

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY 11 DECEMBER 1906**

---

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

## BILLS OF SALE ACT AND INSOLVENCY ACT.

HON. E. B. FORREST (*Brisbane North*)  
asked the Attorney-General—

When is it the intention of the Government to introduce Bills to amend the Bills of Sale Act and the Insolvency Act?

The PREMIER replied—

The Government has not yet decided upon these matters.

## PAPERS.

The following papers, laid on the table, were ordered to be printed :—

- (1) Report for the Government of Queensland upon the utilisation of the power of the Barron Falls, by William Corin.
- (2) Regulations under the Income Tax Acts.

## SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS.

The PREMIER moved—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended, for the remainder of this session, as would otherwise prevent the receiving of resolutions from the Committees of Supply and Ways and Means on the same day on which they shall have passed in those Committees, and the passing of Bills through all their stages in one day.

HON. R. PHILP (*Townsville*): I called "Not formal" to this motion in order to find out what Bills the Government intend to pass through under suspension of the Standing Orders. The Home Secretary has a notice on the paper for the introduction of a Bill to amend the Local Authorities Act. Is he going to put that through this session?

The HOME SECRETARY: I shall explain in a moment.

HON. R. PHILP: The House is entitled to know what Bills are to be passed.

Mr. MACARTNEY (*Toowoong*): I think it is only a fair thing at this stage of the session that the Government should state what Bills they have for presentation to the House; also, whether the Bill to amend the Local Authorities Act is one of any extent. It would be unreasonable at this time to ask the House to go through a long measure.

The HOME SECRETARY: We are not going on with it.

Question put and passed.

## LOCAL AUTHORITIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

## MOTION WITHDRAWN.

On the notice of motion—

That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the Local Authorities Act of 1902 in certain particulars, and for other purposes consequent thereon—  
being called,

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. P. Airey, *Flinders*) said: With the permission of the House, I beg to withdraw this motion, as there is no time to go on with the Bill this session. I had hoped to be able to get it as far as the first reading, so that hon. members might have an opportunity of reading and criticising it.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

*Hon. P. Airey.*]

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

TUESDAY, 11 DECEMBER, 1906.

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

## QUESTIONS.

## REPORT OF CONFERENCE OF PREMIERS.

Mr. PLUNKETT (*Albert*) asked the Premier, without notice—

1. Has the report of the conference of Premiers and leaders of Opposition of the different States, held recently in Melbourne, on federal administration, been yet received?

2. If so, will the report be discussed this session?

3. Failing discussion in the House, will he furnish the report to the Press for publication?

The PREMIER (Hon. W. Kidston, *Rockhampton*) replied—

The report has been received. I regret that it is too late to discuss the matter in the House this session, but I lay it on the table, so that it may be distributed among hon. members.

DALBY TO CATTLE CREEK RAILWAY  
DISTRICT BILL.

## THIRD READING.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. D. F. Denham, *Oxley*), this Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council, by message in the usual form.

LANDS FOR CLOSER SETTLEMENT  
SPECIAL PURCHASE BILL.

## THIRD READING.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. D. F. Denham, *Oxley*), this Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council, by message in the usual form.

## SUCCESSION BILL.

## THIRD READING.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE, this Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be returned to the Legislative Council, by message in the usual form.

## JOINT COMMITTEES.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council, inviting the concurrence of the Assembly in a resolution to the effect that the Buildings, Refreshment-rooms, and Library Committees should continue their functions during the recess.

On the motion of the PREMIER, a message was ordered to be returned to the Legislative Council, intimating the concurrence of the Assembly in their resolution.

## SUPPLY.

## RECEPTION OF RESOLUTIONS.

The CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. Jackson, *Kennedy*) reported the resolutions passed in Committee of Supply, covering the Trust and Special Fund and Loan Fund Estimates.

The resolutions were read at length by the CLERK.

The TREASURER moved that the resolutions be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

## REDISTRIBUTION OF SEATS.

\* Mr. MACARTNEY (*Toowong*), in moving—

That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable that the State be forthwith distributed into electoral districts upon the basis of the quota of electors ascertained by dividing the whole number of electors in the State by the number of members, with such reasonable margin of allowance as shall be specified, and for the return by each such district of a member or members in accordance with such quota, in accordance with the policy of the Government as expressed to the electors in 1904, and subsequently expressed by the late Premier, the Honourable Arthur Morgan, during the debates in connection with the alteration of the Franchise and the Elections Act—

said: When this motion was put on the business-paper some weeks ago and I was prevented from moving it through the fact that the time devoted to private members' business was taken away from us, I understood the Premier to say that

{*Hon. D. F. Denham.*

we would have an opportunity to discuss the question in the form of a Bill for the redistribution of seats. I am rather surprised that the Bill up to this time has not been forthcoming, and that we are not now in a position to deal with the question. The passage of this resolution at this late hour of the session can be of very little use, inasmuch as it cannot be followed by any legislation. If the Premier had allowed me to discuss the motion at an earlier period of the session, and if a vote had been taken upon it, we might have had legislation according to the result of that vote. That opportunity, however, has been denied to me, and the passing of this resolution will practically be of no value beyond assisting to air the question. We have arrived now at practically the last session of the Parliament, and it looks as if we were going into recess without dealing with the question at all. We may not meet again before a new election takes place, which means that we have to go upon the electoral rolls as they now stand, with all their glaring inequalities; and the Government as at present constituted, although under different leadership, has not given full effect to its policy of electoral reform as laid down by Mr. Morgan in 1904, and subsequently laid down and extended in speeches made by him in connection with the Franchise Bill and the Electoral Bill passed in the sessions of 1904 and 1905. I think it is to be regretted that the hon. gentleman did not give full effect to his policy as outlined by him, because at the present time we have only a portion of it in force, which operates unfairly. It was pointed out during the debates that unless the hon. gentleman consented to some provision in the Franchise Act compelling the passing of the remainder of the reform, the probabilities were that we would get one portion of the reform, and that for years the remainder would be delayed. It was pointed out that that would be a gross act of political treachery; but, notwithstanding that, the hon. gentleman said he was sincere about his promise. The years 1905 and 1906 have passed, and we have had no fulfilment of the promise, and, as far as one can see, there will be no alteration in the electoral representation before the general election. In moving this resolution it is incumbent on me to show that the matter I am dealing with was a part of Mr. Morgan's policy, and that it was also promised by him at various times during the years 1904 and 1905. The following are extracts from Mr. Morgan's opening speech delivered at Warwick in 1904. He said—

I think it is highly desirable that the franchise should be assimilated to that of the Commonwealth. The Government, therefore, if they secure a majority at the polls, will submit the question for decision as early as possible. Associated with this will be an electoral machinery Bill, designed to afford facilities to qualified electors to secure and retain their votes. A further measure belonging to the same group will deal with the question of a reduction of members and the redistribution of seats. . . . Redistribution of seats is necessary. It is seventeen years since the last Redistribution Bill was passed, and anomalies have crept into existence in the meantime, owing to the altered distribution of population: these ought to be corrected. While dealing with this subject, the opportunity will be convenient for dealing with the subject of reduction of members of the Assembly.

Then he said—

If the Government were returned to power they would refer this to the people, and take action on their decision.

That was the policy of Mr. Morgan, which was endorsed by the Morganite party and by the Labour party, who went to the country in coalition with Mr. Morgan. Later on, when the Governor's Speech of 1904 was delivered, Mr. Morgan used the following words on the

Address in Reply. They are to be found on page 29 of *Hansard* of 1904—

If Parliament passes a measure which in effect declares that it no longer represents the people, then it is the duty of that Parliament to get to the people at the earliest possible moment. That is well understood, and if we passed a Bill and took a referendum of the people which resulted in a decision by the people that the constituencies should be altered as to their boundaries and reduced as to their representation, then it would be the duty of this Parliament to go back to the people at the earliest possible moment. [Mr. FORSYTH: Nonsense! It should have been done at the general election, and you know it. You had no mandate from the people last year.] That is why the Governor's Speech contains no reference to the Referendum Bill.

Later on again, on page 39, he said—

I stated in my speeches in this House and in the country that I was prepared to remit this matter to the electors, and I am prepared to give effect to that promise at the right moment. [Government members: Hear, hear!] [Mr. FORSYTH: At the right moment?] Yes, at the right moment. [Mr. FORSYTH: Can you tell us when that is?] As to when that moment will be I am not prepared to allow that matter to remain for the decision of the hon. member who represents Carpentaria. [Government members: Hear, hear!] I propose to do it at the right moment, and that will be a moment which will permit the electors to come to a decision on the subject in time to admit of effect being given to their desire, if necessary, on the occasion of the next appeal to the country.

He also said—

We are asked when we provide one adult one vote to make a provision that one vote shall have one value. That is a provision that is not found in the electoral laws of any State in the Commonwealth. I doubt if it exists in any part of the civilised world. [Mr. FORSYTH: Approximately.] And it will be approximately here. We will arrive at a quota, and give a margin of 20 per cent. above or below the quota; that is the only way to arrive at one vote one value. There is a group of three Bills to be read together, and the quota is provided in the Referendum Bill, which is its proper place. That is the proposition, and it is a very fair and reasonable one.

[4 p.m.]

Later on, when dealing with the second reading of the Electoral Franchise Bill of 1904, Mr. Morgan made the following statement:—

We proposed, when we were first dealing with this question last session, to deal with it in three Bills—the Franchise Bill, the Machinery Bill, and the Referendum Bill, but it did not define the number of members, the boundaries of the electorates, and the principle providing for what has been described as one vote one value—a thing that I have pointed out in this House, and in the country, does not exist in any electoral machinery in any part of the world. [Mr. FORSYTH: It does; clause 16 does that.] That does not provide for one vote one value, but it provides for getting as near to it as practicable. There is no necessity for any discord upon that point; we are all in accord. But I think that hon. gentlemen, if they talk of one vote one value, should make it clear under the circumstances that they are saying one thing and meaning quite another, because they are asking for something which they cannot get when they are asking for one vote one value. As a matter of fact, the hon. gentleman who leads the Opposition, when he brought down a draft of his Bill dealing with this question, provided a quota with a margin of 20 per cent. That is exactly what we propose to do. It is a fair proposal, and as reasonable as can be devised. I think 20 per cent. is fair, having regard to the interests of all the constituencies. I should feel disposed myself to make the margin 25 per cent. out of consideration for the conditions and requirements of the sparsely settled districts of the remote West. Our provision is a 20 per cent. margin. I think it is, broadly speaking, fair. [Mr. Leahy: It would be particularly rough on the West just now.] We do not wish to be rough on any part of the State, but to secure that all parts of the State should be fairly represented in the popular branch of the Legislature; and we propose to make the margin 30 per cent. This Bill will be followed by a machinery Bill, if hon. members are expeditious in dealing with this measure. [Mr. FORSYTH: Are they not expeditious now?] Yes, commendably expeditious. I hope that will continue. It rests with hon. members themselves whether we shall be able, during the time we have at our disposal, to get through the machinery

Bill this session. I am quite willing we should get it through this session, and I hope it will be possible to get it through. At any rate, the Government are making an earnest effort to give effect to the will of the people as expressed at the general election on this important question. We have brought down the first Bill—the Franchise Bill. We propose to follow it with the machinery Bill; and after that, in due course—not this session—we will give the House an opportunity of dealing with the question of the referendum. [Mr. Macartney: And if anything happens in the meantime?] Then, perhaps, the hon. gentleman will have an opportunity of dealing with it. The Government has gone now; but, however, we are always safe while the hon. member for Bulloo is with us. [Mr. J. Leahy: I have my eye on you; I will keep you straight.] We have the Franchise Bill before us. We propose to follow it with the machinery Bill, and at the proper time we will bring down a Referendum Bill under which we propose, among other things, to determine the boundaries of the electorates in accordance with the decision of the people, and to fix the quota and the margin. That is the scheme of electoral reform which the Government propose. It is the scheme they proposed last session in the last Parliament; it is the scheme they propose now; and it is a complete scheme. It is a complete scheme to give the people the liberal franchise they have been asking for and the electoral machinery they have been asking for and have been promised; and it will enable them to determine for themselves the question as to what the number of the members of this House shall be, and the boundaries of the electorates; and it will ensure that, when the will of the people is expressed and as it is expressed now, it will be given effect to; and that is a most desirable thing. I have always thought that the course followed in New South Wales in respect to this matter is the most effective that could be adopted.

I may say, in passing, that in New South Wales they have single electorates with a quota and a margin approximating at 10 per cent. above the average and 10 per cent. below the quota. The extracts which I have read from the speeches of the Hon. Arthur Morgan with reference to the matter with which we are dealing to-day establish clearly that that gentleman and the Government of which he was a member informed the country that they were prepared to pass a Franchise Bill extending one vote to each adult, and, further, that they would equalise, by means of a Redistribution Bill, the political power of the residents in the State, and that they would submit a referendum to the country in reference to the reduction of members. I ask hon. members of this House if I have not made clear what was the policy outlined to the country definitely—and not only outlined to the country, but reiterated here by the hon. gentleman when he endeavoured to get his Franchise Bill and Electoral Bill through this Chamber. It was on the faith of the representations made by the hon. gentleman then sitting on the Treasury bench that those Bills were put through without the necessary safeguard in the shape of a clause restricting their application until the rest of the electoral reform which was promised had been given effect to. What do we find is the position in this the last session of Parliament? We find those promises broken. We find that the portion of the electoral reform which the Labour party in the State agitated for, carried out, and the rest of the reform, which was necessary to put electoral reform on a just and equal basis for all the people of the State, has not been carried out. I am not going to suggest the motive which prompted the hon. gentleman to allow the Franchise Bill to be passed through without securing the remainder of the electoral reform which should have been honestly carried out in accordance with pledges given to the country and the House. I do not wish to make reference to the motives. Certain things have happened since; they speak for themselves, and are as well known to others as they are to me. I pointed out to the hon. gentleman when that Bill was going through

*Mr. Macartney.]*

that he knew that there were certain members forming portion of his party who were against the reduction of members, and another section who were against the redistribution or one vote one value; and that if he put the Bill through without one vote one value there was a danger that he would not be able to get the whole electoral reform through. I also pointed out to the hon. gentleman that there was a danger of his not being in his place as Premier to give effect to his policy, and that it was necessary to include some safeguard in the Bill before it was put through this Chamber. The hon. gentleman declined to do it. He reiterated again and again that those other questions would be settled before the next Parliament—that it would be done before the next appeal to the country; and here we are now about to go to the country with as unjust and unequal distribution of seats as you could find in any part of the world. I do not wish to read extracts from my own speeches, but I think they might be looked at, in the light of events which have happened since, as a very true forecast of what would happen if the hon. gentleman would not take the course which I suggested to safeguard the interests of the country. I intend, however, to refer to one of my speeches, for the purpose of getting in an interjection of the Home Secretary and an interjection of the hon. member for Barcoo, the leader of the Labour party. I said—

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 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.

