair play, and I ask for nothing else. [The HOME

SECRETARY: You can only get fair play step by step.] I am quite prepared to admit that there is a good deal in what the hon. gentleman says, but I think there is no difficulty in putting on the table the whole of the measures necessary to complete electoral reform, and letting every member on either side know what that reform is and what will be its effect. But here we find that the Government, who are pledged to carry out electoral reform, instead of placing before the House the whole of the measures necessary to accomplish that object, simply put on the table one Bill which certain hon. members on the other side so much desire, and leave it to luck whether they will introduce the other measures or get them through. If this Bill is passed and a general election is sprung upon us, then the provisions of the Bill will come into operation, and we shall go to the country on a more unequal franchise than we have ever had. Hundreds of things may happen to prevent the hon. gentleman who leads the Government introducing the other measures to complete electoral reform. I regret that the Premier is not present this afternoon, when a matter of so much importance to the State is being discussed. The hon. gentleman, though a country member, is in the position of a trustee for the whole of the people; and is he so foolish as to introduce and pass a Bill which the party behind him are so anxious to get, without protecting the rest of the community? When this Bill is put through, hon. members on the other side can say that they will or will not support the other measures, and if they refuse to support them we shall have only one portion of reform, which will have an effect contrary to what is desired by the people. [Mr. McDONNELL: Are you opposed to the Bill?] I have told the House that I am in favour of adult suffrage, and I have told my electors that while I am a supporter of adult suffrage I will not support any measure which does not give the true electoral reform desired by the people. I do not say one thing to the electors for the purpose of getting votes, and then say another thing elsewhere. Should this Bill be passed by itself, the other portions of electoral reform may be postponed for years, possibly until one or two Parliaments have been returned on the new system now proposed. I know that a large number of members on the other side are opposed to the one vote one value provision of the Bill, and in this connection I should like to say that I have never asked for anything like absolutely one vote one value. I recognise that there has to be a certain amount of give and take in the matter. Twenty per cent. one way or the other may be a reasonable thing; personally, having regard to the difference between State and Commonwealth electorates, the percentage should be less, but I certainly think we should get as near fairness as possible. There are a certain number of members on the other side who have spoken in favour of one vote one value, as, for instance, the hon. member who represents Charters Towers and one or two other hon. members representing centres of population. It is natural that such representatives should favour that principle. I do not see why because people happen to be in greater numbers in one place they should be deprived of equal consideration with others. Hon. members opposite have for years been preaching that we should have representation of souls, not acres; and now when they have an opportunity of carrying out that doctrine they speak as if souls were of no account, but that acres should be represented. [The HOME SECRETARY: They were speaking about an equal number of votes in each constituency, and that is what they objected to.] The hon. gentleman may try to draw a red herring across the track by explain-

[Mr. Macartney.]

ing the matter in that way; but he knows me sufficiently well to know that I do not advocate that there should be an absolutely equal number of votes in each constituency. [The HOME SECRETARY: That is what they were speaking against on this side.] If that is so, then that is all the more reason why we should have the complete measures of electoral reform before us, and not merely one portion of that reform. Hon. members opposite may oppose the other measures, or the hon. gentleman who leads the Government may give place to somebody else who may say, "I did not give this pledge." We must take no risks, and I say unhesitatingly that it would be a gross piece of treachery if that reform was not completed and given to the people. We have no strong assurance that this Bill is not going to come into operation until we get the other Bills passed, and hon. members opposite may say when this measure is passed that they do not care whether the others are passed or not. [The HOME SECRETARY: We are anxious to get the others, I can assure you.] The hon. member may speak for himself. [Mr. KERR: We are all anxious to get the other measures.] I am not prepared to take a pig in a poke from the hon. member. We are trustees for the people, and what we want to see is an assurance of safety. I know that my voice will not have any very great effect on the passing of the second reading of this Bill, or probably in obtaining amendments to the Bill, but so far as I am concerned any opposition or protest that I can offer against the passing of the Bill, without a reasonable provision which will delay its operation until we get the balance of the reform, will certainly be offered. One reason which has been pleaded for not dealing with the other portions of the reform now is that they would entail a redistribution, and that in a redistribution a reduction in the number of members would be necessary. And the Premier told us that it would be perfectly ridiculous to pass a Referendum Bill to submit the question of a reduction of members to the people at the present time, as that would mean political suicide, and therefore that measure must stand over until towards the latter end of the Parliament, and it follows that for the same reason so must the question of one vote one value. Hon. members on the other side who may be in favour of one vote one value are not in favour of a reduction in the number of members, and as a consequence both the question of a reduction of members and that of one vote one value may be so postponed as to leave a very wide margin of risk of our having to go to election on the very unequal state of things which this Bill will have brought about. There is no question about the antipathy of hon. members on the other side to a reduction of members. If the leader of the Government is sincere in the reform which he outlined in his manifesto, he is called upon to protect himself, in carrying out that reform, not only against members on this side, but against members on that side of the House. The hon. gentleman knows there are members on that side of the House who are against the reduction that he has promised, and he knows there are members who are against considerations of value. The hon. gentleman can easily protect himself by putting a provision in this Bill that it is not to come into operation until those other questions have been dealt with; and, if he does not do that, he will be committing an act of political treachery against the people of this State. [Mr. BOWMAN: There are no rats here.] It has been suggested that this Bill, of itself, will not be effective in giving the women of Queensland a vote if a dissolution came about at an early date. I can see no reasonable grounds for that argument. As far as I can see, this Bill extends the

franchise to women; and if a dissolution took place the elections would have to proceed, on the franchise provided by this measure, under the machinery at present in existence. I seriously ask the Home Secretary if he is not prepared to admit that, if a reduction of members is not agreed to or if the provisions of value are not brought in, that would not be the position? [Mr. RYLAND: You are entirely wrong.] [The HOME SECRETARY: Not necessarily so.] I venture to say that the hon. member for Gympie says that I am entirely wrong, in entire ignorance of the subject. The Home Secretary himself, in a cautious manner, says that it is not necessarily so; but I say, with all confidence, that it is necessarily so. This Bill simply alters the franchise and confers it on women, and under the present electoral law we have all the machinery that is necessary to put the women of the State on the rolls, provided the administration of the Act is as it ought to be. I do not know that it is necessary for me to carry the matter any further. A great deal more can be said in connection with the Bill when it gets into committee, and, if no one else does it, I shall certainly move an amendment in the direction of securing for the people of the State the full measure of reform which was promised by the Premier in his manifesto, and which has been promised by members on both sides of the House. I certainly shall oppose any step—so far as it is in my power to do so—which will deprive the populous centres of the State of rights which they now have, without giving them the substitute to which they are entitled. Just before I sit down I would like to point out that the Commonwealth Act settled the question of value. There is no reason why we should not settle it at the present time. In the Commonwealth Act a provision of value was provided, and it was directed that a commissioner should be appointed for the purpose of equalising the electorates. Mr. McDowall was appointed commissioner for Queensland—one of the most respected residents of Queensland, one of the oldest Government servants, and a man who knew his work thoroughly. No man in Queensland was better fitted to undertake the work which he was appointed to perform. He divided the State in accordance with the provisions of the Act; he sent in his report, and, at the instance of a gentleman who belongs to the same party as many of my friends on the other side, that report was set aside; and we have to-day, at the instance of the very gentlemen who are protesting at the present time, an unequal state of things under the Federal Act. So much for the *bona fides* of politicians in carrying out provisions which are against their own ideas, and that is one reason why I would refuse—in a matter of this importance, at any rate—to give anything away upon trust.

After a pause,

Mr. FORSYTH (*Carpentaria*): The reason why I did not get up sooner—[Hon. R. PHILP: Let the other side speak.] That is the very reason why I waited; but I did not wish to wait until the Speaker had put the question. I certainly thought some hon. member on the other side would have spoken, but it is quite evident that there is not the slightest intention on their part of speaking. They are so anxious to get the Bill passed that they are quite willing to let it go without debate. I congratulate the Home Secretary upon the splendid speech he delivered last night. He went fairly fully into the question, though, no doubt, a good deal of what he said was more connected with an Elections Bill than with a Franchise Bill; but there is no doubt that it is

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difficult to keep the two subjects apart. I am delighted that the way in which the hon. member introduced the Bill was diametrically opposed to the opinions expressed by another gentleman, who—I do not say in the House or out of it—stated that this side of the House would have to accept the Franchise Bill whether we liked it or not, and that, as a matter of fact, it would be forced down our throats—so much so, that we would not get it all at once, but we would get it in doses *ad nauseam*. I am exceedingly pleased that the hon. gentleman did not adopt that attitude, because I can assure him that, if that sort of thing is said in this House, it is not likely to lead to business being got through in a hurry. I think that kind of thing has the very opposite effect. We have had a great deal of discussion in connection with adult suffrage for many years. There has been a great deal of discussion as to the real value of adult suffrage. Now we are led to understand that a large majority of members, especially Labour members, are in favour of the principle of one man one vote one value, which is universal suffrage; but it is most remarkable that, although there are a few who certainly believe in that principle, the great majority of members opposite really do not. I remember the first session I was here, in 1899, a Bill was introduced providing for one man one vote, and it was no fault of the Government that it did not get through. The leader of the Labour party, sitting where we are now, stated that he believed in the principle of adult suffrage, and he was exceedingly pleased the Government of the day had brought it forward. He also stated, and I do not think the Labour party now believe it, that that necessarily meant a redistribution of seats and probably an Elections Bill. I will make a quotation in reference to this matter to show clearly what the opinion of the then leader of the Labour party was. The Secretary for Lands had interrupted Mr. Dawson by saying—

The values are not equal.

And Mr. Dawson said—

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

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

That is the point raised by the hon. member for Toowong. In my electorate we have 640 voters, and, unless there is some alteration made, it means that instead of having the plural vote we will have men whose vote is practically equal to six votes in some other electorates. Mr. Dawson went on to say—

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

Well, as a matter of fact the present Government do not appear to think that at all. [THE HOME SECRETARY: I think a redistribution of seats is a necessity.] [MR. MACARTNEY: You did not make it very clear.] No, the hon. gentleman did not; but I am exceedingly glad to think that that is his opinion. We had it from the Premier last year that he intended to bring in a Redistribution Bill, and we heard from the hon. member for Bulloo last night how the Premier's opinion has altered since. The Premier will not now give us a redistribution Bill; but he will give a referendum, and we will not even get the referendum this year. Anyone reading his speeches, both in the House and

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outside of it, will see that the reason why he does not bring in a referendum this year is because he would be committing political suicide by so doing. On more than one occasion the Premier has distinctly stated that there is no place in the world where they have the principle of one adult one vote one value, and I quoted the Federal Elections Act. Clause 16 makes the position absolutely clear—

Subject thereto the quota of electors shall be the basis of distribution.