We have seen up to the present time in what that anxiety has resulted. They are going to the country without the others. Again, the Home Secretary must take the responsibility, along with the late Premier, of a breach of the promise made to the country and to this House for the purpose of getting the Franchise Bill through. The hon. member for Barcoo then interjected—

We are all anxious to get the other measures.

Now we see the result of the anxiety of the hon. member for Barcoo and his followers, which is that the country and this House has been "had." I replied to that, and said—

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.

Mr. KERR: That was "the voice of one crying in the wilderness."

Mr. MACARTNEY: I also said—

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 Govern-

ment 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 interjected at that stage, "There are no rats here." I do not know particularly what the meaning of that interjection was, but if it meant that all those allied reforms would go through, and that the Government would carry out its policy; that its supporters would see that the Government carried out its policy, and that if they did not do so it would mean that they were political rats—well, of course, that is the position in which they are now. The interjection had not very much meaning in it. I do not think it is very much to be proud of, that a Government should make pledges to the country such as the Government have made, with the reiteration of those promises which has taken place in the House from time to time, and that we should stand here on the eve of the close of Parliament without the carrying out of those promises. It is not as if it is accidental; these things were pointed out strongly and clearly on each occasion in the year 1904, and amendments were proposed which would have safeguarded the carrying out of those promises, and protected the interests of the people and the honour of this Chamber. I know that there are Ministers sitting on the other side of the House who, in times gone by, have very strongly laid down the dictum that a redistribution of seats was necessary. I think the Minister for Agriculture, in 1903, made a long speech on this subject, and pointed out how unequal the electorates were, and how necessary it was to rearrange them, and I would be surprised to think that that gentleman placed any difficulty in the way. I fancy that there is no trouble in that direction; the trouble comes from the leader of the Labour party—that branch of the coalition which is called "the Labour party." When we come to consider the question upon which the claim to this redistribution is based, I think it must be admitted that the Labour party are taking up a most extraordinary position. When they were going through the country some years ago claiming one adult one vote, or one man one vote, the greatest offence that could be committed in the world was that a man had property, and that by reason of that property he had an extra vote. It was to correct that state of things that they cried out for equal political power—that the poorest man in the State should have as much power as the richest man, and that there would never be a proper state of things until they got equal power. They passed a reform which has accentuated the inequalities of representation, and when we come to examine the claim that the people of this State have got what is called equal political power, we find it is very far from the case. It used to be an offence to have what was called a "peg" or "property vote," but now it does not matter how plural a vote may be, provided it is thought to be in favour of one party. I do not think, when you examine most of the constituencies, that one party more than another is affected—there is an extraordinary equality—when you take the average number of electors which each party represents, but when we come to look into the individual representation of districts we find very strong inequality, and one not common to Labour or to this side of the House, or common to Morganites.

[*Mr. Macartney.*]

It is a common inequality of representation. It is not limited to towns. It is just as remarkable in regard to country constituencies as it is in regard to coastal towns. I have obtained a statement from the Electoral Department showing the number of electors on the annual rolls. I take it that that means for the year 1905, plus the electors on the additional rolls, down to October of this year. For the purpose of placing it on record, I propose to read the names of the electorates together with the total number of voters on the rolls in each electorate. I recognise that when the annual roll comes out in the early weeks of January we shall probably find that there is a slight difference, but for the purpose of discussion on this motion, I think this statement is about as nearly perfect as we can get at the present time. I am quite prepared to hand the statement to *Hansard* so that it may be inserted in full if it can be taken as read.

The HOME SECRETARY: Read it.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The return is as follows:—

| Electorate.           | Total electors on roll. |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Albert                | 3,515                   |
| Aubigny               | 4,134                   |
| Balonne               | 2,145                   |
| Bowen                 | 2,325                   |
| Barecoo               | 2,230                   |
| Brisbane North        | 4,907                   |
| Brisbane South        | 8,472                   |
| Bulimba               | 5,300                   |
| Bulloo                | 928                     |
| Buudaberg             | 3,338                   |
| Bundamba              | 2,663                   |
| Burke                 | 817                     |
| Burnett               | 4,380                   |
| Burrum                | 3,191                   |
| Cairns                | 3,692                   |
| Cambooya              | 3,619                   |
| Carmarvon             | 2,267                   |
| Carpentaria           | 1,083                   |
| Charters Towers       | 11,086                  |
| Clermont              | 1,696                   |
| Cook                  | 1,777                   |
| Croydon               | 1,428                   |
| Cunningham            | 4,199                   |
| Dalby                 | 2,347                   |
| Drayton and Toowoomba | 7,020                   |
| Enoggera              | 3,606                   |
| Fassifern             | 2,741                   |
| Fitzroy               | 4,774                   |
| Flinders              | 2,411                   |
| Fortitude Valley      | 8,838                   |
| Gregory               | 1,555                   |
| Gympie                | 6,746                   |
| Herbert               | 2,806                   |
| Ipswich               | 5,757                   |
| Kennedy               | 2,610                   |
| Leichhardt            | 1,580                   |
| Lockyer               | 4,675                   |
| Logan                 | 1,972                   |
| Mackay                | 5,637                   |
| Maranoa               | 3,155                   |
| Maryborough           | 4,688                   |
| Mitchell              | 2,949                   |
| Moreton               | 3,672                   |
| Murilla               | 1,364                   |
| Musgrave              | 2,988                   |
| Normanby              | 1,467                   |
| Nundah                | 3,663                   |
| Oxley                 | 3,516                   |
| Port Curtis           | 2,436                   |
| Rockhampton           | 4,940                   |
| Rockhampton North     | 2,627                   |
| Rosewood              | 2,366                   |
| Stanley               | 2,633                   |
| Toombul               | 6,969                   |
| Toowong               | 6,021                   |
| Townsville            | 5,770                   |
| Warrego               | 1,778                   |
| Warwick               | 2,856                   |
| Wide Bay              | 2,801                   |
| Woolloongabba         | 5,313                   |
| Woothakata            | 5,329                   |
| Total                 | 221,768                 |

Mr. O'BRIEN: What is the number for Aubigny?

Mr. MACARTNEY: The numbers as supplied to me were 4,134. I think it will be admitted that there is nothing even about that list. I have made a few calculations, with the assistance of my friend, the senior member for Mackay, in reference to the effect brought about by the list which I have read. The total number of voters is 221,768, and dividing that by seventy-two, which is the number of members of this House, the quota would be 3,080. There are forty-three districts, treating double electorates as two, in which there are 97,808 voters, equal to 2,274 votes per member. All of these are under the quota by something like 33 per cent.; that is to say, there are forty-three members of this House representing electorates which are at least 33 per cent. under the quota. The other twenty-nine electorates, treating double electorates as two, are over the quota, and a member in each of these twenty-nine districts represents 4,724 electors. That is a very large percentage—50 per cent. or upwards over the quota. Taking seven of the electorates, which represent less than the quota, away, thus leaving thirty-seven, which represents an absolute majority of the whole House, they represent a total of 77,281 votes, being equal to 2,088 per member, while the remaining thirty-five represent 144,487 votes, or equal to 4,125 per member, equal to two to one. That is to say, thirty-seven members of this House, who may constitute a majority of this Assembly, represent one-third of the people, whereas the other thirty-five members—not taking them from either side of the House, but taking them generally from both sides of the House—represent two-thirds of the voters of the State. Now, taking the numbers in respect of various parties in the House, there is not a very large discrepancy or difference so far as the number of electors each represent are concerned. In fact, it is wonderful how evenly they work out.

Mr. PAGET: It is extraordinary.

Mr. MACARTNEY: So it is not a matter of raising the question against this party or that party or the other party, but a question of the equality of the individual representation of all. Now, taking the electorates which represent more than 20 per cent. above the quota—that is 3,696 per member—we find that there are nine Labour members—all on the other side of the House—representing a quota of, say, 4,247 each. That is not only largely in excess of the quota, but largely in excess of the quota with 20 per cent. added. On the Opposition side of the House there are four members representing similar electorates in which the electors are over and above the quota, and over and above 20 per cent. in excess of the quota. These four Oppositionists represent 5,956 votes each. In the Morganite party there are three members representing similar electorates with a quota of 4,370 votes each. That is largely in excess of the quota and largely in excess of 20 per cent. over and above the quota. The following table might be useful for reference as showing the number of members below the quota and the number above the quota. There are 15 Oppositionists, 8 Morganites, and 20 Labourites who represent electorates below the quota; and 5 Oppositionists, 10 Morganites, and 14 Labourites representing electorates above the quota. That makes, of course, the total number of seventy-two members of the House. I think that in dealing with the electors in the way I have done it shows a very general inequality in the representation of the State. It is not common to the towns only and it is not common only to the country districts. We find that many of the country members represent very much more than their quota, and probably in the towns—we need not go

Mr. Macartney.]

further than Brisbane for an example—members represent below the quota. So it is not a party question. It is not a question of the Opposition or the Government, but a question of fair play to the people of the State. Looking at the electorates from the individual point of view, we find some very curious results. Taking the individual districts, we find, taking Bulloo with 928 voters, Burke with 817, and Carpentaria with 1,083, that the people in those three districts represent something like from five to seven times—roughly speaking—the political power wielded by the people of Bulimba with 5,300, Charters Towers with 11,086, Toombul with 6,969, Toowong with 6,021, Woothakata with 5,329, Woollongabba with 5,313. There are a number of electorates represented by seven members, each of which has only got practically one vote to five or seven votes of the people in the electorates of Bulloo, Burke, and Carpentaria. That is very unequal.

The HOME SECRETARY : It is nine to one in some cases, such as Burke.

Mr. MACARTNEY : I have endeavoured to put it as fair as possible. I took the three cases of Bulloo, Burke, and Carpentaria, and in taking the result I am bound by the largest number, which is that of Carpentaria. That puts it mildly, if anything, because if we take Burke by itself we find, as a matter of fact, as the Home Secretary points out, that the people of Burke have nine times the political power of the people of Toombul, a suburb of Brisbane. I find that these three electorates of Burke, Bulloo, and Carpentaria have about four times as much political power as the people of Aubigny with 4,134, South Brisbane with 8,472, Cunningham with 4,199, Fitzroy with 4,774, Fortitude Valley with 8,838, Lockyer with 4,675, Burnett with 4,380. Those three electorates have four times as much political power as the seven electorates I have referred to, and those seven include two double electorates. Now those are three country electorates, and hon. members claim that country electorates should have greater representation here. A redistribution of seats is not necessarily in favour of any city or closely settled portion of Queensland. It is as necessary on the Darling Downs or in other settled districts where the people are congregated in numbers. Again, we find that the electorates of Bulloo, Burke, and Carpentaria have about three times and upwards of the political power wielded by the people of the Albert with 3,515, Bundaberg with 3,338, Burrum with 3,191, Cairns with 3,092, Cambooya with 3,619, Toowoomba with 7,020, Enoggera with 3,606, Gympie with 6,746, Maranga with 3,155,

[4.30 p.m.] Mitchell with 2,949, Moreton with 3,672, Musgrave with 2,988, Nundah with 3,063, Oxley with 3,516. Twice as many as many other electorates. To the same extent in the converse degree do the larger electorates which I have mentioned—which include Charters Towers, Toombul, Bulimba, and Toowong—compare with all the other electorates, and in a somewhat lesser degree do other populous electorates, including Brisbane South, Aubigny, Burnett, Cunningham, Fitzroy, Fortitude Valley, Lockyer. When we make further comparisons we find that whereas Rockhampton and Rockhampton North only total 7,567 voters, and are represented actually by three members, we find that the hon. member for Toombul represents nearly as many in his own person.

Mr. P. J. LEAHY : And doing it as well.

Mr. MACARTNEY : I am not going to say whether the hon. member for Toombul is doing

it as well as the other three. The hon. member for Toombul represents 6,969 voters, and I will leave it to the hon. member for Warrego to go further into that matter if he wishes to do so. Toombul's position in this calculation is closely approached by Charters Towers, Bulimba, and Toowong. While Brisbane North, with 4,907 voters; Maryborough, 4,688; and Rockhampton, 4,940—all coastal towns—are each represented by two members; Aubigny, with 4,134; Burnett, with 4,380; Cunningham, with 4,199; Fitzroy, with 4,774; Lockyer, with 4,675—all important country districts—are only represented by one member. Surely we should have a redistribution of seats, and place these districts on the same level as other parts of Queensland!

Mr. FUDGE : Give them two members each.

Mr. MACARTNEY : It is a matter for the House to say how the reform shall be carried out. There are about thirty-six electorates, each representing a quota of 3,080, or 20 per cent. less or 20 per cent. over, while there are sixteen electorates representing upwards of 20 per cent. over the quota, and twenty representing below 20 per cent. under the quota. I do not wish to burden the speech I am making with any further figures. I think I have shown the existence of inequalities, and I think the promise made by the Government, and repeated by the Premier in this Chamber, should be carried out. It is rather a commentary on the Government when we find at the close of the session that we are going to the country again with those inequalities in the electorates. I cannot see anything in the argument, in view of the figures I have given, that the country districts are entitled to a greater representation. I think we should have a redistribution of seats, so that every man and woman voter in the State should have the same weight in the counsels of the country. Let us have fair play to every man. Let them all have equal political power, whatever their position in life may be. That is the position I claim. I have never yet said we should have every vote of absolutely equal value. Of course, I recognise in a growing country like Queensland that a state of things like that cannot be obtained. From the progress of events there is a change of people from one district to another, and new people coming into the country, and inequalities must arise. But under the system that is laid down in New South Wales, or that adopted by the Commonwealth, we can get as near to equality as possible. In New South Wales the quota is fixed at 10 per cent. above and below, and if we are going to get as near as giving every man fair play, 10 per cent. should be the quota. That would not be an unreasonable change. We should be able to get something like a fair thing on that basis. I am pleased to have had an opportunity of bringing the motion forward I now move.

The HOME SECRETARY : I listened to the hon. member for Toowong with very great interest. He dealt very fully with the question, and I do not consider that he dealt with the question unfairly. There is a very great deal that might be said in favour of the motion, and a great deal the hon. member said is absolutely indisputable. At the same time it is a great deal easier to talk about the advisability of changing to an electoral system in which we should have some approach to equality of representation than it is to initiate such a course. I suppose every country in the world that rejoices in the blessings of representative government has felt inequalities such as the hon. member for Toowong complains of. But I am not aware

[*Mr. Macartney.*]

that in any country they have succeeded in even approximately removing the evils which the hon. member refers to.