Suppose we agreed to reduce our number to fifty-six, and say we have 224,000 electors; then if you divide that by fifty-six you get 4,000 as the quota. That is the exact meaning of the Commonwealth Act, and the Act goes on to say that the Commissioner may adopt a margin of allowance to be used whenever necessary, but in no case shall the quota be departed from to a greater extent than one-fifth more or one-fifth less. Those words being inserted make the principle of one adult one vote elastic. Then, again, the Commissioner must take into consideration community of interests, means of communication, physical features, existing boundaries, etc. No one, therefore, can convince me that the principle of one adult one vote one value is not in the Federal Elections Act. [THE HOME SECRETARY: There is at least an approximation to it.] Of course it would be an absurdity to say that you must have exactly 4,000 electors in each electorate, but you must get as near to it as you can. The object of allowing a margin is to meet the cases of sparsely populated districts, such as Burke, Carpentaria, and Bulloo, and it might be advisable if the Government in the case of three or four of our electorates did not put that principle into operation altogether. I do not say that because it would affect Carpentaria, because on a former occasion I stated that I believed in the principle of one adult one vote one value, although I knew that, as far as I was individually concerned, it would mean loss of my seat. Now, why are hon. members opposite anxious for this Adult Suffrage Bill to pass? Is it because it is going to benefit the people generally? I venture to say that the reason why some members of the Labour party have always advocated adult suffrage is something quite different to what they have stated.

They believe that the passing of this [5 p.m.] Bill will be the means of strengthening their position in this House. It is quite true that the Home Secretary stated in his speech last night that he did not think it would make very much difference as far as the bulk of the electorates was concerned, yet there seems to be a fairly general opinion amongst the members and supporters of the Labour party that once this Bill and the machinery Bill are through it will mean that the position of the Labour party will be strengthened in this House. I think I am not wrong in saying that that is the general opinion outside also. They want the Bill passed—not because it is going to benefit the outside electorates; they look upon it from the selfish point of view that it is going to strengthen the Labour members and the Labour party. We have only to consider the printed utterances of Labour members during the recent general election. We have one hon. member saying that when they get adult suffrage the result of the next election, which he anticipated would take place in March, would be that the party would come back so strong that there would be a purely Labour Government. Then we have another member of that party—the hon. member for Clermont—saying that once they got the Adult Suffrage Bill through then, as far as the other side of the House was

concerned, the deluge. [Mr. COWAP: That has come true without it.] It has, to a certain extent. If I may draw an inference from the hon. member's interjection, he seems to be of the same opinion. [Mr. COWAP: Did I say so?] We arrive at conclusions by analogy and inference, and that is the conclusion I arrive at. But whether I am right or wrong I believe it is the general opinion of the Labour party. We have had some very strong animadversions from the leader of the Labour party on the speech delivered by the hon. member for Bulloo last night. I venture to say that the hon. member for Bulloo has a greater general knowledge of election matters than any other member of the House. He has made it a special study for many years. [Mr. KERR: Rigging the rolls.] He gave the House information last night which I hope the members of the Labour party will take into their serious consideration. The trouble is that in endeavouring to explain a very complex matter I am afraid some of them did not exactly understand what was meant. One of the reasons given by the Hon. the Home Secretary last night why we should have the Franchise Bill was because the Federal Government had passed a Franchise Bill and it was only right and proper that we should follow on the same lines. [The HOME SECRETARY: I did not say exactly like it.] The argument of the hon. member for Bulloo went to show that there was no uniformity in the conditions, that the conditions in the various States and in New Zealand are different, and that because the Federal Government had passed a Bill in a certain way that was no reason why we should follow them. The Home Secretary showed that under the Federal Franchise Act the number of names on the various Queensland rolls—reckoning adult males only—was far greater than on our own State rolls, and he instanced, amongst other places, his own electorate and Fortitude Valley. How did this thing work? I made some inquiries as to how the thing was worked in my own electorate of Carpentaria. A strange thing occurred there. I will mention the case of two polling-places—Canobie and Westwood. Canobie station, I can prove, has not more than eight men upon it. The federal roll for Canobie contains the names of no fewer than sixty-nine residents. It is only a cattle station, and it is impossible for sixty-nine men to be employed there. In fact, there are only some 640 in the whole electorate. [An honourable member: Did they all vote at Canobie station?] I do not think they did. Now, on Westmoreland there are employed two or three white men and a few blacks to look after 2,000 or 3,000 head of cattle. There were no less than twenty-eight men down on the roll. I do not think for one moment that the men were not there when the police were sent down to collect the names. In fact, I believe the men were there, but of course they may have got in by being a month or six weeks there. I am arguing now from the point of view of the Carpentaria electorate being one of the new electorates in connection with the working of this particular Act. The position is that, although there were twenty-eight votes on this particular station and four at another station, making up thirty-two for that particular place, there were only four voted. There were sixty-nine names on the roll in one case, of which only eight voted. It was quite evident that the people had left or they would have voted. The consequence is that these men did not vote. They were very busy for the time being; they had an enormous number of cattle in the Gulf at the time, and large numbers of men came from all over the district, and all over Queensland probably, for the purpose of shifting the cattle from the outlying stations, as they have done this year. These men were

away for over a month or six weeks, and because they happened to be in this particular district for six weeks they got on the roll, and as a matter of fact are still on. They did not vote. They are not residents. If we had the same conditions existing in connection with the State elections, what would be the result? Under the Federal Elections Act you have not got a revision court annually, the same as under our State elections. It is by proclamation, and you do not know when it is going to be held. It would please a large number of these men out of pure curiosity to see where they are. Some of them would be in the Flinders, some at Cunnamulla, and some would have left the country altogether. But the position is this: That if we had an election in Carpentaria under these conditions, these men would represent quite 200 votes, although they were never resident there except for a month or so. They could not be called residents in the truest sense of the word. Their names are not taken off the roll, they are still there, and if an election takes place, no matter whether they are there or not, they could still vote for Carpentaria, at any polling-place where a returning officer or assistant returning officer is, and if they liked to vote in one block, they could absolutely knock out the residents of that particular place. I think we want an alteration there. [Mr. KERR: Get a National Liberal Union there.] It is a peculiar position, and it only shows how all the residents in a certain place may be outvoted by people who have no interest whatever in the place. The hon. member for Barcoo believes it will be a great mistake to have one vote as far as Dunwich is concerned. His suggestion is that these people should still have a vote, but that they should vote for the districts where they came from. I was speaking to the Home Secretary a couple of days ago suggesting a certain clause. A man or woman in Dunwich may probably have lived half a dozen years in Brisbane, and half a dozen in Carpentaria, and they may have lived half a dozen years in Gympie, and we may have three members each fighting as to who is to get their votes. [Mr. RYLAND: Give him a vote for the electorate he last resided in.] Then I understand from the hon. member for Gympie that the electorate that a man should get the vote in is the electorate in which he last resided. He would be placed in an anomalous position in connection with this matter. I think, in the case of the other Bills here, the responsibility should be taken by the other side of the House. Supposing they pass a Franchise Bill, and by some means or other we had a general election before the machinery Bill or Redistribution Bill had passed. Although we had passed the Franchise Bill, the women could not vote, as they are not on the roll. The machinery Bill for conducting the elections would not be in existence, and therefore, although some people say the question would not occur before the next election comes round, how would you get a machinery Bill as far as women are concerned? We have an old State Elections Act, and it appears to me that it would be a most peculiar position to be in. It appears to me that if we adopted the federal electoral roll, so as to get the women a vote, we would have to bring an amending Act in in connection with the Elections Act. There is no provision in that State Elections Bill for women voting, and therefore, under these conditions, we should probably have to use the federal rolls, and have to bring in an amending Act as a machinery Bill for the time being. It would be a most complex position. [The HOME SECRETARY: It is rather a remote contingency.] A "rift in the lute" may take place. For instance, in my electorate there are not so many women as men. A great many reasons were given by the introducer of

the Bill—that it was the expressed will of the people we should have it. In connection with the Redistribution Bill, we are told there is no mandate from the people; but, as a matter of fact, in the elections of 1902 it was really a point in the platform. [Mr. MAXWELL: They were wiped out, though.] They were not wiped out then. They wanted to carry out this very same practice with regard to the Elections Bill, and they were sent back by the people with a majority to carry it out. I only raise these questions to show how matters work out. I shall support the second reading, and assist in carrying the measure through. I think it is a mistake that hon. members on the other side, who are so well up in franchise matters, do not give us their views on the question. They need not do so at great length, but it would be well if they would let us have an expression of their opinions, as we should then, having heard both sides, be in a better position to come to a decision on the measure. As far as I am individually concerned, I have advocated adult suffrage ever since I have been a member of the House, and I shall support the second reading of this Bill.

Mr. PETRIE (*Toombul*): It is not my intention to prolong the debate on the second reading of this Bill. I was hoping that some hon. members opposite would speak, but they seem to have adopted a policy of silence. When they were sitting on this side they used to blame us for not speaking, and say that we were “gagged” and were mere voting machines. I shall not say that they are voting machines; but I am very glad to find that they have arrived at the conclusion that if business is to be done quickly they must not do so much talking. I am in favour of this Bill. At one time I was not in favour of one adult one vote or even of one man one vote; but now, after having looked at the matter from various points of view, I have come to the conclusion that it is a proper thing to give the women a vote, and that I was in error in opposing one man one vote, because it will not do the Labour party any particular harm, and it will do this side more good than we thought. I should like to see the Elections Bill—that is, the machinery measure by which this Bill will be worked—passed in conjunction with this Bill. With regard to the age at which persons are to be entitled to vote, I think that the young men of Queensland who are to be our future legislators are not altogether responsible for their actions at the age of twenty-one years. I say nothing about the young women. We know that in Australia we are a very sporting community, and I remember that when the first federal elections were on I attended a meeting one night, and on going home and taking up the *Telegraph* newspaper I found certain marks placed against the names of candidates for election. Those marks meant that our young people are so much given to sport that they do not study politics at all, but pick out a certain number of candidates whether for the Federal or the State Parliament, and say they will vote for those men. I think we should raise the age limit in this measure. [An honourable member: What about the young women?] I am not a bit frightened as far as the young women or the old women are concerned. I should like to see this Bill become law, because I believe that every sensible woman in the electorate of Toombul would vote for me in preference to a great many others. Some years ago I was asked what about the woman's vote, and I replied that if the women of Toombul had a vote I could simply sit on my veranda and smoke my pipe, and they would return me without any trouble on my part. This may not

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apply later on, as I am getting older now. (Laughter.) I believe that in many cases the women have more sense than the men, and that when an election does take place under this measure they will show more sense than not only men outside Parliament, but men in this House. A lot of objection was at one time urged against

women having a vote, on the ground [5.30 p.m.] that they had to stay at home and

look after their household duties; but women who look after their household affairs can do a lot towards putting the best men into Parliament, and they have done so even when they have had no votes. [Mr. TURNER: That accounts for the strong party on this side.] I would not say that at this time, because I believe there was a wave flowing over the country at the time of the elections, and the people went mad on the subject. Although I give credit to the Premier, and those sitting behind him, for being returned with such a large majority, I think it was because—well, I cannot explain it. (Laughter.) But something happened that we were not responsible for—at all events, that wave passed over, and hon. members opposite were returned with a big majority, while only a few of us got back. I suppose we must thank someone for that; but, at all events, we are here, and we hope that, although we may be small in quantity, our quality is good. We will be able to help the Premier, perhaps, in this Parliament when the second party on his side are inclined to be a little obstreperous. One thing I am strong upon is women having the right to vote by post. Many hon. members on the other side may think that, under a system of voting by post, there would be a lot of trickery, but that is not my opinion. We could amend this Bill in that direction in such a manner that no trickery could possibly occur which would upset an election. [Mr. BURROWS: Not in this Bill.] Yes, in this Bill. I am not speaking now for what some hon. members on the other side may call the women of the upper or capitalistic class, but for women of the working class.

The SPEAKER: Order! I would remind the hon. member that this is not the time to discuss a question of that kind.

Mr. PETRIE: I beg your pardon, Sir, for digressing. I know that it more properly belongs to the machinery Bill, but I have heard other hon. members digressing in the same way. I am in accord with this Bill, and I want to see it passed. The question has been before the House and the country for some time, and the sooner we pass the Bill and extend the franchise the better. But I am astonished that it should have been brought in so early in the session, especially in a short session like this, when important financial questions have to be dealt with. We should have gone on with those proposals, and let this Bill stand over until the end of the session, when it might have been put through, and with it an Elections Bill and a Bill providing for a reduction of members and a redistribution of seats. I am ready, however, to assist the Premier to do the best not only for hon. members on that side of the House, but I am looking at it from a broader standpoint than that—of doing the best we can for the State generally. (Hear, hear.) If the majority of hon. members think fit to pass this Bill, I am with them; but I hope that, in committee, some amendment will be moved with regard to allowing women to vote by post.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. PETRIE: Well, I will not go further with that matter, although, if the machinery Bill were before us, I might have a good deal

more to say about it. If the other Bills to which allusion has been made are passed, it may lead to the appointment of a commission to define the boundaries of the new electorates. That will come, whether we like it or not; and, if we have to cut down expenses, we should commence at the top of the tree. We had a very good example set us last night by His Excellency the Governor. I regret very much that he should have resigned. There is no doubt that His Excellency has had in view for some time—

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. PETRIE: If we are going to cut down the civil servants and go in for retrenchment, we should certainly begin at the top of the tree and cut down ourselves. [Mr. MANN: What has this to do with the Bill?] I take it that we are going to cut down the cost of elections—not through this Bill, I admit—and, if we are to keep our expenditure within our revenue, we must begin with ourselves. I hope that this Bill will be passed, though I do not want to see it passed without some conditions being laid down as to how elections are to be carried out in future. We are not altogether on the lines of the Federal Parliament, who, I understand, have provided that the inmates of such charitable institutions as Dunwich shall have a vote. Some hon. members on the other side are of opinion that these people should be enfranchised on the ground that they are old colonists who have done good service to the State, but I do not altogether agree that they should have a vote, and probably when the question is brought up in committee I shall have more to say about it. Hon. members opposite tell us we are taking up too much time. Formerly, when we sat opposite, they accused us of being voting machines. I am glad to have an opportunity of throwing that statement in their teeth now that they are where we used to be.

The SPEAKER: Order! I must remind the hon. member that his remarks are not relevant to the subject before the House, and I must ask him to confine himself to the Bill.

Mr. PETRIE: I apologise for transgressing again. There is a provision in this Bill that—

No aboriginal native of Australia, Asia, Africa, or the islands of the Pacific, shall be entitled to have his name placed on an electoral roll.

Now, I have from childhood known a good deal about the aboriginal natives, and I know that some of them who have had the advantage of being slightly educated are highly intelligent—more so, perhaps, than some members of this House, or some persons outside of it. To show that some of these men have a good deal of common sense, I may say that some years ago the Government were so hard up that they had to economise in the annual distribution of blankets to the blacks, confining the distribution to the older men and women. One man came to me and complained that while the young fellows were getting no blankets, some of the older men were getting two and three each and selling them. Later on he repeated his complaint, and said: "Look here, boss, I have always voted for the Government, but if they don't give me a blanket I will vote for the Labour party." (Laughter.) We have taken these people's country, and we now want to exclude them from all our privileges. I think that some of those natives, many of whom I regret to say are half-castes, who are trying to earn an honest living, who have been educated by the State, and who have had homes found for them by the State, should be allowed to have at least a say in the matters of the State. It is very unkind, to say the least, that they should be debarred from that privilege because

they are of a different colour. Probably, hon. members will say I am talking a lot of nonsense. [Honourable members: Hear, hear!] I do not think so. I do not think any race should be despised because of its colour. I would like to see a white Australia as well as any hon. member on the other side, but the climatic conditions of the North will not permit of it. [An honourable member: Have you ever been there?] I have been a good way North, though not all over it, and I would advise some hon. members opposite to travel more and get their minds broadened. I notice that clause 4 of the Bill provides that inmates of charitable institutions are not to have the privilege of the franchise. I do not know how the majority of hon. members feel about that provision; but there are men at Dunwich, pioneers and others, who have borne the heat and burden of the day and helped to make Queensland what it is; who have, through unforeseen circumstances, come down in the world. I am in doubt whether they should be debarred from voting. The point is an important one, and I am not sure, when the matter comes up in committee, that I shall not vote for an amendment in that direction should one be proposed. Voting by post may seem a simple thing to many, but to the working classes—

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. PETRIE: I will not take up the time of the House any longer, but I am glad to have had an opportunity of giving my views on these various questions. I am not going to block business, but to assist the Premier and his supporters in passing legislation which I believe will be for the benefit of the whole people of Queensland. Notwithstanding this, there is certain legislation which I do not believe is conducive to their interests. In fact, in the past we have had too much legislation with very bad administration. (Government laughter.) I congratulate the Home Secretary on the address [7 p.m.] he made when introducing this Bill, and I would also like to congratulate the other speakers who followed him. In conclusion, I can only say these words—I am not a poet, and I have tried to put it into as plain language as possible—and they are these—

Airey framed a little Bill,
Designed the fatman's vote to kill.
His party generally were mute—
The Opposition used the flute.

When Airey's little Bill goes through,
Heaven and earth will smile anew;
Each woman then will be a queen:
Three meals a day—no work between.

[Government members: The member for Warrego drew that up.] [Mr. P. J. LEAHY: That's a libel on me. If the Home Secretary writes doggerel, I don't.]

* Mr. P. J. LEAHY (*Warrego*): I have no desire to speak at the present moment, especially as I understood that by arrangement an hon. member on the other side would get up and favour the House with his views; but as no one appears prepared to do so, and as I do not think this Bill has been sufficiently debated, I have decided to fill the breach. I think it is rather a lamentable fact that hon. members opposite have not given adequate reasons in support of this Bill. It is true enough that the Home Secretary did his best, and his best in this instance—whatever it may amount to in other instances—amounted to a good deal. But if this Bill rested simply upon the arguments given by the Home Secretary, I do not think the House would be warranted in passing it. I do not wish that remark to be construed in any way as an indication that I intend to vote against the

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Bill, because, as a matter of fact, I do not; but I think it is only fair that members who have information on the subject should give that information to the House, whether it may tend against the Bill or not. I intend to take a somewhat comprehensive view of this question; in fact, it is my intention to take a comprehensive survey of all the franchises of the leading countries of the world. [Honourable members: Hear, hear!] I am glad that hon. members say, "Hear, hear," because it is a recognition of the fact that they require information upon this subject. Before I commence to deal with the franchises of the world, I think it is pertinent to ask what is the object of a franchise, and upon what should it be based? I take it that the object of a franchise is to enable the people of a country—the permanent, *bonâ fide* residents of a country—to elect the members of the Legislature, which will enact such laws as will meet with the approval of the people of that country. The next thing to consider is what form of franchise is most likely to give effect to the will of the real, permanent citizens of a country. When I say permanent citizens of a country, I do not mean persons who may be temporarily there—men who, for instance, might come into Queensland for a few months and then go away to New South Wales. [Mr. MANN: The only permanent residents are in the cemeteries.] That may be so; but I take it that this Bill is not for dead men and dead women; it is a Bill for live men and live women, and it is only with regard to live men and live women that I intend to speak. Having explained the object of the franchise, and the class of people who in my opinion should exercise it, I think it is pertinent to make some observations as to the franchise that prevails in other countries. I have no desire to refer at any length to the Australian franchise, because in speaking on the Address in Reply I referred somewhat briefly to it, and other speakers on this Bill have dealt somewhat fully with the different franchises which exist throughout Australia. I really think we have heard a great deal too much, both inside and outside this House, as to the alleged fact that Queensland is behind the other parts of Australia in the matter of the franchise. For years the journals of the party opposite, and the leaders of the party, and even obscure followers of the party, have been telling the public that Queensland has been lagging behind in this matter, and they have conveyed the impression to the public that the Government which last year controlled the destinies of this country was a Government composed of strong Conservatives. The fact is that persons who have spoken in this debate have shown that the franchise of Queensland is more liberal than the franchise of some of the other Australian States. The Premier told us in speaking on this Bill that there was a mandate from the people in favour of it. The hon. gentleman did not explain to us in what way that mandate was arrived at. I could show, if I felt disposed to do it, that there was a mandate of the people against it. I should certainly, at any rate, be as logical in saying that there was a mandate of the people against this Bill as the Premier would be in saying there was a mandate in favour of it. What right has the Premier to assume, because he and the party with which he is associated when they went to the country came back with a majority, and because this one particular measure was included in the Premier's manifesto—what right has he to assume that he has received a mandate from the people in regard to that particular matter? Do we not all know that the manifesto of the leader of the Opposition also contained this matter of electoral reform, and that the public by