Mr. FORSYTH: What about New South Wales?

The HOME SECRETARY: I shall deal with New South Wales later. It is practically true that for a time a country may succeed in cutting down the inequalities that exist. We have seen that done in New South Wales, but in New South Wales and in Queensland there are such rapid changes in the centre of gravity of population—if I may use the term—that any system which may be introduced with the view of bringing about a more even distribution of representation very soon becomes out of date, and perhaps as unequal as the one it superseded. I quite agree with the hon. gentleman when he says that this should not be a party question. I think it would be a very unfortunate thing if it was adopted as part of a party scheme. It should be a question in which we are all equally interested. It should be the desire of all parties in this House to bring about such a system of redistribution that after we have got one adult one vote—or I should say the ideal one adult one vote—to bring about a system in which every vote in every electorate should have the same value. At least, our desire should be to get as near to such a system as we possibly can. I quite agree with the hon. member for Toowong in regard to the unfairness of the present system. There is no doubt that the present system has a very large element of injustice in it, but I do not think the hon. gentleman is quite justified in assuming that he and those who are connected with him have a monopoly of sincerity in this matter. For many years the question of one adult one vote was agitating the public mind, and it took a great many years to bring it into practical operation and make it the law of the land. Now, the hon. gentleman's speech consisted largely of quotations from the utterances of the late Premier, Mr. Morgan, and members of this Government, and it would be idle and foolish to dispute the commitments entered into by the late Premier. There are, however, difficulties in the way; there always will be; and I think the Government might be pardoned if, in dealing with the very large number of important questions with which they have to deal, they did not succeed in quite overtaking all they intended to do. As I said just now, the question of one adult one vote was a burning question for a number of years until it was finally accomplished. The question of a reduction of members and a redistribution of seats has only been before us to any extent for the past two or three years.

Mr. BARNES: Question, question!

The HOME SECRETARY: As a matter of fact, although I think the hon. member for Toowong made out a very good case, and I agree with nearly all he said, still I am sorry to say that the country at large does not realise the importance of this question of redistribution. I could mention constituencies, particularly in the South, where the importance of the matter is realised, but I must say that as far as I am concerned, if I talk to the average elector about the matter, he does not seem to have taken it very seriously. I do not think that that is any justification for the present position, but it is no use any member seriously attempting to convince the House that this is really a burning question in the public mind. More is the pity. I think the public should realise that this is an important question. It is somewhat unfortunate that the two questions of reduction of members and redistribution of seats have been connected in this

House. The question of reduction of members I regard as comparatively trivial; whereas the question of redistribution I look upon as a very important matter indeed. Now, the hon. member for Toowong quoted some assertions made by me and the hon. member for Barcoo, and attempted to show that there was a practical assurance on the part of both of us with regard to this matter. However, he did not prove his case. The calculations he made did not bear out his assertions for one moment. I said just now that I regarded redistribution as a most important matter, but I believe the cardinal motive which prompted the introduction of the question of a reduction of members was one purely of economy. The motive which underlies the question of redistribution is a very much more important one. It is a vital question whether the constituencies and the individual voters shall have something like an equality of electoral power. Looking at the question broadly, he would be a bold man who would venture to say that they should not; but it is one thing to admit the abstract justice of a proposition, and another thing to carry it into effective operation. The moment you attempt to embody it in a Bill, you are beset with a thousand practical difficulties of which the abstract theorist takes no account.

Mr. BARNES: Is that a reason for not tackling it?

The HOME SECRETARY: I do not assert that for one moment. If the hon. gentleman thinks this Government has not given the question very serious consideration, and made more than one attempt to overcome the difficulties, he assumes a little bit too much.

Mr. FORSYTH: In the House?

The HOME SECRETARY: I am not speaking about the House. The hon. member pointed out the discrepancy that existed in the present system, and it might be instructive and interesting to the House to notice what this question means with regard to the various great divisions of the State. The figures I have are almost identical with the figures used by the hon. member for Toowong, and they show this state of things: Take the number of electors in the Southern division at 150,100. We find that the South has forty-five members at the present time, but by a uniform quota of 3,080 the South would have forty-eight and seven-tenths members; that is to say, the South would gain three and seventh-tenths members. If I take the Centre, it has about 26,000 electors, and eleven members at the present time. On the quota mentioned it would have eight and a-half members. It would lose two and a-half members. The North, with 45,600 electors, has sixteen members at the present time, and under the hon. member's quota it would have fourteen and four-fifths members. So that, roughly speaking, the North and Centre would lose four members, and the South would gain about four members. Now, that is an aspect of the case to which the North and Centre cannot be indifferent. Whether their stand be right or wrong I do not say, but it is a very human and natural stand all the same. The hon. member drew attention to the glaring discrepancies between the electorates. He showed, and quite correctly, that in such an electorate as Bulloo the voting has nine times the weight that it has in an electorate such as Toombul or Toowong. That, of course, leads one to the conclusion which cannot be escaped, that the perpetuation of such a system is the old evil of plural voting in another form. In that I quite agree with the hon. member. It does not matter whether you give a man nine votes in one constituency and one in another, or whether you say the vote in one constituency shall be nine times as powerful as in another, you arrive

*Hon. P. Airey.]*

at the same conclusion. If the one is unjust, there is no escaping the conclusion that the other is unjust also. Now, the real question that comes before one is, Upon what principle shall we proceed to remedy these inequalities? Under the Federal Act, when the electorates were arranged, there was a margin of 20 per cent. In New South Wales I think it is 10 per cent. I am afraid that a margin of only 10 per cent. over and above the quota would not suit the conditions of Queensland. In New South Wales the system to which the hon. gentleman alluded, resulted in the city of Sydney, which had always been remarkably well represented, gaining nine members, while the country districts lost nine members. I do not think that is a consummation to be desired. Nobody who knows anything about politics in New South Wales will maintain that Sydney was imperfectly represented. The last time we were discussing this matter I think the hon. member for Toowoomba suggested that we might possibly adopt three quotas as they do in New Zealand—one for city constituencies, one for suburban constituencies, and one for country constituencies. I think that is possibly the best thing that could be devised, but it is perfectly clear to me that whatever system we adopt we cannot avoid inflicting injustice upon certain portions of the State. We might minimise the injustice, and make it less than at present, but in a country such as this, where the conditions are so changing and uncertain, the infliction of injustice in electoral divisions is almost inevitable. Now, take the question of the North and Centre. Quite recently the people of those divisions were so strongly of opinion that they did not receive that consideration in the Queensland Legislature that they ought to have, that there existed a very powerful separation movement. That movement has apparently died out.

Mr. JENKINSON: Federation killed it.

The HOME SECRETARY: I am not sure that it is killed beyond resurrection. I am inclined to think that if the North and Centre lost a considerable number of members, it would be apt to arise again in a more powerful form than ever. Under the scheme outlined by the hon. member for Townsville for a redistribution of seats and reduction of members, I do not know whether the hon. member is aware that the North would lose 25 per cent. of its representatives, and the Centre 40 per cent. The hon. member would scarcely advocate such a scheme as that?

Hon. R. PHILP: I had a Bill prepared.

The HOME SECRETARY: I am referring to the hon. member's scheme to reduce our numbers to forty-eight members. The problem that I see is this: How are we going to effect a redistribution of seats without increasing the already preponderating power of one or two big towns? I said just now that the last redistribution in New South Wales gave Sydney nine seats more, and the country seven seats less. I do not think anybody here would advocate that there should be much of an increase in the representation of Brisbane.

Mr. JENKINSON: It that not a natural corollary of one adult one vote?

The HOME SECRETARY: It does not follow. The hon. member has not put the case fairly. We know that if the city of Brisbane had not one representative she would still have considerable power here, and when we are considering any scheme of redistribution we have to take that fairly into account.

Mr. JENKINSON: You are evading the question.

[*Hon. P. Airey.*

The HOME SECRETARY: If the hon. member means that the corollary of one adult one vote is one vote one value, I say that to carry that out in its abstract entirety is an impossibility.

Mr. JENKINSON: Ah, ah! Cornered at last.

Mr. FORSYTH: You will carry it out partially.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member for Carpentaria takes a more rational view of the matter. If, as the hon. member implies, it is impossible to carry it out in its entirety, we should adopt some course which would remove the inequalities partially, at all events.

Mr. FORSYTH: Why has that not been done?

The HOME SECRETARY: Does the hon. member remember the time that it took to accomplish the reform of one adult one vote? Does he remember how many years it was kept dangling before the people by his own party, who failed to bring it in or give effect to it? It is only this session that the Government have had to hold over three or four very important measures which we should much have liked to have become law this session, but with which we cannot go any further on account of the difficulties of the situation.

Mr. JENKINSON: Yes, especially the difficulties of the situation. I mean with your supporters.

The HOME SECRETARY: With regard to the situation and our supporters, the question of redistribution is one that the Government have never discussed with their supporters. It was discussed one afternoon in the House, and I am not aware that our supporters showed any very strong feeling on the matter. They nearly all admitted that a very strong case could be made out for redistribution. I admit, as I admitted before, that the case for redistribution is a very good case, and I regret that we have not been able to see our way to carry it into effect; but I say in that respect we are not singular, and that in regard to our electoral system we are in the same position as nearly every civilised country in the world that has parliamentary government. In England I know of one constituency that has 20,000 voters, and another with less than 2,000.

Mr. BARNES: What about the other States?

The HOME SECRETARY: There are inequalities in most of the Australian States. New South Wales made an attempt to remedy matters, but I am not sure that they did not make them even worse than they were before. What we have to face is the question how are we going to bring about redistribution without increasing the preponderating power of one or two big centres, and the second question is how are we going to effect redistribution and not minimise the power of the North and Centre? I do not think that the North and Centre are over-represented, and I think any scheme which threatens to increase the power of the big centres and to lessen the power of the distant portions of the State, where the people are already severely handicapped by reason of their distance from the capital, and by other conditions of life, would meet with very great difficulties in this Assembly. At the same time I agree with the hon. member for Toowoong that, even if you cannot devise a perfect system in which we have one vote one

value, still I think it is a great pity [5 p.m.] if we cannot devise some scheme to do away with the glaring inequalities which exist at the present time. It has not been that the Government have been unwilling to do this, but want of time has caused this and other measures to be laid on one side,

and I trust that on some future occasion we may find an opportunity of remedying the gross inequalities of the present system.

Mr. JENKINSON: Good old futurity!

HON. R. PHILP: When the Government gave the hon. member for Toowong an opportunity for discussing this question I thought we should have had some declaration of policy from the Government, but what do we find? After the strong case which the hon. member for Toowong has put before them, the Government say they cannot do anything, and do not intend to try to do anything. They do not propose to redeem the promises made by the late Premier—not till after next election, if they do it then. I hope they will tell us what they intend doing. They admit that there are too many members in the House, and that there is a great inequality in the representation. We find that one member often practically represents as many constituents as four or five members in the House. That ought not to be the position, and there ought to be some alteration. A reduction of members would have taken place if what I proposed had been done. The hon. gentleman knows that I had a Bill prepared which I would have gone on with, but the party on the other side would not allow me. It was a Bill to reduce the House to fifty-six electorates, with a quota of 20 per cent. either way. We could not have exactly 3,000 or 4,000 electors in every electorate; that is not possible, but I thought a maximum or minimum of 20 per cent. either way would be fair. There is more need for an alteration now than in times gone by. Before federation we could give an extra seat to one place and another, and make up the numbers as the population increased, but now we have come to a time when our population is stationary.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We expect a big influx in the North when the Cloncurry line is built.

HON. R. PHILP: Very likely it will take them from the South. There is no great desire on the part of the present State or Federal Government to increase our numbers; we have now nearly 500,000, and I think on that basis we may fairly have a redistribution. It has been possible in the other States, and the Federal Government have done it, though it has not given universal satisfaction. Here is the Toombul electorate which has 6,969 electors.

Mr. KERR: How many in Townsville?

HON. R. PHILP: Far more than in the Barcoo. Townsville has 5,770, which would be just about the average. Bulloo has 928; Burke, 817; Carpentaria, 1,083; Cook, 1,777; Burnett, 4386; Croydon, 1,428. Townsville has more than double any of those electorates. Balonne has 2,145; Gregory, 1,555; Leichhardt, 1,580; Logan, 1,972; Murilla, 1,364; Normanby, 1,467. The average ought to be about 3,000. I am disappointed that the Government have not tried to redeem their promise. We have been looking forward to it for some time, but they are quite satisfied with the present condition of things, and instead of seventy-two they would like to see 144 members. I am satisfied that the country will be in favour of a reduction, and does not like to see the House go on year after year with seventy-two members. Time and again it has been pointed out—

The SPEAKER: Order! I would point out to the hon. member that this question deals exclusively with the equalisation of the electorates, and not the reduction of members.

HON. R. PHILP: It is not possible to speak on one without the other. I do not know why the Home Secretary has brought in the Central

and Northern members, as there is nothing in it. The Northern members would only lose one and the Central about four. Now that the Cloncurry Railway Bill has been passed, there should be an increase there. If the South has the population, why should they not get the number of members they are entitled to. Of course if the Government will not do anything at all, it is useless having this debate, which might just as well have gone by default. The hon. member for Toowong asks the Government if they cannot do anything, but they are quite satisfied to leave things as they are, with seventy-two members. After the next election they might do something, but in the meantime they do not intend to do anything. I hope the country will take due note of the way in which the Government have redeemed their promise.

Mr. FORSYTH (*Carpentaria*): If there has ever been special pleading in this House, it has been this afternoon by the Home Secretary. I never listened to a speech in my life which was more in the nature of special pleading; yet he sat absolutely helpless and said, "We cannot do anything, as we have not got the time." I say if the Government were sincere they have had ample time to pass a Bill through the House. Why should we adjourn to-morrow without dealing with such an important question as this? If hon. members are sincere—and I am sincere—they would be willing to sit for a month to pass a Bill which is absolutely necessary throughout Queensland. I know if that Bill were passed I should lose my seat.

Mr. MANN: You nearly lost it last time. (Laughter.)