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a very large majority returned opponents of the then leader of the Opposition, Sir Arthur Rutledge? From that fact I might reason with as much logic as the Premier has done that, because Sir Arthur Rutledge in his manifesto expressed the view that adult franchise should be granted, and the public went against Sir Arthur Rutledge, they were of the opinion that adult franchise should not be granted. There is as much sense in the one argument as in the other. The truth of the matter is that there were so many matters besides electoral reform brought before the people that it cannot be said that there was any mandate in regard to this particular matter. I do not say that the people are not in favour of one adult one vote, I am rather inclined to think that they are in favour of it, and I am not opposed to the principle being carried out. It has been said that at the same time as we deal with this question we should deal with the question of a reduction of members and a redistribution of seats, and I think there is a great deal in that argument. While I am in favour of the principle of this Bill I do not see that there is any urgency for the measure—I do not see why this Bill should not remain over till next year, when we could deal with the whole of the matters together. There are matters of much more importance and urgency than this particular matter which should engage our attention at the present time. There is the matter of land legislation, and matter of dealing with the rabbits, and other matters that are of more pressing importance than this particular measure, and that should be brought before the House so that they could receive early consideration. However, as this Bill is before the House, it is our duty to express our opinions in regard to it. I do not desire to refer at any considerable length to the question of equal representation, or one vote one value as it is commonly called. On the whole, the Premier was fairly right when he said that absolute equality of representation is impossible, and, for my own part, I should be satisfied with some such arrangement as he suggested of 20 per cent. above or below a certain quota. Logic is in favour of absolute equality of representation as far as it can possibly be obtained, because if it is right that one man should have one vote, and one vote only, there can be no justification for 300 or 400 men in one place having the same voting power as 600 in another. I do not think there should be absolute equality of representation, because that would mean the disfranchisement of some remote places. If it is not desirable to have absolute equality of representation, then it is open to argument whether one adult one vote is a proper principle to adopt. If hon. members hold the view that there should be one adult one vote, and desire to be absolutely logical, there is no doubt that the logical corollary to that is one vote one value. At the same time I recognise that injustice would be inflicted on many remote places if we had one vote one value, and I am of opinion that the suggestion of the Premier is as reasonable as the circumstances warrant. There are many reasons why every person in the community should not have a vote. I entirely agree with the Home Secretary that the inmates of Dunwich should not have votes. I think I have as much sympathy with those old and unfortunate people as any man; but, however valuable they may have been to the State in their time, there is no getting away from the fact that at the present time they are living on the charity of the State. They are not paying any taxes, nor are they in any form contributing to the wealth of the State, and while it is the duty of the State to maintain those people I do not think it is any part of the duty of the

State to put them on the same plane as men who pay taxes, and upon whom the whole financial and political responsibility depends. We have been told a great deal by the Home Secretary and other people as to what was the effect of broadening the franchise in Great Britain. But do hon. members imagine that because the broadening of the franchise in England—first in 1832 and later on in 1867—was beneficial, there ought to be absolutely no limit to the extent to which the franchise should be broadened? It is a perfectly correct principle to lay down with regard to the franchise, or railway rates, or any other matter, that there is a certain point at which the maximum of advantage can be obtained, and that we should not remain below or go above that point. It does not follow, because the broadening of the franchise in England on the occasions I have mentioned had a beneficial effect, that a further broadening of the franchise would be attended with equally satisfactory results. In Queensland at the present moment, and in nearly all the Australian States, we have a franchise which is very much more liberal than in England; and though the franchise in England has given satisfaction, and is working very smoothly, it does not by any means follow that a too great departure from that franchise would work in the same smooth and satisfactory manner. With regard to the statement we have heard inside and outside this House that great material advantages would spring from a widening of the franchise, I was glad to notice that the Home Secretary did not think that any great material advantages would result from the passage of this measure. That is, however, by no means the view of the Labour men outside this House. I remember not very long ago—I think it was in May last—the *Worker*, which may be fairly held to embody the views of the greater portion of the Labour party in Queensland, contained something to this effect: It said, "You are told that the franchise will confer no material benefit upon you; that statement is entirely incorrect—the franchise will put a new roof over your head, repair your fences, give you a new tent to sleep in, add a fragrance to the rose and make cabbages grow prodigiously, provide wives for single men and husbands for single women." When the public have been told that all those material advantages will result from carrying out this franchise, is it any wonder that a certain class are clamouring for it? But, when we take into account the franchise as it exists in other countries, we find that there is absolutely no connection between the material welfare of a country and the franchise which exists in that country. I have collected the latest information on this subject, and it will probably be of advantage to hon. members if I state briefly what the franchise is in those countries. I find that in Canada there is no federal franchise. In Ontario there is manhood suffrage after twelve months in the State and three months in the province. In Manitoba it is the same. British Columbia—Manhood suffrage, six months in province and three months in State. Quebec—Ownership or occupancy of real property, position as teachers or clergymen, income or personal property of specified amount. In Nova Scotia—Ownership or occupancy of real property valued at 150 dollars; real or personal property; real and personal property or personal property alone, 300 dollars; widows' sons, 150 dollars; fishermen, 150 dollars or income of 250 dollars and residence in electoral district for twelve months. In New Brunswick—Ownership of real property valued at 100, or personal and real, 400 dollars; position of clergyman, teachers, or professors in colleges, income of 400 dollars; residence in electoral district

for twelve months. In Prince Edward Island—Full age males and property qualification. Coming to the United States, which probably is at the present moment the greatest and the richest country in the world, I find that there is no such thing as a federal franchise at all. Those people consist of, probably, some of the best people from all the countries in Europe; they have had an experience of a century and a quarter, and yet up to the present moment they have not taken the trouble to frame a federal franchise. Citizens vote according to the State franchises: In general such voters are all male citizens over twenty-one years. Neither race nor colour affects the right of citizens. Franchise is not absolutely universal. Residence for at least one year in most States; in some States payment of taxes. Several of the Southern States have adopted methods with avowed purpose of excluding negroes from franchise, and yet avoiding the constitutional consequences of discriminating "on account of race, colour, or previous condition of servitude." Colorado, Idaho, Utah, and Wyoming admit women to franchise. While speaking on this subject, I would like to read a comparatively brief extract from an up-to-date American book. It says—

The non-admission of women to the suffrage was the universal practice in every country having the representative system until about thirty years ago, when some of the American territories began a new system. There are now four States—Colorado, Wyoming, Idaho, and Utah—in which women have suffrage; one, Washington, in which they formerly had it, but have now lost it. In several of the other States, woman-suffrage amendments have been submitted, but have failed of popular approval; others, among them Kansas, give the municipal suffrage; Iowa and Montana allow a vote on the issue of bonds and like financial questions; many more allow women to vote for school officers. About twenty-five of the forty-five States recognise the right of women to participate to some degree in the choice of public officers and the decision of public questions.

The writer goes on at considerable length, and winds up as follows:—

Although full woman suffrage is now making way in the north-western communities, it has for many years made no gain in the older communities.

With regard to other countries, many of which are as advanced as we are in Australia, it is possibly desirable that I should give a little information. In all the countries I shall refer to I shall only give the franchise for the Lower House, in order that the comparison may be as fair as possible. In the Lower House in Austria the franchise is—All citizens twenty-four years of age and possessed of a small property qualification. Eighty-five represent landed proprietors; 21 trade and commerce; 118 the towns; 129 rural districts; and 72 whole body of male citizens. There are thus five classes of electors. Females who have property can vote. This is the franchise in Hungary: The voters are all male citizens of twenty years of age who pay a small direct tax on house property or land, or an income varying with occupation. I now come to Belgium—a country which at one time did confer the franchise upon women. There were many enthusiasts there who thought the salvation of the country might be brought about by conferring the franchise on women, and yet we find that the franchise in Belgium to-day is not so broad as it is in Queensland. I am putting it wrongly. The franchise in Belgium is broader in one respect than ours, inasmuch as they give a vote to families, which we do not give here. This is somewhat similar to a proposal introduced into this House two or three years ago, and which was ridiculed by unthinking people as the "baby vote." Yet it has worked with perfect satisfaction in Belgium. I may say, in passing, that in many countries men must be considerably more than twenty-one years of age before they become entitled to the

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franchise. This is the franchise in Belgium. Every citizen over twenty-five years has a vote. Every citizen over thirty-five years, married or widower, with legitimate issue and paying at least 5 francs a year in house tax, has an additional vote. Two supplementary votes are given to citizens over twenty-five years who have certain educational qualifications. Failure to vote is a misdemeanour punishable by law. In Germany they have universal suffrage, and in connection with that I believe the Home Secretary was probably right when he told us that it may turn out, after all, that this will not be a measure that will play into the hands of the Labour party, because we know that, notwithstanding the fact that they have the widest possible franchise in Germany, there is far less real liberty than there is in Australia; and, though there is a small Socialistic party, a Labour party as it exists in Australia is unknown in that country. Referring to some other countries, I find that in Saxony the franchise is confined to men over twenty-five years of age, who pay a certain direct contribution to the State. In Greece there is manhood suffrage, but not adult suffrage. There is a country with a civilisation over 2,000 years old—a country which was the home of liberty, which has been almost the mother of liberty—and which had a democratic population and a democratic form of government probably before Australia rose from the sea. After 2,000 years of civilisation we find that it is still confined to manhood suffrage, and that its franchise is a good deal more restricted than it is in Queensland. Are we to be told, in our arrogance and conceit, that we, a mere mushroom community, possess wisdom to a far greater extent than the people of a country with a civilisation of 2,000 years? I now come to another classical country—Italy. There all voters must be over twenty-one years, who can read and write, who have one or other of the following qualifications:—A certain standard in elementary education or must pay direct taxation. Few of us pay direct taxation. And though our franchise is more liberal than theirs we are told that we are lagging behind the age. Leaving Italy and coming to Japan, I find that in that country an election took place in 1902, and the franchise is confined to male voters upwards of twenty-five years of age who pay a certain tax. I do not say that we are bound to follow the example of Japan, because it is a country whose civilisation, as we understand the term, is of a comparatively recent order, though the country is very progressive in other matters. In Mexico they have a most extraordinary qualification—a qualification which if anyone attempted to introduce it here would be ridiculed. The qualification is for respectable male voters.