Mr. FORSYTH: Ever since I have been in the House I have never lost my seat, but the hon. member for Cairns knows he will lose his next time.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. FORSYTH: This is a Bill which has been promised ever since we came into the House, and which is essential because of the changed conditions in Queensland. We have now got the women's vote, which has intensified the position. We have double the number of voters we had two years before. I knew there was no hope of this coming on, as hon. members on the other side do not want it. They think they will lose their seats through it. Taking the quota given by the hon. member for Toowong, of 3,080 for each electorate, there would be a loss of four seats to the North and the Centre, and the South would gain four seats. But I say the policy we should adopt is not to take it upon the actual quota, as it would be unfair. While we cannot give sparsely populated districts the same number of members as we can in the South, yet there should be some allowance. I am perfectly willing to have 25 per cent.—not 10 per cent., like New South Wales, or 20 per cent., like the Commonwealth Government. That would mean that we would lose three or four seats in the North; but I believe that we would be practically in the same position as we are now. The only difference would be that the boundaries of each particular electorate might be altered, but as far as the aggregate number of members from the South or the Central division is concerned, I do not believe it would make the slightest difference. There is no doubt that each electorate, no matter in what part of the State, should have the voters arranged on a better basis than is the case at the present time. Hon. members opposite think that, by giving the margin of 25 per cent. over and above the quota, as the case may be, their electorates might be wiped out, but I do not think that would apply at all. It would only mean that the boundaries would

be altered in such a way as to bring in a larger or lesser quantity. It would not be a reduction of seats, but an equalisation all round. With one electorate comprising 7,000 or 8,000 voters and another with 800 at the present time, no man can say that that is a fair thing. You could disfranchise 6,000 men in the Toombul electorate to-morrow, and they would still have as many men behind them as there are in my electorate. That is a state of affairs which should not exist, and it should have been remedied by the Government. If a general election was not going to take place next year, no doubt they would have done it. As the Franchise Bill has doubled the number of voters in Queensland, it has intensified this business. Suppose we had 10,000 plural votes altogether, what is that in comparison with three or four seats? You can get three or four large seats with perhaps 20,000 votes—say, Bulimba, Toombul, and Toowong—and you can take out three others with not 3,000 amongst them. Is not that ten times worse than plural voting? I think that it is, and if the Government were sincere in this matter, and wanted to carry out the promise they made, they would certainly have brought in a Redistribution Bill, more especially as the franchise is now on a different basis. The Home Secretary said that it was not easy to do it, but it has been easy enough to do it elsewhere. There is not the slightest reason why we should not do it here, as there would be no difficulty. The whole thing wants to be taken in hand by an expert and brought before the House, when, if necessary, it could be easily modified to suit the circumstances. The Home Secretary agreed that there is an enormous injustice in connection with the present Franchise Act, because we have not had a Redistribution Bill. We have the Government practically speaking as one man; and yet, in spite of that, nothing has been done, and, as far as we can judge, nothing will be done. There are hon. members sitting behind them who do not want this to be done. The Home Secretary said there were difficulties in the way, and that it was a most important matter. It is one of the most important matters ever brought before the House. The Government believe that, and yet they are determined to give the matter no consideration.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: What are you quoting from?

Mr. FORSYTH: From the speech delivered by the Home Secretary this afternoon. I can also quote a remark made by the Home Secretary in 1904. I was speaking on the Franchise Bill in that year, when the Home Secretary made an interjection, in which he said, "The Redistribution Bill is an absolute necessity." It has been an absolute necessity for three or four years, and yet that necessity has not been met. The Home Secretary talked about difficulties being in the way. There are difficulties in the way of all legislation, but if the Government had been sincere all these difficulties would have disappeared, and some system which would improve the condition of things as it exists now could certainly have been passed through this House. But here we are going to have a general election. It is going to be held on the new franchise, while all these enormous anomalies in connection with the electorates exist. At the same time the Government are lying back and saying, "We are not going to pass a Redistribution of Seats Bill now." That means that there will be no Redistribution of Seats Bill for the next six years. In spite of all the distinct pledges made by this Government, and the references in the Governor's Speech and in the manifestoes and speeches of Ministers throughout the

country, we find that on the eve of a general election we are in exactly the same position with regard to that matter that we were in three years ago. The Government say they believe that this is one of the most important measures that could be brought before the House. If so, why do they not carry it out now? I believe that we could get it through in a week or ten days' time. I do not want to say any more on this matter.

Mr. KERR: We will have a special session to deal with it.

Mr. FORSYTH: I am quite willing to have a special session, or I am quite willing that it should be carried out in the next week or ten days, because I believe it is such an important measure. Why is it that the Government have not brought in this Bill? It is because their supporters are afraid that they will lose their seats, and that the alterations of the boundaries of their electorates will interfere with them. Taking a number of seats, and allowing a margin of 20 or 25 per cent., there need not be any single electorate lost either in the Central or Northern divisions. However, the Government is not prepared to do it. At present we have the greatest amount of inequality that ever existed in Queensland, and in spite of that the Government is going to the country and allowing these things to remain as they are.

Mr. KERR (*Barcoo*): The last speaker says that we are going to allow the inequalities that now exist to continue to exist for a longer period. It is wonderful to hear the hon. gentleman and the leader of the Opposition talk like that, when those gentlemen allowed those inequalities to exist for the number of years that they did without making any change. Anyone who has followed the question of representation in this Chamber knows very well that it has been asked for years and years that there should be better representation in the voting of the people of this State.

Mr. FORSYTH: It is very much worse now.

Mr. KERR: I only rose to point out to the hon. member that the Government have not neglected to face this question, and have not put it on one side because a certain section of members supporting the Government are opposed to a reduction of members.

Mr. FORSYTH: We are not considering a reduction of members now.

Mr. KERR: The hon. members are building up their arguments on a false basis, because they have not proved that members supporting the Government are against a redistribution of seats. There is no man sitting behind the Government who is foolish enough to say that there shall not be a redistribution of seats. We know that there cannot be one vote one value. I am pleased that the hon. member for Carpentaria, who represents a Northern electorate and who knows something of the conditions of the State, falls in with the proposition that there should be a margin of 20 to 25 per cent. If that margin were adopted, there would be a better chance of getting better representation. The hon. member for Toowong picked out three electorates—Bulloo, Burke and Carpentaria—and showed the representation they had. That was an extreme case. The hon. member for Toowong pointed out that those three electorates had the same representation as three large electorates in the Southern portion of the State. But anyone who knows anything about representation knows that Brisbane does not want a member in this Chamber at all, as the influence of Brisbane is quite strong enough to enable it to get every-

[*Mr. Forsyth.*

thing it requires, while the outside districts are not able to get what they believe are their natural requirements.

Mr. BARNES: Would that be just? Surely you do not suggest such a thing as that?

Mr. KERR: When it comes to voting money you can see what chance the other parts of the State—the sparsely populated districts—have of getting money voted for them in comparison with Brisbane and the larger centres of population.

Mr. JENKINSON: That is not so.

Mr. KEOGH: Why do you not go in for single electorates?

The SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. KERR: I represent a single electorate, and so does the hon. member for Rosewood, and I quite agree that we should have single electorates. I believe there are electorates that have two members that are over repre-

[5.30 p.m.] sented; but you cannot get away from the fact that what we want is a redistribution of seats, so that the Northern, Western, and South-western portions of this State will get as much representation as it is possible to give them.

Mr. FORSYTH: We believe in that, and I said so.

Mr. KERR: The hon. member for Carpentaria asked why it is that the Government has not introduced this measure. I would point out that the one adult one vote Bill only passed this Chamber in January, 1905.

Mr. FORSYTH: The redistribution of seats should have been passed at the same time.

Mr. KERR: That was less than two years ago. And when we think of the number of years that the late Government allowed the plural system of voting to exist without bringing in anything to remedy it, we can see that this Government has not taken much time in giving the just representation that ought to be given to the people of this State. I agree that we should have a redistribution of seats. I would point out, though, that it has not been a burning question in this State, and neither has the reduction of members been a burning question. I believe this question ought to be referred to the electors so that they can have a say whether there should be a redistribution of seats or not, and also what should be the basis of representation. There should be some command from the electors. It is very hard in this State to adjust the boundaries of the electorates, and so forth. If the Northern or Central portions of this State are going to lose representation under this motion of the hon. member for Toowong, then there will not be satisfaction given.

Mr. HERBERTSON: We have not got sufficient now.

Mr. KERR: It will not be satisfactory to the Central or Northern portions of the State if they lose members. The Government, while they are prepared to consider the matter, are not prepared to rush like a bull at a gate in a matter like this; they want to consider it calmly and also bring down a measure that will be satisfactory not to the Southern portion of the State alone but to the Northern and Central portions as well.

Mr. P. J. LEAHY (*Warrego*): I should like to take some four or five minutes in expressing my views on this matter before giving a vote. It has been said that there has been a breach on the part of the Government in regard to this matter. I do not intend to take up that line of argument, because I am used to these things, and it would be a surprise to me if there had not been a breach of some kind by this Govern-

ment. It is undoubtedly a sound principle to lay down that we should have the widest possible franchise, but the corollary of that is that the votes should be of the same value. Yet I am against giving each vote the same value. I quite understand the attitude taken up by the hon. member for Toowong and other hon. members—that when that Franchise Bill became law each should get the fullest possible amount of voting power. It is perfectly absurd to give one adult one vote while at the same time you give one electorate three or four times the voting power of the people in another electorate. To justify my action in rising, I can consistently take up the stand in saying that I do not believe our present franchise is in all respects an equitable one. If I held opinions like the hon. member for Barcoo, and considered that the present franchise was an equitable one, I could not fail to vote for this motion.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: What is the matter with the franchise?

Mr. P. J. LEAHY: Some have more votes than they should have, and family life is not represented at all. The crying need of Australia is more people. I hold that if this motion is carried the greatest injustice would be inflicted on the more sparsely settled places of Queensland. As regards that matter, I am in entire sympathy with the hon. member for Barcoo; but I am perfectly logical in the course I take up, while the hon. member for Barcoo is perfectly illogical. If I held the same opinions that the hon. member for Barcoo held, then I should vote for this motion. I quite agree that, if the people of Brisbane had no representative at all, their interests would not be neglected, but I do not advocate that Brisbane should not have representation. We know that as long as it is near the centre of government it must exercise a considerable influence upon the Parliament, quite apart from the influence exercised by its own member, so we should not give the larger centres any more authority than they have got at the present time. The attitude taken up by the hon. member for Barcoo and some who agree with him is not comprehensible, because it was only a few years ago, when these hon. members did not represent Western electorates, that they used to get up in this Chamber and tell us that the men who represented Western electorates were representatives of sheep and cattle. But since that time several of these districts have fallen into the hands of these hon. members, and we do not hear anything about that now. I think a redistribution of seats scheme is wanted, but it is not wanted on the lines laid down in this motion. I think that a margin of 10 per cent. either way is not sufficient. I say we ought to have a margin of 40 per cent. either way. If we take the estimate of the hon. member for Toowong that the quota should be 3,080, then the electorate of Bulloo, which is one of the largest electorates in Queensland, will have to be multiplied by 3 or 4 to get that number. Then take the Warrego electorate—it is a fairly large electorate, with 1,700 on the roll. It would mean that two such districts would have to be put together to make one electorate. Then in the case of Burke three, four, or five times the area would have to be put together for one electorate. The wealth of this country and the prosperity of this country to a very large extent at the present day depend, and must depend for a large number of years to come, upon the producing industries which those districts represent to a very large extent. I think there should be something else—that more than mere heads of people should be counted in a matter of this kind. We know that with comparatively a small number of

Mr. P. J. Leahy.]

people scattered over a very large area of country it is impossible for a member to keep in touch with those people in the same way as he could keep in touch with two or three times the number of people in an electorate like Brisbane, Toowoomba, or some other places near the coast, and consequently it would be perfectly absurd. The system might work very well in the places I have enumerated, and would work equally well in Carpentaria, Burke, Barcoo, or several other places. But whilst admitting all these things, there can be no justification for the action of the Government. The hon. member for Barcoo tried to whitewash the Government, and, at the same time, tried to blame the late Government. There is no possible use in whitewashing a matter of this kind, because the late leader of the Government and the leader of the present Government made distinct promises to this side of the House and to the country that a Redistribution Bill and a Bill for the reduction in the number of members of Parliament would be brought in; but notwithstanding the fact that there has been ample time to carry out these promises, absolutely nothing has been done in the direction indicated. The hon. member blamed the late Government. Things have altogether altered since then; things were not the same in the time of the late Government as they are at present. The Government brought in a Bill giving a vote to women, and if nothing of that kind was done, it would not have been necessary that a Bill of this kind should be brought in. I have not the slightest doubt that if the late Government were in office a Redistribution Bill and a Bill for the reduction of members would have been brought in long ago. It is just as well we should recognise that—there is no getting away from the fact—that a distinct promise was given by the late leader of the Government and by the present Government to bring in the measures I have indicated; and although ample opportunities have occurred, neither of these promises has been kept. It is ridiculous for the hon. member for Barcoo to get up and try to explain away their neglect in connection with this matter. There is very much more I should like to say in connection with a matter of this kind, but I understand we are coming to a vote on this matter at 6 o'clock. I have only to say, in conclusion, that, however just it may appear on the face of it, I am perfectly certain that under such a scheme a grave injustice will be done to the more sparsely populated parts of Queensland. I venture to say that if this matter is fully considered—if it is considered on its merits quite apart from any party obligations or party ties—the House will not affirm a principle of this kind. I do not see that there is any good in debating the matter any further, because it does not make much difference what we say; but I consider that, as a representative of a Western district, it was my duty to speak on the matter, and I have discharged that duty as briefly as possible.

Mr. RANKIN (*Burrum*): I am perfectly in accord with the resolution of the hon. member for Toowong, although I am not in accord with the basis he suggests. When we look at some of the figures, notably Burke and Bulimba, and see that in one electorate 800 voters have returned one representative, while in the other instance there are 5,000 electors, naturally one is inclined to think there is something wrong somewhere. But, on the other hand, it must be apparent that it is not merely a question of heads that should count. I dare say that if we look at some electorates that are represented by two members—take, for instance, Maryborough, Gympie, Mackay, and one or two other places—I dare say that one man could serve very

[*Mr. P. J. Leaky.*

much better as representative of any of those electorates than one man in some of the country electorates comprising a small area of country and a large number of industries. Consequently, any redistribution on a population basis would be unjust in the extreme. I do not quite agree with the Home Secretary when he says the matter is not one to concern the people in the country very much. Personally, I think it is one that concerns them a great deal. I believe that this is a matter that will come very strongly before us at the next general election, not only the question of a redistribution of seats but also the question of a reduction in the number of members. There was a very general feeling when federation was brought about that the cost of the State government would have to be very materially reduced by a reduction in the number of members.

The SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. RANKIN: I do not think, at all events, that any redistribution that might be made in the future will be complete without an ultimate reduction in the number of members of this House. I would just like to point out whereby a reduction might be made. Take, for instance, the double electorates: we should have some means of dividing these electorates. Nothing, perhaps, can be more ridiculous than the evidence we have in this Chamber. A number of important double electorates are practically disfranchised, merely because they have one member sitting on one side of the House trying to undo everything that the other member is trying to do on the other side of the House. We have only to look at Charters Towers, look at Mackay, at Toowoomba, and at Ipswich. We see nearly all those double electorates disfranchised merely because they have a member on each side of the Chamber. If it is possible in a Redistribution of Seats Bill to bring in some means whereby these double electorates can either be reduced in number or be divided so that we can have separate members for each particular part, then I think a redistribution of that kind would be of some value. There is another question which I think we will have to take into consideration, and that is this: If the population—that is the basis the hon. member for Toowong has adopted—we find that the great bulk of the representation would be in the more densely settled districts. The primary producer—the country elector—should really deserve more consideration than those who are merely living on the people of the country in the more settled districts, so that there should certainly be some difference made in the redistribution. Personally, I should like to have seen the hon. member for Toowong bring in some scheme to divide the State into city, suburban, and country electorates, and fix the quota for each of those particular districts. That, I think, would be reasonable; but merely to take 3,000 people, with a limit of 25 per cent. above or below that number, would be doing an injustice to the country districts, and will not receive my support. Believing, as I do, not merely in a redistribution of seats but also in a reduction in the number of members, I still think this is not the most desirable way to bring it about, as foreshadowed in the motion moved by the hon. member for Toowong. Some electorates differ a great deal more than others. For instance, we have electorates where enormous industries play an important part. We might have one taking in mining, farming, secondary industries, and taking in the pastoral industry, and then we might have an electorate which is a pastoral electorate and nothing more. If there is to be any double representation, I think it should be given to those electorates that have the greater variety of industries. It is

there certainly where representation is needed, because it is in those electorates where the greatest difficulty is experienced in advocating their claims. It is not merely one single industry where the difficulty is—that is comparatively simple. It is where there is a diversity of industries that difficulty is experienced in securing adequate representation. The area of the electorates is also a matter that would have to be taken into consideration. We know that some of the Western electorates, although sparsely populated, must be extremely difficult to work. Immense areas necessitate a great deal of travelling, and it certainly requires a harder working man to serve them than it does in the coastal districts, where the population is closer and where the facilities for getting about are much greater. All these things should be taken into consideration when a question of the redistribution of seats is being contemplated. I hope, at all events, that the motion of the hon. member for Toowong will have done this much good—it has brought the matter more prominently before the country, and when the elections come on it will give the people a chance of saying what they think of it. I am quite sure that there will be only one expression of opinion, and that is in favour of a redistribution of seats, and also in favour of a reduction of members.

Mr. KEOGH (*Rosewood*): This is a matter that, ever since I have been a member of the House, I have tried to bring under the notice of hon. members, and I agree with the hon. member for Toowong, who spoke so remarkably well on this matter this afternoon. There is nothing I can add to what that hon. gentleman has stated further than to say that it is most advisable that a curtailment of members and also a redistribution of seats should take place. This matter has been brought not only under the notice of the House but it has been spoken of by hon. members when they addressed their constituents at the late elections, and the minority was decidedly those gentlemen who did not inform their constituents that they were prepared to vote for a redistribution of seats and also for a reduction in the number of members. My own opinion is that since the advent of federation we should have a redistribution of seats and a reduction in the number of members. We should follow in the same steps as New South Wales and Victoria. In New South Wales they put the matter before the country, and the country decided that they would have only so many members—I think ninety. In Victoria the members of Parliament took the matter in hand themselves, and curtailed the number of members. I do not think this House should ask the whole of the State to interfere in the matter. I think it is within the province of the members of this Chamber. We are over legislated, and the number of members could be reduced by a majority of the members of the House; and therefore, seeing that in New South Wales and Victoria they have reduced the number of members—

The SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. KEOGH: Well, with regard to the redistribution of seats, placing it on the same plane as that of the other States, we would be only entitled to thirty-three members—that is, on the population basis.

The SPEAKER: Order, order!

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: That is a considerably smaller country than this.

Mr. KEOGH: Granted that we have a larger country, and, no doubt, a progressive one, still it is advisable that we should have a redistribution of seats, but hon. gentlemen on the other

side are averse to this, simply because they know if that takes place a number of them will not appear here again. I trust that if the Premier is again returned to his present position, one of the first measures he will bring forward will be a Redistribution of Seats Bill. Unfortunately, the redistribution, even should it take place, cannot come into operation until three years. Therefore, I think we should have a special session to deal with the matter.

Question (*Mr. Macartney's motion*) put and passed.

#### CLOSER SETTLEMENT BILL.

##### LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S MESSAGE, NO. 3.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council, intimating that they did not insist upon their amendments in clauses 12 and 16, and still further insisting on their amendment in clause 20, to which the Assembly had disagreed.

##### CONSIDERATION OF THE MESSAGE IN COMMITTEE.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS moved that the Committee no longer insisted upon their disagreement with the Council's amendment in line 46 of clause 20.

[7 p.m.] The reason for that was simply that there was a great probability of a measure that might be most useful being lost if they insisted any further upon disagreeing to the insertion of the words. His motion must not be taken in any way as an acquiescence with the amendment. On the contrary, he regarded it with apprehension, as he deemed it to be quite possible that the presence of those words might, to a large extent, defeat the object of the Bill. It might quite conceivably be the case that the Government could have acquired estates at the same rates previous to the introduction of the Bill that they could now do with these words inserted, because they gave a most ample opportunity, and perhaps encouragement, to the Land Appeal Court to take an excessive view of the amount of compensation that was to be paid to the owner. It should be remembered that it was not merely a question of the sum that they had to disburse from the Treasury to the owner in order to acquire the estate. The question that should be present in their minds was the cost of the land to the small man who was going to take it up, and for whose benefit the Bill had been brought in. However, the amendment had been inserted, and whatever its effect it would not be irremediable. If they found it did not succeed—if they found it put such a value on the estates as not to make it worth while buying them for closer settlement, it would become a matter for consideration with the Government whether the measure ought not either to be wiped out altogether or amended in that particular. It was in no sanguine frame of mind that he bowed to the exigencies of the case and moved his motion.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee no longer insisted on their disagreement to the amendment of the Legislative Council in clause 20, and the Bill was ordered to be returned with a message to that effect.

#### HARBOUR BOARDS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

##### MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council, intimating that they did not insist upon their amendments in this Bill.

*Hon. Sir A. S. Cowley.]*

TRUSTEES AND EXECUTORS ACTS  
AMENDMENT BILL.

MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council, disagreeing to the amendments made by the Legislative Assembly in clause 2, and agreeing to their other amendments.

CONSIDERATION OF THE MESSAGE IN COMMITTEE.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved that the Committee do not insist on the insertion of clause 2. The reason given by the Legislative Council was one that commended itself to common sense.

HON. R. PHILP did not agree with the reason given by the Attorney-General. Although the clause was regarded by the hon. gentleman as objectionable, he accepted it. Was he afraid of the judges? It was too late in the session to prolong the matter or to have a row with the other House over it, but he thought that that Chamber was wanting in common sense to have disagreed with such a very reasonable amendment.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee did not insist on their amendment in clause 2 to which the Legislative Council had disagreed, and the Bill was ordered to be returned with a message to that effect.

SUPPLY.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1905-6.

EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE—LEGISLATIVE  
COUNCIL AND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

The TREASURER moved that £342 11s. 2d. be granted for "Executive and Legislative—Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly." This was made up of small amounts which did not call for any particular comment, as full explanation was given in the Estimates.

Question put and passed.

CHIEF SECRETARY.

The TREASURER moved that £7,263 4s. 11d. be granted for the "Chief Office," "Audit Office," "Steamer 'Lucinda,'" "Thursday Island," and "Miscellaneous Services." This was much the same as last year. The only notable item was £1,275, "Expenses of Royal Commission *re* Deportation and Repatriation of Pacific Islanders, and Labour for Sugar Industry," and there was an amount standing to the debit of the South Africa contingents trust fund. They had paid off the old score in that matter.

HON. R. PHILP: What about the £300 to Jones?

The TREASURER: Hon. members would know pretty well enough about Jones by this time. Mr. Jones was appointed for two years as from the 1st January, 1906, and an amount was allowed him for travelling expenses of £600 for 1906 and £500 for 1907. He had explained before that the amount fixed was not expected to pay Mr. Jones for living in the East, because, unless he could earn an equally large amount of commission from the orders he took, it would be a very hard job for him to live on this amount. At any rate, he could hardly live in such a style for a man doing business in the way he was doing it there. This was simply meant as a kind of "socialism in our time" for people who might desire to open up business there, but did not care to go to the expense of having a

traveller of their own there. It was simply done to encourage the development of trade. Whether it was wise or not could only be gauged by results.

HON. R. PHILP, referring to the £1,275 expenses of the Royal Commission, said there was not a doubt that the commission furnished the House with a very valuable report, and he understood the members of the commission were not satisfied with the amount of money the Treasurer gave them. If that was so, he thought they ought to pay something adequate to the work they did. Members of the House were inclined to think that these commissions were given as sops to members of Parliament and that they made money out of the business, but he understood that they did not make any money out of this business.

The TREASURER quite agreed with what the hon. gentleman said with regard to the satisfactory work done by the commission. The report had been recognised as a fair and carefully-thought-out statement of the position, and the chief value which he attached to it was this: it had satisfied everyone here and in the Commonwealth Parliament as a fair statement of the case. It was largely owing to having the report of that commission in the hands of the Federal Ministers that he was able to induce them to take over the business, and so save Queensland a good deal of money. But to pay the commissioners any more money now was quite another thing. The price to be paid for the work was all settled beforehand. No one could think more highly of the work than he did, yet the members of the commission agreed to do it for that price, and there was no great reason to pay more except the fact that we were coming near Christmas, and people's hearts were apt to be soft. (Laughter.)

Question put and passed.

HOME SECRETARY.

The TREASURER moved that £22,685 19s. 9d. be granted for "Home Secretary." This was a very large supplementary vote, but it was made up of a number of small details. The

only considerable item was a sum [7.30 p.m.] of £4,716 2s. extra for "Dunwich Benevolent Asylum" and £5,211 12s. 7d. for "Public Health," which had always been there. They had tried to avoid that this year by voting a sum on the Estimates-in-Chief. There was an amount down of £2,327 1s. 7d. for "Electoral Registration." This was brought about by the new franchise, and then the Government had spent £2,000 more in Government advertising.

Question put and passed.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS.

The TREASURER moved that £8,720 4s. 2d. be granted for "Department of Public Works." The chief item was £7,454 8s. 11d. for public buildings and repairs to public buildings.

Question put and passed.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE.

The TREASURER moved that £3,201 1s. 9d. be granted for "Department of Justice." It was made up of a large number of small items, only one of which amounted to £500—"Railway Fares, Printing, etc."

Mr. FORSYTH noticed there was £684 13s. 5d. down for witnesses, acting judges, and acting Crown prosecutors, which was not put on the Estimates for last year. Would it not be better to put a lump sum on the Estimates to cover expenses of this kind?

[Hon. Sir A. S. Cowley.

The TREASURER: There was something in what the hon. member said. It was right to put on the Estimates-in-Chief all the expenditure they expected, but there was no certainty that there would be any money required for this purpose. The whole increased cost to the Justice Department was only £684. There would be much more in the contention of the hon. gentleman if it had gone to a considerable amount. They had done just the same in the Health Department.

Question put and passed.

#### THE TREASURER.

The TREASURER moved that £4,575 12s. 2d. be granted for "The Treasurer." Like the other vote, this was made up of a large number of very small items, none of which amounted to £1,000. The vote included £909 15s. 1d. for new boilers for the Harbours and Rivers Department.

Mr. PAULL: There was a sum of £625 14s. 2d. down for "Cost of Investigation and Reports on Woongarra and Isis Irrigation Schemes." He would like to know to whom that money was paid.

The TREASURER: Hon. members would remember that for many years back there was an irrigation board in the Woongarra Scrub district, and the Government promised that if the board found a certain sum the Government would have an investigation made as to the practicability of irrigating this scrub. His idea was that he should pay twice the amount that the board had paid. The amount named was the amount paid to the engineer who made the report and the men he employed. It cost somewhat more than he (Mr. Kidston) anticipated, and he was sorry that the result of the report did not offer good prospects of carrying out irrigation. He would much rather that the report had been more favourable. Before irrigation could be largely accomplished in Queensland they could hardly expect that they were going to have investigations here and there without any practical results. He was not quite sure that any practical results would come of this report, and he was more sorry, for that reason, than he was for the spending of the £600.

Mr. FORSYTH noticed that there was £1,637 13s. 6d. down for "Government Printing, etc.," including the increased cost of *Hansard* and the increased cost of the extra hands and the overtime. Last year £3,000 was voted for *Hansard*, and this year it was put down at £3,500. He would like to know if the amount put on the Estimates for this year for running the Printing Office and the extra hands would be sufficient.

The TREASURER: He hoped the amount would be sufficient. He did not know any reason just now for believing it would not be sufficient.

Mr. FORSYTH: That is a big increase.

The TREASURER: It was a large department that they were dealing with, and the increase of £1,600 was a comparatively small sum. He understood that the amount put down this year would be approximately sufficient. Last year they had the reprinting of the annual State rolls and the printing of the new State rolls.

Question put and passed.

#### DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC LANDS.

The TREASURER moved that £27,391 14s. 7d. be voted for "Department of Public Lands." This was a considerable increase of the amount over the Estimates, and it had practically all been incurred by the extra activity of the department in promoting settlement. Hon.

members would see that the chief items were £2,600 for "Railway Fares and Freights, Printing, etc." The Minister had given passes to encourage settlement.

Mr. P. J. LEAHY: Mainly to outsiders and not to Queenslanders.

The TREASURER: That was so. It was the outsiders they wanted here. The others we had here now. Then there was an amount of £4,999 18s. for "Fees to Licensed Surveyors," and £6,800 for "Central Rabbit Board," which his friend, the hon. member for Warrego, smiled at.

Mr. P. J. LEAHY: It is not big enough to smile at.

The TREASURER: Then there was £2,500 paid as "Commission to Agents in other States, Special Advertising, etc."

Mr. FORSYTH: Are you still paying this commission?

The TREASURER: Yes, he was still paying commission for results.

Hon. R. PHILP: Who got the money?