[7.30 p.m.] If that were a qualification here, would we have the same number of electors on the roll? I do not know whether it is possible to put in such a qualification here, but if we could in some way improve the standard it might be desirable. Coming to the Netherlands, that is an old civilised country, and the franchise is conferred upon male citizens of twenty-five years, who pay certain State taxes, householders who pay rent or are in receipt of a certain annual salary, or are in possession of a savings bank deposit of £50. They do not ridicule thrift in that country. The modern Australian democrat tells us that thrift is a crime; but in the older countries of the world it is not so regarded. In some parts of the world, the mere fact of a man being thrifty gives him a vote. In Portugal, another old civilised country, the franchise is conferred on all citizens of twenty-one years of age who can read and

write, and who pay taxes, and they exclude all convicts, bankrupts, beggars, domestic servants, workmen in the service of the Government, and soldiers. And not only have they certain restrictions as regards voters, but they have an educational qualification for members of Parliament. In Spain, another country with a very old civilisation, the voting is confined to all citizens of twenty-five years, and they must reside for two years in the country. In Sweden and Norway the franchise is confined to persons of twenty-one years, and they must possess property to a certain amount, or pay a certain amount of taxes. There is also a very novel provision in that country. The duration of Parliaments must not exceed eight weeks without the special permission of the King, and though that might be somewhat foreign to a Bill of this nature, I think some such limitation would be an excellent provision. In Switzerland that we have heard so much about, the home of the "initiative" and the "referendum," a country from which so many of the planks of the Labour party's platform is taken, I find that every citizen of twenty-one is entitled to a vote for the Federal Parliament. In some of the smaller cantons the people exercise their power direct without any parliamentary machinery. All adult males meet in the open and vote according as they think fit, and appoint their administrators. In our sparsely populated country I do not think we could adopt such a system. Coming now to the colony of Natal, which enjoys the same privilege of self-government as we do, I find that the electors who are qualified to vote are those possessed of immovable property to the value of £50, or those who pay rent to the value of £10, or have resided three years in the colony, or have an income of £96 per year. We do not hear any cry from Natal about people being disfranchised. We do not hear any cry about adult suffrage or the masses groaning under bad laws such as the hon. member for Barcoo talked about, and yet Natal, bearing in mind the conditions which exist there, is as prosperous as we are, if not more so. I only mention these things to confirm my statement that the franchise of a country has very little indeed to do with its prosperity or welfare. Now, coming to the mother of Parliaments, what do we find? We have heard a great deal from the Home Secretary and others about the United Kingdom, and we would be justified in drawing the inference that it had a franchise much wider than ours, yet what are the actual facts? There is a property qualification there. Every occupier who has been for twelve months in the United Kingdom, the inhabitant of a dwelling-house on which the rates have been paid, is entitled to registration; lodgers, occupying for twelve months the same lodgings of the value of £10, have a vote. They disqualify aliens and persons in receipt of parochial poor relief, and in that country only about one-sixth of the people are voters. That is a much smaller proportion than we have. I think the figures of the Home Secretary show that considerably more than one-sixth of our population are voters. Coming now to a colony, the conditions of which are very similar to ours, the colony of the Cape of Good Hope, what do we find? Their qualification is occupation of house property of the value of £75, or receipt of a salary of £50. The electors must be able to sign their names, and state in writing their occupations and addresses. Coming back now to America, I should like to give a few particulars. I look upon this as the most important comparison of all, for America is the greatest and most progressive country in the world, and if we do not follow its example we should treat with respect its institutions. The following are the qualifications for voters in

the United States of America :—

VOTING QUALIFICATIONS OF STATES AND TERRITORIES.

States and Territories.	Requirements as to Voters.	PREVIOUS RESIDENCE REQUIRED—	
		In State.	In Country.
Arkansas	Citizens of the United States by nativity, or one who has declared intentions upon payment of poll tax	1 year	6 months
California	Citizenship by nativity, treaty, or naturalisation effected ninety days prior to election	1 „	90 days
Delaware	Citizens who have paid the country tax, except those under twenty-two years old	1 „	3 months
Florida	Citizens by nativity or naturalisation who have paid poll tax	1 „	6 „
Georgia	Same as Florida, and all taxes; but no soldier, sailor, or marine	1 „	6 „
Illinois	Same as Florida	1 „	90 days
Iowa	Same as Florida	6 months	60 „
Kentucky	Same as Florida	1 year	6 months
Louisiana	Citizens who can read and write, or who pay taxes on \$300 worth of property assessed in their own names or whose father or grandfather was qualified to vote on 1st January, 1867	2 „	1 year
Maine	Same as Florida, and citizens who had the right to vote on 4th January, 1893, who were sixty years of age on that date, and who can read the Constitution	3 months	3 months
Maryland	Same as Florida	1 year	6 „
Montana	Same as Florida, except that women may vote on school questions	1 „	30 days
Nevada	Same as Florida	6 months	30 „
New Hampshire	Same as Florida. Women may vote upon school questions	6 „	6 months
New Jersey	Same as Florida	1 year	5 „
North Carolina	Same as Florida	1 „	6 „
Ohio	Same as Montana	1 „	30 days
Pennsylvania	Citizens by nativity or by naturalisation at least one month prior to election. If twenty-two years old or more, must have paid tax within two years	1 „	„
Rhode Island	Same as Florida	1 „	„
South Carolina	Citizen by nativity or naturalisation who can read and write any section of the Constitution, and who has paid all taxes, including the tax on property assessed at \$300, which must be paid six months before election	2 „	1 year

Now, compare the length of time that a voter must be in the States of America with the length of time he must be in Queensland, and reflect whether we are lagging behind in respect to the franchise. When we compare Queensland with a great and progressive country like America, we find that the people can obtain the franchise on much easier and more liberal terms here. With regard to the disqualifications imposed in this particular Bill, I agree with them as far as they go, but I do not think they go far enough. We are frequently told that in New South Wales they have an advanced franchise, and that we should copy that State. I find that the following disqualifications exist in New South Wales: Any person who is in receipt of charity, or is in prison, or has elsewhere been convicted of crime punishable in this State with death or penal servitude; any person imprisoned for an aggregate of three months, without the option of a fine, within six months before election; persons convicted of bribery or a similar offence within or before election; or if within a year before election, has been convicted of being an habitual drunkard, rogue, or vagaond, or has in existence an order for maintenance of wife or children, legitimate or otherwise; has been convicted of having committed a grave assault on his wife within one year. I should like to submit to the Home Secretary that when this Bill gets into committee he might very well consider whether he might not adopt some of those disqualifications. The Act there has worked very well, and if we are to copy the example of New South Wales at all, that is a case

in point. In South Australia the disqualifications are similar to those we have here. In New Zealand persons are prohibited from voting if they are idle or disorderly persons, have been convicted as public defaulters, or contribute nothing to the revenue. In this State all those persons have exactly the same voting power as yourself, Mr. Speaker, or any Minister or member of the House. Is that fair, or just, or equitable? The Home Secretary told us last night that this Bill is not the legitimate consequence of the Commonwealth franchise. That is something new. Have we not been told over and over again, ever since that franchise became law, that we should follow on similar lines; that because the Commonwealth did a certain thing we should adopt it? The Premier himself told us last year, when the famous compact was made, that it was not desirable that the Commonwealth should have one franchise, and this State another. Perhaps hon. gentlemen opposite did not know until the last day or two that in no other country in the world except Australia is there such a thing as a Commonwealth franchise. And it would be a very good thing for Australia if we could do away with both the Commonwealth and the Commonwealth franchise. In all other Commonwealths the State franchise is used. Therefore there is nothing in the argument that because the Commonwealth has adopted a certain franchise we also ought to adopt it. The Home Secretary recognised the absurdity of the argument, though he must have known that it was the great argument that has been used through

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the length and breadth of the country ever since the Commonwealth franchise was passed. The Home Secretary asked, "If this is not an urgent matter now, when will it be?" What is the object of giving the franchise but to enable every man and woman in the country to have a vote for the election of members of this House? And does anyone imagine for one moment that we are likely to have a general election within the next six or twelve months? In fact, there is no likelihood of an appeal to the country for the next two or three years, for this little body of sixteen or seventeen cannot burst up the solid phalanx we see on the other side. That being the case, where does the urgency come in? And there is very little chance of getting this session a redistribution of seats or a reduction in the number of members. The Premier has told us that a reduction of members would mean political suicide, because the House would have to go to the country immediately afterwards. But if we give the franchise to the people we should not withhold their right to vote for two or three years. We ought this year to consider a number of very important matters, which should take up the whole of our time, such as the Dairy Bill, the Land Bill, and the Rabbit Bill. And yet we are keeping back these urgent measures for the sake of a particular measure which cannot be put into force for the next three years. There is no urgency for the Bill at all. The Home Secretary also told us that the country endorsed the franchise at the recent election; but I have already dealt with that question in my opening remarks, and I have no desire to repeat myself. And here let me quote a passage from a speech of a very much greater man than either the Home Secretary or myself. Sir Edward Braddon, speaking on the Franchise Bill in the Federal Parliament, referred to this and other matters. He said in the course of his speech—

It has no existence in the two larger States, or in Queensland, or in Tasmania. Let us turn to a country in which women suffrage has existed longer than it has anywhere else—the United States of America. In Wyoming it was introduced thirty-two years ago, and what is the position now of this movement which the Minister says is going forward by leaps and bounds, and gaining ground? After thirty-two years female suffrage exists in four States and territories, with an aggregate population of a little over 1,000,000 souls out of a total population of 77,000,000 in the United States.

About 1½ per cent. of the American population have adult suffrage amongst that number, and the great majority possess no such franchise. Then passing on he says—

These efforts have borne no fruit. One of my great objections to women suffrage is an objection which has been corroborated to a great extent by what has fallen from the Minister for Home Affairs. I object to it as a Tory vote, as a Conservative vote.

And then further on he says—

I object to the measure because I object to conservatism and Toryism, which retard progress and prevent the world moving on. How do we find this particular principle taken up in the old country? The Minister has told us of what Pitt failed to do. He has told us how Mr. Balfour spoke and voted in favour of this principle. The one occasion on which it was passed by the British House of Commons was when it was moved and carried by Conservatives.

[Mr. JENKINSON: What are you quoting from?] I am quoting from the speech delivered by Sir Edward Braddon on the second reading of the Franchise Bill in the Federal Parliament—Federal *Hansard*, page 11936. I do not wish to be misunderstood; I do not intend to vote against this measure. I have spoken many times in favour of giving a vote to women. I recognise there are many reasons why women should have votes, and the fact that this measure will be of a very conservative character is not going

to frighten me in the least. It does not frighten the Home Secretary. I am glad to know that he is no longer the extreme Labour man that he was, and that a little conservatism does not frighten him now. And even if it should have that highly conservative effect, I should still be inclined to support the Bill for other reasons. Women have to obey the laws of this country, and they are, generally speaking, as intelligent as men. They are sometimes well educated—often better educated than men; and if a woman has to obey the laws and has the intelligence to conform to them, I would not deny her the franchise, always providing that she wants it. There is not the immense difference between the sexes that some people think. We are all more or less the creatures of circumstances, and not only does our environment affect us, but our antecedents affect us. We know that in the middle ages, and as far back as the dawn of history, woman was a mere chattel. We know as time passed women increased in the social and intellectual scale. We know that the Christian religion, probably more than any other factor in the world, raised woman almost, if not quite, to the same plane as man. I confess I do not see my way to refuse her the franchise if she desires it; but I have great doubts whether women really desire the franchise or not. If I thought a majority of women desired the franchise I should have no hesitation whatever in giving it to them, and even if the majority did not want the franchise, I should not be justified in withholding it from any considerable minority. I intend to give the principle of this Bill my support, though I differ on certain matters, as I shall show the House presently. The Home Secretary told us also that the political pendulum swings from conservatism to Labour, and from Labour to conservatism, and there is no question about that. All the world is changing; everything in life is changing. We know that communities, like individuals, get tired; men love change, and communities love change. In fact, it may be laid down as a general rule that whatever is true of the individual is true of the community; and, as individuals change, it is inevitable that communities should change also. That being so, I think the Home Secretary was right, and I am pleased to agree with him occasionally. In fact, I should like to agree with the hon. member whenever I possibly can, and I shall be prepared to go some distance to do so; and the reason why I do not agree with him oftener is because the hon. gentleman does not get sufficiently near to the right line of truth to get on the right track. [Mr. FORSYTH: It is possibly due to his environment.] Yes. I am glad to know that he is an intellectual man, and, judging by his speech last night, he seems to me to give some evidence that he is getting away from his recent environment. I hope the process will continue, and if it does I have no doubt he will be a very useful member of society, and a useful Minister, too. Of course, I do not mean to say that he is not useful now, but that he will be more so. I do not intend to go over his figures, because we have had so many figures from the Home Secretary and from the hon. member for Bulloo, and the hon. member for Carpentaria, and it is not desirable that I should repeat them. There is no necessity to "gild refined gold" or "paint the lily," or anything of that kind. The Home Secretary dealt at great length with this argument; he said: Should there be different franchises in different States? He conveyed the idea that all the other States have practically the same franchise, but as a matter of fact it was pointed out that the franchise throughout the States was more or less different, and there is not a great deal of differ-

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ence between our franchise and that of some of the other States. I believe I am right in saying that in some of the other States—Victoria, for instance—the franchise is less liberal than in Queensland. Then he told us also that if the Commonwealth system is just, the State system must be unjust. I might go a little bit further, and I think I will be just as logical in saying that if the State system is just the Commonwealth system is unjust. I do not think that the mere fact that the Commonwealth has a certain system, more especially when we know that that system has not given satisfaction and that a commission is sitting to review it so that Parliament may [8 p.m.] alter the system, is any argument why we should follow the Commonwealth in this matter. I might argue with as much force that because we have a particular franchise which I believe is right, and the Commonwealth has a different franchise, therefore that different franchise must be wrong. We have not to consider what the Commonwealth Parliament or any other Parliament has done. What we have to do is to examine the facts and form our deductions from those facts. There is a reason why the franchise of the Commonwealth should be a broader franchise than we have—that is, if it is wise to have a federal franchise at all. A man may be in Queensland to-day, he may be a nomad, a bird of passage, a man who is not a permanent resident, who is not a citizen of the State as that term is understood. Is it reasonable that we should give that man the same say in the government of the country as we give to the permanent *bonâ fide* citizens of the country? If the only duty of members of Parliament were to make laws civil and criminal, I admit that in that case every man who lives in a country, whether he has any property or not, and no matter how long or short his stay may be, should have the same say in electing members of Parliament as other persons, because he is amenable to the laws of the country. But we know that besides making civil and criminal laws members of Parliament have to vote money for the government of the country, and that money is provided by the taxpayers of the country. If a man who is a mere bird of passage has the same say in the election of members of Parliament as other persons in the country who are permanent residents, he might vote for borrowing recklessly, and stay in the country as long as wages are high, but when a reaction came he would leave the country and let the permanent residents bear the brunt of the extravagance to which he was a party. But with the Commonwealth it is a different matter. It is very easy to pass over the boundary from one State to another, but it is quite another matter to leave the Commonwealth. Consequently, any man who is resident in the Commonwealth, whether his stake in the country is large or small, whether he remains long in one State or not, cannot escape the consequences of misgovernment the same as the citizen of a State could. The Home Secretary told us that an extension of the franchise and progress went hand in hand, and the inference to be drawn from that statement is that progress is the result of a wide franchise. [THE HOME SECRETARY: Oh, no.] Well, you said they went hand in hand. [THE HOME SECRETARY: No. I said the extension of the franchise was often followed by a great amount of material progress.] Very well; I will accept the hon. gentleman's correction that the extension of the franchise is often followed by a great amount of material progress. The only inference we are warranted in drawing from that statement is that this material progress was the result of a broadened franchise. If the hon. gentleman can prove that a

broadened franchise would result in material prosperity—that it would make two blades of grass grow where only one grew before, that it would increase the number of our sheep so that instead of a lambing of 60 per cent. this year we should have 75 per cent., that it would give us 25 bushels of wheat to the acre instead of 20 bushels—in short, if he can show in any way that the broadening of the franchise would improve the country, there will be no need for any further argument in favour of this Bill. But there is absolutely no more connection between material prosperity and a widened franchise than there is between Tenterden Steeple and the Goodwin Sands. Two things may occur at the same time and there may be absolutely no connection between them, and I am simply astonished that a man of the intellectual attainments of the hon. gentleman should have attempted to mislead the House by a fallacious argument of that kind, and I feel it to be my duty to place it in its proper light before the House. The hon. gentleman also said that if you object to women having political views you must as reasonably object to women having religious views. Let us examine that statement for a moment in the light of reason as Lord Bacon recommends, and see if it will stand the test. We know perfectly well that a great deal of misery and suffering has resulted in the past from attempting to interfere with people's religious beliefs. It has become a recognised doctrine in all civilised countries that the religious views of people are sacred, and that they are entirely a matter between themselves and the Creator. The days are past when people are persecuted for their religious beliefs, and, if people want to get to Heaven, we allow them to go to Heaven their own way. I go further and say that we have absolutely no right to coerce a man on account of his political views. I think it was John Stuart Mill, or some other great man—anyhow, a greater man than either the Home Secretary or myself, and that is saying a good deal—who said that, if all the people in the world except one man were of one opinion, the whole world with the exception of that one man would have no more right to coerce him than he would have to coerce the rest of the world, if he had the power. That is the view I take with regard to religious liberty. There is absolutely no connection between the political and the religious views of women. In the same way that we have no right to coerce people for their religious views, we have no right to interfere with the political views of people, however much we may differ with them. Of course, it is recognised that you must have majority rule, and the only question is what particular persons you are going to exclude. Although I am as great a believer in the liberty of the subject as any person, I hold that we are quite justified in excluding certain persons from the franchise, and I think the Home Secretary will be justified in making this list of exclusions larger than it is at present; and, when the Bill gets into committee, I shall be very glad indeed if, with that sweet reasonableness which is so characteristic of the hon. gentleman, he will listen to any reasonable amendment, no matter which side of the House it may come from. I do not propose to discuss anything connected with machinery, because I would be out of order, I have no doubt; but I submit that, without going into the machinery Bill in detail, I am quite within my rights in referring in a general way to the matter. Now, what would be the effect of this Bill if passed? Would it have any immediate effect, supposing a general election came off in two or three months? I should like the Home Secretary to tell me whether in that case women would have votes. If they would

not, what is the use of bringing in the Bill at all at the present moment? Would it not be just as well to let it wait until next year, when we can put all the Bills through at the same time? Then, again, this Bill does not make any provision for machinery. It does not provide that women shall vote by post. I am not going to argue now whether that is a good thing or not, but I think I would be justified in arguing that a Bill that does not contain a provision of that kind would not be of a workable character, and it is a question whether we shall be wise in passing the second reading unless, when we get into committee, the scope of the Bill would enable us to insert a provision of that kind. At the right time I shall express my views upon the question of women voting by post, and at present merely confine myself to remarking the absence of any provision of a machinery character. There is something more that I would like to know about the Bill. It is not apparent on the face of it whether this Bill does away with the property vote or not. Clause 5 says—"No person shall be entitled to vote more than once at the same election." We know that a man cannot vote more than once, but does it mean that he can use the residence vote and not the property vote, or does it mean that he can use the property vote and not the residence vote if he likes? I am in the dark, and I think it is a matter that we should have some information about. At first sight I took it to mean that a man would have a right of using the property vote if he liked, but he could not vote more than once; but, on looking into it more closely, I am somewhat in doubt as to what is the meaning of the section. While it is desirable that a man should not vote more than once, it is of the greatest importance that he should have the right of deciding where he is going to exercise that vote. Take, for instance, myself. I may live in a rented house at Clayfield, whilst I have property worth thousands of pounds in Brisbane. Am I, under this Bill, compelled to vote in Clayfield, and am I debarred from voting in Brisbane, or, on the other hand, am I permitted to vote in Brisbane or in Clayfield, just as I think fit? It is very important that we should have accurate information with regard to that matter. If, as the Bill stands, a man is to be permitted to vote where he resides, or where his property is located, whichever he thinks fit to do, then it is in the interests of the country that it should be so stated. We have heard a great deal about the property vote, but I represent a district where the property vote does not count. I will not weary the House with figures, which can be made to prove anything. It was an American humourist who said that there were three descriptions of lies—lies, — lies, and statistics. The Home Secretary gave us statistics, but I do not intend to follow his lead. I should, however, like to say that figures are often misleading, and we have received no really correct information as to the number of people who actually use the plural vote. A number of people are down on the property qualification; I am myself, though I am entitled to a residence qualification. I know hundreds of people who have a property qualification, and yet if they thought fit they could go on the roll on a residence qualification. When the hon. member for Barcoo gets up he does not tell us about these things. He says there are so many people with property on the roll, and therefore they represent corner allotment votes. I venture to say that 75 per cent. of those people are entitled to the residence or household qualification. I have little more to say upon this matter. I do not desire to go into the question whether black people should be allowed to vote, because it has been referred to at considerable length by