The TREASURER: All this had been fully discussed in the Estimates-in-Chief.

Hon. R. PHILP: He was not going to cavil at the amount of money spent. He would like to know who got this £2,500 which the Government paid as commission?

The TREASURER: The matter had been discussed already, and the Secretary for Lands had already informed the Committee. The money had been paid chiefly to Messrs. Pulsford and Murphy.

Hon. R. PHILP asked the Treasurer if he had any objection to giving the names and the exact amount paid to each.

The TREASURER: The bulk of the amount has been expended in advertisements.

Mr. JENKINSON: He had heard a good deal of talk outside, and the amount paid to outsiders, and yet there had been only two names mentioned in connection with this particular matter. He could hardly pick up a southern paper without seeing the names of several men who advertised themselves as southern agents for the Queensland Government. That was specially the case in the Richmond River district and on other northern rivers in New South Wales. He had no objection to that at all, because he believed they had been doing splendid work. He was not cavilling at the vote, but he would like to know if there was any objection why the names should be read out, with the amount paid to each.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There was no harm whatever in giving the names, and he was only sorry he had not the figures with him. As a matter of fact, he remembered distinctly giving the figures within the last six weeks.

Mr. JENKINSON: They are not in *Hansard*.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes, they were, because he distinctly remembered giving the figures. The only agents who had received any large amount for commission were Messrs. Pulsford and Murphy—they were the most active agents. There were other agents who represented the Government in the south, chiefly in the Northern Rivers of New South Wales. Those people had asked if they sent people here from New South Wales who selected land, would they be paid a commission?

Mr. JENKINSON: Does that apply to New Zealand? I see they are advertising there as well.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Lands Department had advertised in New Zealand, and there were agents there as well, but he was sorry to say that he had been greatly disappointed with the results. They had received a number of inquiries from that place, but they had bagged very few New Zealanders so far. There were other agents in New South Wales who had not yet received any commission.

Mr. COWAP asked what had become of the money sent by Mr. Elliott?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The whole amount had been placed to consolidated revenue account.

Mr. JENKINSON asked if it was the intention of the Government to do any further work in connection with the road that had been built from Boonah to Killarney?

The TREASURER: We are waiting to see how they vote. (Laughter.)

Mr. JENKINSON believed they would vote all right. Between £2,000 and £3,000 had already been spent in connection with that road, and it would be absolutely wasted if it were left in its present state. He could not understand the parsimony of the Government in this small matter. At present the road was absolutely dangerous to traffic. The shire council rightly refused to take it over, for that reason. Had the Treasurer taken his advice about two years ago, and spent another £100, in addition to the amount offered by the Boonah Shire Council and the amount collected locally, the road would have been in proper order to-day. About £200 was required to make it available for tourists, and to enable the land, on which there was a large quantity of valuable timber, to be cut up and selected. He understood about 30,000 acres would be readily availed of if the department would only do what he had suggested. He hoped the Secretary for Lands would consult his engineer and see what could be done in the matter.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: So far from the Government being guilty of parsimony, their action was one of unrequited generosity. He had ridden over the road; and, speaking from recollection, he was told the amount necessary to make the road available was about £1,500. The Government had spent far more than that, yet the shire council and the people concerned had not done anything towards making the approach to the road at the foot of the range. They had declined to do anything at all, not because the road was unfinished; they were unanimous in the opinion that it was a remarkably fine piece of engineering work.

Mr. JENKINSON: As far as it went.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes. You could drive four or five horses down there quite easily. The reason why the local authorities declined to do anything was because they thought they could get the Government to go the whole length. That was the exact reason why this fine piece of work was allowed to remain in its present state.

Mr. JENKINSON: The fact of the matter was when the work was forecasted the members of the shire council and the residents of Boonah and Killarney did not profess to have any engineering capabilities. The result was the Government sent their engineer up, and he forecasted the amount necessary; but, unfortunately, before the work was completed there came a visitation from Heaven, in the shape of a heavy thunderstorm, which practically destroyed a good deal of the work that had been carried out by the Government engineer. He could not blame the Government for that. He had stated before publicly that the work was a credit to the Government as well as to the engineer in charge;

[Hon. J. T. Bell.

but now it was positively dangerous. As to the question of unrequited generosity, could the Secretary for Lands tell them of another instance where a number of citizens put their hands in their pockets and contributed over £100 towards an expenditure to enable the Government to complete the work?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Yes; numbers of cases.

Mr. JENKINSON: If the Government would not recognise the exceptional circumstances of this case they were blind to the public interest.

The district had acted in a public-spirited manner and simply asked [8 p.m.] the Government to back it up. If

the Treasurer would only inspect the road himself, he would be convinced of the accuracy of the statement made.

The TREASURER: I will take the matter into consideration.

Mr. JENKINSON: That was not sufficient either for him or his constituents. He was pleading on behalf of the general taxpayer, who had contributed £3,000 towards the cost of the road, and the whole of that money would be wasted if the Government left the road in its present condition.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Will the shire council put the approaches in order?

Mr. JENKINSON understood that the shire council would be fully prepared to assume the responsibility if the Government would complete the work they had undertaken.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If the shire council will make the approaches, the whole situation will be altered.

Mr. JENKINSON: Would the hon. gentleman pledge himself that if the shire council would make the approaches the Government would complete the work? It was a shame that the money should be wasted, and that the road should be lying idle, considering the amount of timber which was available and the fact that the land when cleared would be readily taken up. He had a list of people who would be ready to take up the land if the Secretary for Public Lands would throw it open, but the making of the road must precede the opening of the land.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You get the shire council to make the approaches.

Mr. JENKINSON: He would do his best. If the Government would put it in a proper state of repair the shire council would be prepared to undertake the responsibility.

Mr. HAMILTON: There was a vote on this Estimate for the Central Rabbit Board. When the Estimates-in-Chief were going through they were promised a Rabbit Bill, and he should be glad to know what the intentions of the Government were? Was the Secretary for Lands going to restore the poison carts? He saw that a number of the carts that had been knocked off had been destroyed.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He had a Rabbit Bill ready, but he was sorry to say that there was no time to bring it in. He was afraid they would have to wait until next session before anything could be done.

Mr. P. J. LEAHY: He was at Killarney not long ago, and intended to drive over the new road to Boonah, but when he had made his arrangements he was informed that it was impossible to get over the road. He was at Boonah a month ago, and the statements which had been made in reference to the road were confirmed by other people in the district. The least the Government could do was to put the road in such a condition that the public could use it.

Reference had been made to the railway fares and free passes issued to men in search of land. He made an interjection, and the Premier said that they did not need to do anything for the people in Queensland because they were already here. That was an extraordinary statement to come from such a source. It was the concentration and acme of selfishness. He had no objection to giving free passes to men from the south in search of land, and had no objection to the Secretary for Public Lands committing a little petty larceny by inducing men from the south to come here; but at the same time he believed that the people already in the country should be afforded the same facilities for inspecting the land as southerners. It was perfectly clear from the information that they had from the Secretary for Lands that the great bulk of the money spent in assisting people to view land for selection was spent upon southern men. If they could afford to be generous to the people from the south they could afford to be just to their own people. He noticed that three grazing farms had been resumed in the Dalby district. He would like to know the names of the persons from whom they were resumed, and why the selections had been resumed. Then with regard to the Central Rabbit Board, he should like to know what the intentions of the Government were. They certainly had got some information from the Secretary for Lands, but not by any means all they desired. He observed that there was a vote set down for the destruction of prickly pear. Was that an additional sum required for the clearing of the Jondaryan land or the land west of Dalby? When replying the Minister might also tell them something about the vote of £2,500 for commission and agency fees.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You have had all that already.

Mr. P. J. LEAHY: Yes; but the hon. gentleman's information on a former occasion was not of a satisfactory nature. It was not by any means as full as it should have been.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Grazing farms 41 and 477 were two areas at the terminus of the Dalby-Cattle Creek Railway, which it was considered desirable to resume. The township was on one of them. The allotments had sold very well, and it was a very profitable thing to resume the land. The other farm was at Chinchilla. It was 10,000 acres in extent, but the soil was good, although the land was infested with prickly pear. Men who came from the south expressed their willingness to take it up as prickly pear selections and clear it. The Government purchased it for £800, and had thrown it open at a price which would ensure it all being taken up, and the repayment of the cost. The deeds would not be issued until the land was cleared. With regard to the question about the Central Rabbit Board, he could only say that the hon. gentleman was, by that question, almost casting a slur on his leader, who had already extracted the fullest information on the subject.

Mr. FORSYTH thought they should have more information on the item of £2,500 commission to agents.

The TREASURER: We have discussed that twice already.

Mr. FORSYTH was going to discuss it again. It was pointed out when the Estimates-in-Chief were going through, that that was the place for such a vote to appear. He would ask the hon. gentleman was it a fair thing, if he still intended doing it? There was no one who used to rail against the late Government more than the present Premier for the amount of unforeseen expenditure, and now the hon. gentleman

spent £100,000 of unforeseen expenditure, and wanted to pass it all with a smile. That was a wrong thing to do. He would like the Treasurer to explain how it was that in the Auditor-General's report the amount put down for commission to agents in other States was £1,712, while in these Estimates the amount was put down at £2,500? With regard to the survey fees, there was practically £5,000 asked for in these Estimates. When the regular Estimates were going through, he pointed out that last year there was £17,000 down for "Fees to Licensed Surveyors," and £22,000 was spent, and yet only £22,000 was down this year, although the officer in charge stated that this was going to be a record year and a good deal more money would be required.

Mr. RANKIN: There was a good deal of misunderstanding about the matter of allowing railway fares. He understood that Queenslanders who were looking for land were granted the same facilities as men from the other States, and he would like to know if that was so? One instance he knew of was that of a man from the south going to purchase a private estate—not Crown lands—and a Queenslander was after the same land. While the man from the south was travelling on a free pass, the Queenslander had to pay his own fare; and yet the visitor was competing against him. If facilities were given to Queenslanders to spy out land for themselves, it would be just as well it should be made known. The Lands Department should grant them the same facilities as were granted to other people.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He was quite prepared to give, and did give, passes to all *bonâ fide* Queenslanders who were looking for land. That did not mean that any Queenslander who wanted a free railway trip was going to get it with the help of the Lands Department. If he was a *bonâ fide* selector, looking for land, and more particularly if he was a man who had never had a selection, he certainly would not be refused a pass. With regard to giving southern men passes, he considered it was a good policy to use our railways for the purpose of settling these men in Queensland. It might be said that there was a danger of men coming up from the south in order to get a free trip over the railways, by saying that they were looking for land; but a check upon a wholesale practice of that kind was that the men who came to Brisbane had to pay their own fares, and they could not be purely penniless persons if they did that. The instance given by the hon. member for Burrum of a Queenslander and a man from New South Wales travelling towards the same freehold property in order to acquire it, one with a railway pass and the other paying his own railway fare, was an unfortunate occurrence. If that man came to Queensland solely with the purpose of purchasing private property, he must have obtained his pass under false pretences. It was quite probable he came up here to look at some Crown lands, and that in the meantime he was struck with the freehold property. He was convinced that the general policy of encouraging southern men was a good one. At the same time, he was as liberal as anyone could be to Queenslanders.

Mr. RANKIN: As a means of guarding against the kind of thing he had referred to, there might be a regulation that any man taking up land should have his railway fare refunded.

The TREASURER: With regard to the important matters raised by the hon. member for Carpentaria, he (Mr. Kidston) for [8.30 p.m.] a long time had pointed out that it was very improper that such a large sum of unforeseen expenditure should be

*Hon. W. Kidston.]*

incurred, but his remarks rolled off the hon. member and his colleagues, and had not the slightest effect on them. The fact that the hon. member had been sitting three years in opposition, and was likely to sit there for another three years—(Government laughter)—now showed the hon. member the beauty of this doctrine. He was quite pleased that the hon. gentleman agreed with him in this matter. But the hon. gentleman must remember that in the best regulated Governments there were little laches now and then.

Mr. FORSYTH: £100,000 is a pretty fair laxity.

The TREASURER: It was made up of a number of little items.

Mr. FORSYTH: A multitude of sins.

The TREASURER: He agreed that something should be put upon the Estimates-in-Chief in regard to such contingencies, and he should try to have that system carried out next year. With regard to the hon. gentleman's reference to the difference of £1,700 in the Auditor-General's report and the £2,500 in the Supplementary Estimates, the Auditor-General's report only dealt with matters up to the 30th June; while, as the hon. member knew, engagements made in the old year were paid up to the end of September, and came out of this appropriation.

Mr. P. J. LEAHY: With regard to the amount placed on the vote for the Central Rabbit Board, they were told last week that the expenditure was less than the amount voted, and he would like an explanation from the Minister on that point?

The TREASURER: It is not very likely that the Central Rabbit Board will spend less than the amount voted.

Mr. P. J. LEAHY: That was stated in the House the other night, and he would like an explanation.

The CHAIRMAN: I would like to remind the hon. member for Warrego that he has already discussed this item on the general Estimates.

Mr. P. J. LEAHY: I am going to discuss it now.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I would point out that in these Supplementary Estimates the discussion must be confined to the items, and the hon. member is not entitled to raise the question of Government policy. I have allowed hon. members a good deal of latitude on these Estimates, and a general observation is all right in connection with a particular item, but hon. members cannot go further.

The TREASURER: The Act provided that the Government should grant a sum to the Central Rabbit Board not exceeding £100,000. The board spent that sum, and the Committee were now asked to vote £6,000 extra, which the board had also spent.

Mr. P. J. LEAHY: A week ago the Minister said that they spent less than the amount voted.

The TREASURER: He did not believe that any such thing was said.

Question put and passed.

#### DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND STOCK.

The TREASURER moved that £4,925 1s. 4d. be voted for "Department of Agriculture and Stock." The only item of any importance was £2,652 19s. 6d., the expense of establishing a State farm at Roma.

Mr. P. J. LEAHY: This was a very serious matter. Here they found £3,000 had been expended without coming before Parliament at all, and now they were asked to confirm the act

[Hon. W. Kidston.

of the Government. That was not a proper thing to do. The House ought to have some say in these things. The policy of the present Government evidently was, when they could depend upon a district voting for a certain member to support the Government, that district would get £2,000 or £3,000 spent there.

Mr. JENKINSON asked if the £86 10s. 8d. for "Botanic Gardens and Government Domain" was in connection with lighting the Botanic Gardens?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No.

Mr. JENKINSON: He would like to know what progress had been made towards lighting the Botanic Gardens, as the summer months were now coming on and country people had no place to go to at night.

The TREASURER: He was very desirous of lighting the Botanic Gardens in Brisbane, but he could not spend £2,000 or £3,000 for that purpose without spending some money in other towns as well.

Hon. E. B. FORREST: Have you got an estimate?

The TREASURER: He had not; but had been informed that it would cost a good deal of money. He was getting an estimate now, and thought he would be able to go on with the matter.

Hon. E. B. FORREST: Two or three years ago an estimate had been obtained, and he thought the total was about £1,500 at the very outside. It was not necessary to light the whole Botanic Gardens.

The TREASURER: I think it is very desirable.

Hon. E. B. FORREST: It was very desirable, but they could make a very good job by lighting only the portion near the bandstand and along the river bank. He understood from the Government that they were going to have the thing done when the new Director was appointed from the Agricultural Department. Something of the sort had been wanted for a very long time, particularly in the summer months, and the money would be spent in the interests of a large section of the public and visitors. The Botanic Gardens were very beautiful, and the only objection was that they were too small. Visitors who came here said they had seen nothing better in Australia, except that they were too limited in area. It was perfectly absurd to talk about £3,000, as nothing like that amount was required for lighting.

The TREASURER: A statement was made to him the other day to the effect that the lighting of the Botanic Gardens would cost under £1,000. He would be very glad if the Government could carry out the work for that amount.

The CHAIRMAN: I wish to point out that this discussion is not in order. We are not discussing the intentions of the Government now. All these items have been expended.

Mr. P. J. LEAHY asked for information about the £2,775 in connection with the State farm at Roma gardens. Did that amount include the purchase of any land, or did the land belong to the Government?

The TREASURER: The amount had been spent in initiatory expenses, such as clearing, fencing, ploughing, erection of buildings, etc., etc.

Mr. P. J. LEAHY: Could the Treasurer tell what it cost to clear the land?

The TREASURER: He had not that information with him.

Question put and passed.

## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION.

The TREASURER moved that £1,252 16s. 5d. be granted for "Department of Public Instruction." As hon. members would see, practically the whole of the amount was made up of supplementary amounts to schools of arts and technical colleges.

Question put and passed.

## DEPARTMENT OF MINES.

The TREASURER moved that £1,040 5s. 5d. be granted for "Department of Mines." This, as hon. members could see for themselves, was also made up of several small items. The largest amount was £500 "Grant to O.K. Copper Mines Development Syndicate towards cost of Bridge over Walsh River."

Mr. JENKINSON: He would like some information with regard to the £225 12s. 5d. "Subsidy to Dawson River Anthracite Coal Prospecting Company and the Dunstan Coal Syndicate."

The TREASURER: That was a sum he was chiefly responsible for. It was given to the coal companies in the Central district to encourage them to develop an anthracite coal bed in the Dawson Valley. Under the arrangement the companies were to find a part and the Government were to find a part—that was, £1 to £2. He regretted to say that the companies had not succeeded in their venture, and ultimately the Government had to take possession, and were now working the mines.

Mr. JENKINSON: A State coalmine?

The TREASURER: He was pleased to tell the Committee that he had to-day got word from Mr. Rankin, who was in charge of the mine, through the Mines Office that at 264 feet they had struck a bed of anthracite coal 6 feet 6 inches in width. That was very gratifying information.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The TREASURER: They were sending a sample of the coal to Garden Island, Sydney, to be tested by naval experts; and he could only hope for the sake of Queensland, and for the sake of Central Queensland particularly, that the quality of the coal actually produced would be equal in character to that shown by analysis. If that were so, it would be a very good Christmas box for Queensland.

Mr. FORSYTH: How much have you spent up to the present time?

The TREASURER: I cannot tell you.

Question put and passed.

## RAILWAYS.

The TREASURER moved that £13,714 4s. 3d. be granted for "Railways." The hon. member for Carpentaria would be pleased to note that in a great department like this there was only £13,700 of unforeseen expenditure. He thought it was exceedingly creditable to the Commissioner, and to the officers under the Commissioner, that the department was run last year with so small an unforeseen expenditure.

Mr. JENKINSON asked if the amount £495 8s. 10d.—"Stores Branch," included the expenses in connection with the inquiry into the Stores Branch?

The TREASURER: No; That does not come under this at all.

Question put and passed.

## SUPPLEMENTARY TRUST FUNDS ESTIMATES, 1905-6.

## CHIEF SECRETARY.

The TREASURER moved that £2,579 3s. 5d. be granted for "Chief Secretary."

Mr. FORSYTH: The Committee had no information about this big item. What was it for?

The TREASURER: It was extra passage money required in connection with the return of Pacific Islanders.

Mr. JENKINSON: He noticed in the papers that an officer had been appointed as one of the Government agents who had been connected with the department before, when some serious thing happened in connection with it.

The TREASURER: We have nothing to do with that. The whole business has been handed over to the Federal Government.

Question put and passed.

## HOME SECRETARY.

The TREASURER moved that £13,250 be granted for "Home Secretary." That was a trust account that had been opened here in connection with the overdraft of the Brisbane Hospital.

Question put and passed.

## THE TREASURER.

The TREASURER moved that £9,489 14s. be granted for this department. There was, as hon. members could see, an increase, chiefly on account of the work done in the Brisbane River. More dredges were employed, and it was thought wise to spend more money than they had provided on the training walls, in order to carry the work out in an effective and speedy manner.

Question put and passed.

## AGRICULTURE AND STOCK.

The TREASURER moved that £10,637 15s. 6d. be granted for this department. The chief item was for increases in salaries to the inspectors of stock.

Mr. FORSYTH: He noticed an item for postage, incidentals, etc., £750. He would like to know what that referred to?

The TREASURER explained that, instead of passing over a large amount of money to the bank and charging them interest, the bank was only charged interest on the actual amount they were using—3 per cent. on the minimum weekly balance.

Question put and passed.

## SUPPLEMENTARY LOAN ESTIMATES, No. 2, 1905-6.

The TREASURER moved that £17,184 10s. 2d. be granted as Supplementary Loan Estimates. The chief item was £9,571 [9 p.m.] 18s. 6d. required for rabbit netting, and there was also a large amount of £2,833 2s. 10d. required for new boilers for the dredge "Platypus."

HON. R. PHILP would suggest to the Treasurer that if on a future occasion the necessity arose for bringing in Supplementary Loan Estimates he should have information at his disposal to supply to the Committee. He had only asked him one question to-night, and he could not get an answer. He had referred to the question of commission to agents, and all the hon. gentleman could tell them was that two

*Hon. R. Philp.]*

persons, named Pulsford and Murphy, had received the money. The hon. gentleman adopted an attitude of "take it or leave it."

Mr. JENKINSON noticed an item of £273 15s. 5d. for "Surveys." He would ask whether that included an amount for the re-survey of the Fassifern line for the purpose of cutting down the steep grades? Three-fourths of the haulage incurred on that line at the present time could be saved if the work be referred to was carried out. Would the hon. gentleman take the matter into his consideration?

Mr. P. J. LEAHY asked if the £9,571 18s. 6d. set down for wire netting was for the purpose of supplying the boards, or supplying the lessees, with wire netting?

The TREASURER: The hon. gentleman would see that the vote came under the Rabbit Boards Acts, 1896 to 1903, and covered both the supply of netting to the lessees and to the boards. It made no difference to the Government to whom it was supplied.

Mr. P. J. LEAHY thought it would be in the public interest to know how much netting was supplied to the boards, and how much to the lessees, but if the Treasurer had not got the information he would not press the matter.

Mr. PAULL referred to the amount of £265 5s. 9d. paid to G. C. Wilcocks on account of prospecting. Had the whole amount been repaid, or was there any prospect of its return?

The TREASURER: That was only part of the money advanced, and he hoped it would be all repaid.

HON. R. PHILP: In reference to the question raised by the hon. member for Fassifern, he would point out that although the Fassifern line was one of the best paying branch railways in the State, yet it was in an unsatisfactory condition. It took three and a-half hours to travel 35 miles, and if it was dealt with in the way suggested by the member for the district, it would pay very much better.

Question put and passed.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY LOAN ESTIMATES 1906-7.

The TREASURER moved that £150,000 be granted out of the Supplementary Loan Estimates for the Richmond to Cloncurry Railway. The item required no explanation.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to certain resolutions.

The resolutions were received and agreed to.

#### SHEARERS AND SUGAR WORKERS ACCOMMODATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

##### MESSAGE FROM THE COUNCIL, No. 2.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council, disagreeing to the Assembly's amendment in paragraph 9 of clause 8, but proposing a modification of the original amendment.

#### CONSIDERATION OF THE MESSAGE IN COMMITTEE.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: When dealing with the Bill last Thursday, he pointed out that the Council's amendment required temporary provision to be made in a travelling shearers' plant for twenty shearers, exclusive of labourers, involving the employment, at any rate, of thirty men in connection with a

travelling plant. He further said that no doubt the amendment would be a great convenience to the grazing farmer, but there was a danger under it of the principle of the Bill being interfered with. On that account the Committee thought it desirable that the number "twenty" should be reduced to fifteen—the words "exclusive of labourers" being deleted from the amendment. That meant that a total of fifteen shearers and labourers would be the maximum number for whom temporary accommodation had to be provided in connection with travelling shearers' plant. The Upper House insisted that the amendment should not be disturbed as regarded the labourers. He was unwilling to send the Bill back to another place for fear other portions of it should be lost. He had already pointed out how difficult it was having no power to frame regulations, and his department would be seriously hampered again during the coming year if they had no regulations. They could make regulations for accommodation; and, if it was found that the root idea was interfered with by this amendment, they could deal with it again next year. The Bill was too valuable to be lost, because of the number of men who were to be provided with temporary accommodation. Therefore, he found himself in the position of asking the Committee to accept the amendment.

Mr. KERR did not like the amendment of the Upper House. They wanted to allow twenty shearers, exclusive of labourers, but the Assembly amended it to fifteen. The portable plants that travelled round had stands for fourteen shearers, and that meant that there were ten or twelve rouseabouts engaged as well, making twenty-five or twenty-seven men who were exempt from the provisions of the Bill. He agreed with the Minister that the Bill was a valuable one, but there was such a thing as giving away any value that was attached to it. The Upper House, in sticking to fifteen shearers, exclusive of labourers, were going to break down one of the main provisions of the original Act, where a rouseabout was defined as a shearers. He and the hon. member for Gregory, who had taken a great interest in getting this Bill passed, knew the conditions under which shearing was carried out, and they knew that a good many could contract themselves out of the Bill altogether. He felt inclined to move an amendment reducing the number of shearers to twelve, and allowing the "exclusive of labourers" to go.

The TREASURER: So do I, but what is the use?

Mr. KERR: These portable shearing plants carried a six-horse power engine and boiler, and they could only work fourteen shearers altogether, as it would only provide driving power for fourteen machines. So that the Council wanted to provide for more men than the engine was capable of providing power for. The Council had got concessions in two or three directions already. He was looking after the interests of the men following shearing occupations, and the amendment was taking away the greatest safety there was in the Bill. If they accepted the amendment, it would be against the interests of the men they represented. He moved that the Council's amendment be amended by substituting "twelve" for "fifteen."

Mr. HAMILTON was sorry that the Minister had accepted the amendment. He quite admitted that it was a good Bill, and he also admitted that the Minister was hampered by want of regulations. The Council seemed to look at it as a matter of pounds, shillings, and pence, and did not consider the effect it would have on human people. What was the use of passing measures like this in a democratic

[Hon. R. Philp.

Assembly if that other chamber of horrors interfered with it, as they did with all democratic legislation?

Hon. R. PHILP: One of your own nominees moved the amendment.

Mr. HAMILTON: He was not his nominee, at any rate.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member for Gregory is not in order in reflecting on the members of the Upper House.

Mr. HAMILTON: The amendment introduced by the Upper House, if it were passed, would wipe a lot of good out of the Bill. Surely the health and well-being of thirty-five men was worthy of the consideration of any chamber!

The PREMIER: The Minister, in agreeing to the Legislative Council's amendment, pointed out that it was an objectionable amendment from his point of view, and likely to interfere with the efficiency of the Act, but he only accepted it as the lesser of two evils—the other evil being the danger of losing the whole Bill. The Minister did not want to lose the Bill, as it gave him power to make regulations, so that there was not only the danger of losing this Bill, but also the danger of losing the [9.30 p.m.] principal Act, as they had no power to make regulations. Hon. members could move an amendment if they liked, but they would have to take the responsibility of getting the whole thing thrown out in the other House if they did so. Under the present Bill the Minister could make regulations prescribing the nature and extent of the temporary accommodation to be supplied by the owner; but if this amending Bill were thrown out, the Minister would have no such power at all. His judgment was to take what they could get to-day and hope for something better next year, and if it did not work well then they could get it amended the next year.

HON. R. PHILP hoped the hon. member for Barcoo would withdraw his amendment. According to his own argument, the portable plants could only provide power for fourteen shearing machines, and the Council gave permission for one more man to be employed. Was it not better to have these small portable plants running through the country, and saving the small selectors the cost of putting up sheds? The Council had given them some useful amendments, and this was one which they might accept. As this was a Parliament that was about to expire, they might agree to the amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE explained that his department would be seriously crippled without having the power to make regulations, as was provided under the Bill. He pointed out that the Council did not interfere with the increase in the amount of air space, which had been increased from 240 feet to 350 feet. He hoped the hon. member for Barcoo would not insist on his amendment.

Mr. KERR: The portable plants were shearing on the large holdings, and those holdings were not making the necessary improvements. Why should one station-owner have to provide suitable accommodation for his employees while another did not have to make that accommodation because he had his shearing done with a portable plant? He was as much interested in the shearers and rouseabouts as any member of the Committee. Before he withdrew the amendment, he wanted an assurance from the Minister

in charge of the measure that the owners of those portable plants would have to provide sufficient accommodation for the men working on the plants. If the Minister was not prepared to give that assurance, he should certainly press his amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He had not the slightest hesitation in giving the assurance asked for. The clause read, "So that in all respects the health and well-being of the shearers will be provided for." He would take good care that the regulations were such that the well-being of the shearers was properly safeguarded.

Mr. P. J. LEAHY thought the best thing for the hon. member for Barcoo was to let the matter drop. There was nothing in it. It was a piece of political fireworks. The Minister could give no more assurance than was provided in the clause. He hoped the hon. member for Barcoo would gracefully back down—it was the best thing he could do.

The CHAIRMAN: On considering the matter, I do not think I can submit the amendment of the hon. member for Barcoo, as it is practically in accord with the amendment of the Council.