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others. I can only say, in conclusion, that I do not intend to oppose the Bill; in fact, if it goes to a division I shall record my vote in favour of it; but at the same time I do not think the measure will be complete until we have other measures that will provide for the reduction of members and for the redistribution of seats. When all those measures have become law, and when the country has had an opportunity of returning, not seventy-two members, but, say, thirty or forty, and when we have a franchise which is so broad that we can say of it that it offers facilities for every man and woman in the country to vote, the great grievance of the Labour party will be gone. In fact, with their grievance gone, their occupation will be gone also, and I venture to agree with what the Home Secretary said—that when the people have got this measure, when the present feeling subsides, and people look at things in the cold light of reason, the effect of this measure may be very different to what the hon. member for Barcoo anticipates.

Mr. BARNES (*Bulimba*): I think it will be generally admitted that this subject is one of very great importance to the community, and yet to discuss the Bill at great length would be a mistake. There can be no question that a majority of the House has decided in favour of the Bill, and to unduly discuss the matter would not be in the interests of business. There are, however, one or two remarks that I should like to make as briefly as possible. I have listened with great pleasure to the discussion, and especially to the remarks of the last speaker, who has supplied us with a fund of information. [Mr. PAGET: He has gone over the whole world.] He has gone over a considerable portion of the world, and put on record information which will be very useful for future reference. I would like to inquire as to what may be the probable effects of the Bill as regards women. Will women generally approve of it? I know there are to be found women representing both sides of politics who even at the present moment take a very keen interest in matters appertaining to elections; but it is said that quite a large number of women are quite indifferent to politics. I have often heard it argued that because a majority of women do not take an interest in the franchise, therefore those who do should be deprived of the right to exercise it. As a supporter of women's franchise, I think it altogether unfair reasoning to assume that, because one particular woman or class of women refuse to exercise the franchise, women who are desirous of exercising it should be penalised. I very sincerely hope that the time will not be far distant—indeed, it cannot be—when women will have the privilege of exercising their votes at a State election. [Mr. PAGET: We shall have a general election next year.] Perhaps the mantle of prophesy has fallen on the hon. member for Mackay. Whether we have an election or not, my experience is that women have taken a keen interest in politics, although unable to exercise a vote. During the last election for Bulimba one woman walked several miles to record a vote in my favour, being under the impression she was entitled to vote. That shows there is in the minds of some women a desire to take part in the politics of this State, and I want to say most emphatically that I believe women should have a say in the government of the country. There can be no doubt that the influence of women in connection with the franchise of the country will be distinctly, in my [8.30 p.m.] judgment, for the good of the country; and it does seem to me to be unfair that in the past we have practically said

that women shall be responsible to the laws of the country and yet shall be deprived of the privilege of exercising the vote. Indeed, the Home Secretary very clearly pointed out that we have allowed them to vote in connection with local government, and so forth, and yet have deprived them of the larger interests in connection with the government of the State. I would like to point out that there are women—women representing different associations, and representing a very important part of the community—who, rightly or wrongly, believe that if they were able to have a say in the election of representatives to this House it would have a very marked effect upon some of those things which they regard as great evils. We certainly ought to allow them to step in so that those particular matters may be dealt with. I would like to refer to some of the charges which have been hurled against some on this side of the House as to their sincerity. It has been stated that the only members who have been sincere in this matter are those who are sitting on your right, Mr. Speaker. [A Government member: Hear, hear!] Some hon. gentleman on the other side says, "Hear, hear!" We are prepared to admit that in this particular connection they have been sincere, but surely they must extend to other members of the House equal sincerity in that direction! [Mr. TURNER: You have not shown it.] I do not know whether the hon. member speaks of us collectively or individually; but I am here to speak for myself, and I challenge that hon. member to prove from *Hansard* that at any one time when a Bill of this kind has been introduced, I was ever found voting against it. When the Hon. the Treasurer was sitting on this side, and brought in a Bill, I voted for it. And yet the hon. member for Rockhampton North says that all on this side are inconsistent. [Mr. TURNER: I said collectively, not individually.] The hon. member now apparently sits corrected, and I accept his explanation. I certainly did not catch him making that particular explanation. I join with the hon. member for Toowong in desiring to point out that while I am exceedingly sincere in my desire to support this Bill, I would impress upon the House the danger which seems to me to exist in connection with the way in which it has been brought in. I refer to the fact of the absence of a machinery Bill and a Redistribution Bill. The Premier, speaking last night on the Bill now before the House, said—

The Bill itself has one distinct purpose, if no other. Even if no machinery Bill and no other Bill dealing with electoral reform were passed by this or the next session of Parliament, it would do away with the plural vote.

I question very much whether it would do away with the plural vote. I am prepared to admit that in a sense it would do away with what is called the property vote. But would it not, in another form, do that which would be a very great injustice, especially to electorates like the one which I have the honour to represent—the largest in point of numbers of any single electorate in the State? If during the passage of the Bill through committee it is found that, say, Dunwich should be tacked on to Bulimba, what would be the effect? It would simply be monstrous as far as that electorate is concerned. We have about 5,200 males and females without including Dunwich. With Dunwich added a very serious injustice would be done under the present distribution of seats, in having to return only one member, while other electorates, such as Burke, Bulloo, and others which I might name, would have equal representation. The Premier went on to say—

We propose to have the principle of one adult one vote. This Bill in itself will not give a woman a vote

in an effective form, because the machinery is not provided for getting her name on the roll, but it will provide that the males on the existing roll shall only vote once at an election, and that in itself will be a distinct step in advance.

I agree with the Premier that it would have that effect, but, again, I say the effect would be exceedingly unfair, and would be perpetuating in another form all the evils that are said to exist in connection with the plural vote under the present franchise. I understand there has been an arrangement come to between the leaders of the House for the debate to close at a certain time, and I have no wish to break that compact. I shall be pleased to support the second reading of the Bill, but only on the understanding that when it gets into committee some of those anomalies I have pointed out will be dealt with; and I shall be very pleased to assist those hon. members on this side who have already intimated that at that stage they will do their utmost to remedy some of the grave objections that are to be found in the Bill. I shall vote for the second reading.

Mr. JENKINSON (*Fassifern*): I should like to express, in the first place, my dissatisfaction at the state of the House when such an important measure as this is being discussed. There appears very little reason to doubt that we in Queensland at the present time are in the midst of an epoch; and yet one has only to look round the Chamber to see the apathy that is displayed by the representatives of the people when we are discussing what is perhaps one of the most important matters the House has ever been asked to give a vote and opinion upon. [Mr. HAWTHORN: On which side?] On either side of the House. [Mr. COWAP: You have hardly been in your place ten minutes this week.] As far as the relative numbers of members of the House are concerned, hon. members on this side are represented just as fully as hon. members on the opposite side. It seems to me that hon. members sitting on the other side are practically gagged. They have evidently no desire to give expression to their opinions, whatever they may be, either to enlighten the House or to enlighten the country. Another reason for disappointment—although I believe it is not the reason why this measure has been brought forward—is that in this critical time in the history of Queensland a measure is brought down which is practically not going to assist the people of this State one iota on the road to prosperity. The country is in a deplorable state; its finances in a parlous condition; there are a large number of unemployed and destitute going round the country looking for work, and yet the principal measure of the Government is a Bill conferring the franchise on some people, when it is doubtful whether they are anxious to have it or not. This is the interest they are apparently taking in the welfare of the people of this State. There is very little doubt, from what has been said by the Minister introducing the Bill, and the Premier, that this is more a party measure, to assist a party, and not to assist the country. [An honourable member: Which party?] There is only one dominant party on the other side, and this measure is evidently the price of their support to the gentleman who is the nominal leader of the House. [Mr. BOWMAN: We want no rats about it, anyhow.] I am surprised to hear that expression from the hon. member for Fortitude Valley. Look over history, and see what has been the attitude of his leader, what has been the attitude of the two or three hon. gentlemen who are now sitting on the Treasury benches? And yet he has the audacity to make use of an expression like that. Where is the consistency of the hon.

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gentleman? Has he any regard for truth at all when he uses that expression? Either that, or he does not know the use of the term.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. JENKINSON: I repeat what I said in this Chamber some time ago, that I challenge him or anyone else to show on any public platform or in this House any principles I have departed from. That challenge is thrown down to him or anyone else if they desire to take it up. He cannot say the same of his leader nor of several of the other hon. members who are occupying seats on the Treasury benches. Let him sweep in front of his own doorstep before he attempts to do it in front of the door of other people. Judging by what has been said in this Chamber, and also on public platforms during the election, this is the price of the support of the Labour party to Mr. Morgan and his colleagues. Once they get this measure through, it has been said by members belonging to the Labour party they will have no further use for the hon. gentleman who is nominal Premier—he can be cast aside to go on his own way. They used him as a crutch to get into Parliament, and the crutch will be thrown aside when they get this measure through. [An honourable member: What will they do?] I have not the slightest idea what they will do, but, in my opinion, they will make him very much more insignificant in the eyes of the country than the hon. gentleman is to-day. The Home Secretary introduced this measure in a modest way—probably concealing his real desire—and, in giving the information to the House, stated that the party behind Mr. Morgan was not really anxious to introduce measures that were of benefit to the country. The measure of the session was to be a Franchise Bill. Once get that through, and they could turn their attention to other matters which were of vital effect to the welfare of the people of this State. The hon. member for Clermont, both prior to this election and during the time of the election, gave utterance to practically the same sentiments, and they were also endorsed by a gentleman who was brought up evidently by some gentleman on the other side of the House—although the Premier thought fit to deny it at a public meeting—who apparently gave the whole show away. [Mr. KERR: Who is that?] John Norton. [Mr. KERR: I heard the hon. member for Fassfern brought him up.] I am very doubtful whether the hon. member ever did any such thing, but, as a matter of fact, I have never spoken to Mr. Norton in my life, and I am not particularly anxious to do so. He is, judging by the company he keeps, one who might be expected to associate with the hon. member for Barcoo. It is stated in the Press that the existing coalition is simply for the purpose of securing electoral reform. I believe that is honestly the desire of the members of the Labour party who are supporting Mr. Morgan at the present time—for that particular purpose, and that only. [Mr. MACARTNEY: I believe that is the compact.] I believe that is the compact, written or unwritten. I believe they are relying on it. Other hon. members also during the time of the election gave utterance to the same sentiments, and if hon. members of the Chamber were sufficiently interested, they would find on looking over the newspaper files in the various electorates during the election that these utterances were made on the public platforms when they were seeking the suffrages of their own constituents, and there was no desire at that particular time to conceal their real motives. But here, apparently, they are willing to sit silent, and not open their mouths or give utterance to their real and true sentiments. As far as this Bill is concerned—the question of elec-

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toral reform—it is practically one of those shibboleths that every party has used for years and years. But there are different kinds of electoral reform, and I am not quite so sure that the majority of hon. members of this House were returned pledged to support a Bill on the same principles as are enunciated in the one that we have before us at the present time. It is not likely to affect me personally. I believe that throughout the country the question of giving women a vote is one that will appeal to a good many, and I believe it will have a good effect in political life. I have nothing whatever to fear from it, and I believe a good many members on both sides are in that position, too. This Bill contains many innovations—innovations that have been spoken of and thought about for some considerable time. First, it gives every man a vote. I am not quite sure that that principle itself is a just one—that placing every man in the community, no matter who he may be, on the same level, is one that will really commend itself to the thinking portion of the community. Why should a man who has been working for some considerable time, and managed to save a competence or sufficient to keep himself, be placed on the same level as another man who spends the whole of his substance perhaps in drink? [Mr. MURPHY: Or probably in an unlucky speculation, and loses it.] That does not enter into the question at all. I am just taking the case of two individuals—a man who works hard and tries to save sufficient to keep him in the time to come when he will not be able to work, and who will not be a burden on the State; and another man who, with every shilling he gets, practically puts it down his throat, and does not care a continental what becomes of the State. It appears to me very unfair that these two men should be classed in the same category, and be looked upon as equal to enjoy the full rights of citizenship. This levelling down—for that is what it means—has never appealed to me. I never could see why some people who waste their substance should be placed on the same level as those who by hard work or in some other way have become better citizens. As someone stated, the principle is that of a man behind calling out to those in front, "Heigh! you fellows, you are getting along too quickly, come back and let us all crawl together." This levelling down process is the bedrock and bottom of the platform of the Labour party, and its adoption will take away from men the inducement to become respectable and honest citizens, and make provision for their old age. Such a scheme will not raise a desirable class of citizens in Queensland or anywhere else. It is an old principle that there shall be no taxation without representation; but this proposal will violate that principle, inasmuch as a man who has accumulated a little property on which he is taxed will not be entitled to any representation in respect of that property. From what has been said by previous speakers—notably by the hon. member for Toowong—the corollary attached to one adult one vote is one vote one value—in other words, that every man and woman in the country shall have equality of voting power. If that principle is carried to its logical conclusion, then each representative of those people in this House should have equality of voting power. I should like to point out to members representing country districts what one vote one value means to them. I cannot see what is going to stop members who are returned on this question of one adult one vote from being pushed by their constituents to the acceptance of one vote one value. We know that there is a tendency in all parts of Australia, and it is particularly

noticeable in Queensland, for people to collect in the cities and towns, so that the result of one adult one vote accompanied with one vote one value will mean that five-sixths of the members of this Assembly will be elected by our cities and towns. Speaking roughly, out of seventy-two members sixty would be representatives of centres of population like Brisbane, Ipswich, Gympie, Maryborough, Mackay, Townsville, and Charters Towers; and the result of that would be that members representing country districts would have extreme difficulty in getting what they considered fair play for their electorates. The hon. member for Warrego referred to the question of giving women a vote. I have always been an advocate for that principle, and on every occasion when the question has come up in this House I have voted in favour of it. But judging from what the Premier said last night it seems very improbable that the privilege is conferred upon women by this Bill, for without a machinery Bill it is absolutely impossible for women to get their names on the electoral roll. The hon. gentleman said—

This Bill in itself will not give a woman a vote in an effective form, because the machinery is not provided for getting her name on the roll, but it will provide that the males on the existing roll shall only vote once at an election.

Therefore, this measure does not really confer the franchise on women. There is no provision made for the machinery to accomplish that, nor are we sure that we shall have the machinery Bill providing for the enrolment of women. With regard to this Bill doing away with the plural vote, I am not quite certain that it will have that effect. Hon. members have only to look at the wording of the clause dealing with that question to see that it is of doubtful interpretation. The wording is exactly the same as that in the Commonwealth statute, but no case has been yet tried under that section. I have long held the opinion that it does not do away with plural voting, and I believe that that opinion would be upheld if a test case were brought before the court. The clause in this Bill and in the Commonwealth Act was taken from the Victorian Elections Act, which provides that each elector shall vote once only, and apparently it gives the principle of one elector one vote. The words "no person shall vote more than once at the same election," which constitutes the provision in the Victorian Act, seem to emphasise that principle, but the Appeal Court in Victoria has decided that it does not provide for one elector one vote—it simply provides that no elector shall vote more than once in the same electorate. Hon. members will see that the provision in this Bill is capable of that interpretation, and as we have no machinery Bill there is no penalty attached to voting more than once. I am perfectly satisfied that if a case were taken to the court on that provision the judges would rely on the decision of the Victorian Full Court that it means that an elector shall vote only once in the same electorate. In company with other hon. members, I am rather sorry that we are to have no machinery Bill brought down at the present time, and also another Bill which

is the necessary corollary of this—
[9 p.m.] a Bill for a redistribution of seats.

It is nothing short of a public scandal that we are continuing, not only under the present franchise, but that we are asking the people of this State to return the same number of members as we did prior to federation. It is all nonsense to talk about the fact that this will bring about a reduction in the cost of running the government. I was not

quite sure what was the meaning of the Home Secretary when he used the phrase last night that before we could assimilate the electoral machinery we must assimilate the franchise, and then we can come down with what members on both sides believe is necessary, and that is a reduction in the cost of government. There are several members on the other side who say that the best way to bring about a reduction in the cost of government is by the abolition of the Upper House; and, if they can only get this Electoral Bill passed, they will have the power given to them to return a sufficient number of members to this House, and then they will be able to carry out their will and abolish the Upper House. The hon. member for Carpentaria is quite wrong in that matter. They have the power to appoint members to the Legislative Council who will abolish themselves, if they like. There is nothing to prevent them doing so. There is nothing to prevent them bringing in an amendment of the Constitution Act. They have the machinery at their disposal, and, if they come back to this House in sufficient force, I have not the slightest doubt that will be their ultimate aim, so that there will be no impediment to their carrying any legislation they desire. It is my intention, seeing that this Bill contains a principle that I believe in, to vote for the second reading; but, at the same time, I regret with other members on this side that there is no machinery Bill accompanying it, and, according to what the Premier says, we are not likely to get it—not this session, at all events—and also that there is no likelihood of a Bill for a redistribution of seats in this Assembly.

Mr. HAWTHORN (*Enoggera*): I do not intend to detain the House very long, in view of the agreement that we should adjourn at 9 o'clock or a little later, but I wish to say that it is very satisfactory to the Government to have brought in this Bill so early in the session, because, in spite of what has been said by some hon. members on the other side, I hold that the past elections have shown distinctly that a Bill of this kind is acceptable to the majority of the people of Queensland. I consider that the majority of the people of this country are quite fit to be entrusted with the business of electing representatives to Parliament. In the United States, in South Australia, and in other States of Australia, one man one vote is in existence, and I consider the people of those States are in no way better than the people of Queensland, and therefore our people are perfectly entitled to have the same rights as the people in those States. Further than that, the Federal Legislature has provided that one man one vote shall be in force for the Commonwealth Parliament, and it is an anomaly that we should have our State elections run on different lines to those in connection with the federal elections. I further say that it would be the cause of great disappointment to the people of Queensland if a Bill of this kind was not passed. The fact that the Premier has practically promised to have the machinery Bill introduced so soon as possible does away with any objections to that Bill not being brought forward simultaneously with this Bill. I presume that, as soon as time will permit next session, the machinery Bill will be brought in, and that the objections raised by the Opposition on that ground will therefore disappear. The main item in connection with this Bill is the granting of the franchise to women. Woman suffrage is a principle that is generally recognised all over the world, because, after all, giving the franchise to women is only the political recognition of their status. At present they have

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the full right to enter upon any trade, to engage in any business, to sue and be sued, to engage in any profession, and generally to carry out the full rights of citizenship, so that there is nothing to debar them from having the electoral franchise as well. It is merely a recognition of the principle. It does not mean giving them any further rights of citizenship, but merely putting on the electoral rolls a certain number of electors; and the experience of countries where the franchise has been granted to women goes distinctly to show that the general position of political parties is really not affected by the conferring of the franchise on women. It has had no effect in making parties uneven or in any way different to what they were before. At present there is some idea that probably the women's vote will give one section of the community a very much larger influence in future elections. That might have been so in past federal elections; but, as soon as the system is perfectly in vogue, I am of opinion that the position of parties will be about the same as it is under the present franchise. If we want good government, there is no safer and surer way of getting it than by entrusting the full privileges of the ballot to the women of Queensland. [Government members: Hear, hear!]

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put and passed, amid Government cheers.

The committal of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

ADJOURNMENT.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I move that this House do now adjourn. The first business on Tuesday will be the second reading of the Dairy Bill, and after that the committee stage of the Electoral Franchise Bill.

HON. R. PHILP: Will the hon. gentleman tell us when we may expect the Financial Statement? I understood it was to come on on Tuesday next?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Treasurer tells me that he will be ready with his Financial Statement next Thursday evening.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at ten minutes past 9 o'clock.