Mr. KERR: He did not think there was anyone in the Chamber who would have accused him of making political fireworks, other than the hon. member for Warrego. Long before that hon. member had been in the Chamber, he (Mr. Kerr) had always advocated better accommodation for shearers and bush workers; but they had had the experience of the maladministration of Acts in the past by the previous continuous Government.

Mr. P. J. LEAHY: He had not referred to the hon. member for Barcoo at all. He referred to the party of which he (Mr. Kerr) was the mouth-piece, and he certainly would not withdraw anything he had said. He ventured to say, if they took the facts into account, the late Government had administered their Acts a great deal better than the present Government.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE, a consequential amendment was made in line 29.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had agreed to paragraph 9B in the form now proposed by the Legislative Council, and a consequential amendment which they proposed to insert in clause 4, line 29, after the word "section."

The report was adopted, and the Bill was ordered to be returned to the Legislative Council, by message in the usual form.

#### RICHMOND TO CLONCURRY RAILWAY, SECTION No. 2.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council, intimating that the Council had approved of the plan, section, and book of reference in connection with this railway.

#### LANDS FOR CLOSER SETTLEMENT SPECIAL PURCHASE BILL.

MESSAGE FROM THE COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Council, returning this Bill without amendment.

*Hon. Sir A. S. Cowley.]*

## GATTON SCHOOL OF ARTS BILL.

## MESSAGE FROM THE COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Council, returning this Bill without amendment.

## DALBY TO CATTLE CREEK RAILWAY DISTRICT BILL.

## MESSAGE FROM THE COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Council, returning this Bill without amendment.

## CONTRACTORS' AND WORKMEN'S LIEN BILL.

## MESSAGE FROM THE COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of the following message :—

Mr. Speaker,—

The Legislative Council, having had under consideration the message of the Legislative Assembly, of date 7th December, relative to the Contractors' and Workmen's Lien Bill, beg now to intimate that they—

*Insist* upon their amendments in clauses 2, 4 (as now printed), 6 (as now printed), 10 (as now printed), 13 (as now printed), 22, 26, 34, and in the schedule; also upon the omission of clause 13—all relating to the workmen of a subcontractor, *because* the Council consider it inadvisable to extend the lien to the workmen of the subcontractor;

*Insist* upon their amendment in clause 7, lines 51 to 57 (as now printed), *because* it is considered dangerous to allow the interests of the mortgagee to be over-riden; and

*Agree* to the Assembly's amendments upon the Council's amendments in clause 4 (as now printed) and in clause 29, and to the Assembly's amendment in the new clause to follow clause 2.

ARTHUR MORGAN,  
President.

Legislative Council Chamber,  
Brisbane, 11th December, 1906.

## CONSIDERATION OF THE MESSAGE IN COMMITTEE.

\* The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS moved that the Assembly no longer insist on their disagreement to the Council's amendments. The first point of difference was that the Legislative Council wished to strike out subcontractors' workmen. The Bill, as originally sent to the Council, included the subcontractor. The Council had eliminated the subcontractors' workmen. The Assembly disagreed to that amendment, and sent the Bill back, insisting on their own amendment, so far as the subcontractors' workmen were concerned. He regretted that the Council had insisted [10 p.m.] on their amendment, because it was a very serious blemish on the Bill; but, on the whole, seeing that there were some very useful provisions in the Bill, it was wise to get what they could on this occasion, and leave the remedy to some other time. The other point of difference was in connection with giving priority to the workmen for thirty days over a mortgagee. The Council had also insisted on that. Under the circumstances, he moved that the amendments be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee no longer insisted upon their disagreement to those amendments on which the Legislative Council had insisted.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS moved that the report be adopted.

HON. R. PHILP: It seems to me that the Bill might as well be dropped altogether. This side insisted that everyone should be protected,

[*Hon. Sir A. S. Cowley.*

but the Minister would not have that. He only wanted to protect contractors, subcontractors, and workmen; while the Opposition wanted to protect the people who supplied material. By the omission of subcontractor the Bill is no better than the existing law. Subcontractors ought to be protected, and also the men who supply material. Apparently Ministers will accept anything in order to get away.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS, the Bill was ordered to be returned with a message intimating that the Assembly no longer insisted upon their disagreement to those amendments on which the Council had insisted.

## BRISBANE CRICKET GROUND BILL.

## MESSAGE FROM THE COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Council returning this Bill with amendments.

## CONSIDERATION OF THE MESSAGE IN COMMITTEE.

The HOME SECRETARY moved that the Committee agree to all the amendments of the Legislative Council in the Bill.

HON. R. PHILP pointed out that they had no amendments before them. What were the amendments?

The HOME SECRETARY: The Council had inserted in clause 2, after paragraph (d), the following :—

Every such lease shall contain a covenant that the land so leased shall not be used for the purpose of an hotel.

Then there was also inserted a new clause to the following effect :—

The trustees shall not have power to lease or use such Brisbane Cricket Ground for the purpose of horse or pony racing, and any lease to be hereafter granted shall contain a prohibition of horse or pony racing on such land.

After clause 5 they proposed to insert—

If within six months after the passing of this Act the council of the city of South Brisbane shall assume or pay and discharge all the obligations of the said trustees, so that the trustees shall be effectively released from all obligation in respect thereof, the piece or parcel of land set forth in the preamble of this Act shall thereupon become vested in the said council upon the same trusts as set forth in the deed of grant thereof, and the preamble of the Brisbane Cricket Ground Act of 1897.

After clause 5 it was proposed to insert—

No vesting of such land in the said council shall be deemed to abrogate any right now possessed by members of the Brisbane Cricket Ground as such.

There was nothing contentious in the amendments.

HON. R. PHILP thought all the amendments were improvements.

Mr. BARNES thought the other House was to be congratulated upon what they had done. The Bill was rushed through this House in the early hours of the morning, although it should have been known to the Government that it was a contentious measure. The way in which that ground had been used in connection with pony-racing at night time, and the abuses to which it had been put, had been a disgrace to the city of Brisbane.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Not as bad as Coorparoo.

Mr. BARNES: He was not justifying Coorparoo, but he believed the other House had

done splendid work. He did not think the trustees of the ground themselves had any knowledge of what had been going on there. All kinds of abominations had been committed, and, if it were not for the fact that ladies were in the gallery, he would give hon. members some information on the subject. The whole business had been a disgrace that would cause people to blush if they knew the facts. He was thoroughly in sympathy with legitimate sport, but when a place was made the breeding ground of vice, they ought to be thankful to the Upper Chamber for performing such a splendid duty towards the citizens of Brisbane.

Mr. DIBLEY could not allow the hon. member's remarks to pass without notice. He was a trustee of the ground, and had been there on several occasions, and he never saw anything they would not see on any racecourse. He did not know at what time of night the hon. member went there, but the only thing that he could find fault with was the usual pandemonium made by the bookmakers. The same state of things was to be found all the world over, and the hon. gentleman had no proof of what he said. The police reports were not against the ground, and never were.

Mr. BARNES: The ground is used for prostitution.

Mr. DIBLEY: The hon. member ought to be proud to think that racing had been removed from his own electorate, but perhaps he would like a racecourse back again at Coorparoo, and he would probably have one. He had made an assertion which was most untrue. If there was any immorality carried on, it was in the park, and not in the grounds. He had been there several times, and had taken friends there, and had never seen anything wrong at all. He had never seen a drunken man there. He did not believe himself that there was any honesty in horse-racing. There might here and there be a man who raced horses for the love of sport, but most men raced them for gambling purposes. He would join willingly with the hon. member at any time to bring in a Bill to abolish horse-racing altogether. He did not believe in it any more than he believed in drinking; but he thought it was wrong for the hon. member to get up and say that the ground was a hotbed of immorality. The hon. member admitted that he had not been there, and he only knew what somebody else had told him.

Mr. BARNES was very careful to say that he was certain the trustees could not be aware of what was going on. If the hon. member for Woolloongabba had been in the other Chamber he would have heard an opinion on the grounds from an hon. gentleman who was himself engaged in horse-racing, and who gave the grounds a very bad name. The hon. member could not deny that the grounds were a disgrace not only on account of the racing but on account of the prostitution which was carried on there at night, and he was not afraid to say it.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had agreed to the Legislative Council's amendments, and a message was ordered to be returned to that effect.

#### CITY OF SOUTH BRISBANE LOAN BILL.

##### MESSAGE FROM THE COUNCIL.

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

#### CONSIDERATION OF MESSAGE IN COMMITTEE.

The TREASURER moved that the amendment of the Council be agreed to. It was simply a rearrangement of the schedule setting forth the amounts devoted to each ward. When the Bill went from the Assembly, No. 1 ward was provided for in the schedule for £14,850, but the schedule now provided that £15,400 should be spent in No. 1 ward. The amount to be spent in each of the four wards was altered, but the total remained the same. It was a matter of arranging, carried out at the suggestion of the South Brisbane Council.

HON. R. PHILIP: So far as he could see, there was no objection to the amendment, but there was a new schedule issued by the Secretary for Public Instruction, and that hon. gentleman might have had the courtesy to circulate copies of it in the Assembly.

The TREASURER: I never saw it.

Mr. BOUGHARD explained that the amendment of the schedule was in accordance with the resolution of the South Brisbane Council.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had agreed to the Council's amendment, and a message was ordered to be returned to that effect.

#### WAYS AND MEANS.

##### RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

The TREASURER moved that further sums not exceeding £2,202,681, £283,823 18s. 6d., and £890,735 be granted from the consolidated revenue account, trust and special [10.30 p.m.] fund account, and loan account respectively, and that further supplementary sums not exceeding £95,112 15s. 11d., £35,956 12s. 11d., and £17,184 10s. 2d., be granted respectively from the same accounts.

HON. R. PHILIP: This would be a convenient time for the Premier to tell them when he intended holding the next election. The House ought to get some information on the matter.

Mr. PAUL: We would like to know if there is going to be a short session?

HON. R. PHILIP: There would not be any short session. At any rate, he hoped not. They were now giving the Government Supply until the end of June. Did the Premier intend holding the elections before the end of June? If not, the House would have to be called together before then to get further Supply. This was the last opportunity they had of getting any information from the Premier, and he would like to know if the hon. gentleman had made up his mind.

The PREMIER: I will give you all the information you want before the House adjourns.

HON. R. PHILIP: This was the proper time to get the information.

The PREMIER: He did not wish to raise a discussion on this matter just now, because he had asked the Legislative Council to wait for the Appropriation Bill. If hon. members wanted to come back to-morrow, he did not mind coming back himself. When they had passed the Appropriation Bill, he would give the House all the information they wanted, and they could discuss it until to-morrow morning.

HON. R. PHILIP: The Premier could tell him all he wanted to know in five minutes. This was the proper time to get that information. He did not want to keep the House waiting till 6 o'clock in the morning. He wanted to get away in an hour's time; but he would like to know when the elections would take place.

*Hon. R. Philip.]*

The CHAIRMAN: Order! This is not the time to raise a debate as to whether there will be another session or not, or as to when the elections will take place. This is Committee of Ways and Means.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER moved that the Chairman report the resolution to the House.

HON. R. PHILP: He would like to know what arrangements had been made about the business for to-night. Was the Council asked to wait?

The PREMIER: He hoped to get back the business from the Council, and also the Appropriation Bill, and then the work of the session would be over. He would then give any information about the elections.

HON. R. PHILP: How long have you asked the Council to wait for this Bill?

The PREMIER: He had not asked the Council to wait at all. Hon. members knew the position as well as he did, and if it did not suit their convenience it was all the same to him.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to certain resolutions, which were agreed to, and it was ordered that a Bill be introduced founded upon these resolutions.

#### APPROPRIATION BILL No. 4.

##### ALL STAGES.

On the motion of the TREASURER, this Bill was put through all its stages and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council, by message in the usual form.

At ten minutes to 11 o'clock,

The SPEAKER said: I shall resume the chair at 11 o'clock.

The SPEAKER resumed the chair at the hour named.

#### SHEARERS AND SUGAR WORKERS ACCOMMODATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

##### MESSAGE FROM THE COUNCIL, No. 3.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Council, agreeing to the consequential amendment made by the Assembly in this Bill.

#### APPROPRIATION BILL No. 4.

##### MESSAGE FROM THE COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council, returning this Bill without amendment.

#### SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I beg to move that the House, at its rising, do adjourn until Tuesday next. It is not intended that the House shall meet again this session, and a proclamation will be issued proroguing Parliament still further. The session has come to an end, and while it may be admitted that it has not been everything that some of us could have desired—and while it may be said even that it has not been everything that it should have been—I think it will be admitted by most fair-minded men that we have done an exceedingly good session's work—work which on the whole will, I think, be much to the advantage of Queensland in the

[Mr. Jackson.

future, if made good use of. As hon. members know quite well, before the House meets again—of course, I do not intend that there shall be any short session—there will be a general election, and, just as we had little differences upon many things in the House, so it is possible we may have little differences during the general election.

HON. R. PHILP: I hope so.

The PREMIER: I hope so myself. I think the greatest calamity that could befall Queensland would be if the people did not take an interest in the elections. I hope there will not only be differences between us, but I hope the election will be fought with some kind of spirit and earnestness. I hope to fight so myself, and I expect other men who differ with me to fight that way. But I hope that, as far as possible, there will be an absence of those personalities which sometimes mar election times.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: Whatever errors a man may drop into in the heat of debate, it is well to recognise beforehand that it is a bad thing not to be conscious of our imperfections, and it is not a bad thing to try and set up a high ideal. (Hear, hear!) I am not greatly concerned in the meantime as to what will be the result of the elections.

Mr. FORSYTH: Are you not?

The PREMIER: No, I am not; and I may tell the hon. gentleman that I never fought an election yet in which I was greatly concerned about the result. I have gone into many election fights when the result meant a great deal more to me than it means to-day. I am willing to go into a fight with a heart for anything, and meaning to do everything I know in a fair way to win; but quite believing that, after all, the electors will settle the matter according to their own notions.

Mr. FORSYTH: They will settle it all right.

The PREMIER: I think the electors will settle it, and we shall have to take it in the way the electors settle it. However, although we may quarrel then, there is no occasion for quarrelling now, especially as I do not know whether we will all meet again or not. (Laughter.)

Mr. FORSYTH: I think it is very unlikely.

The PREMIER: I do not know whether we will all meet again in this House.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: We will meet somewhere else.

The PREMIER: And I am not sure that it is at all desirable that we should all meet. (Hear, hear, and laughter.)

Mr. FORSYTH: There is some truth in that.

HON. R. PHILP: You have not said when the elections are to take place.

The PREMIER: In regard to when the elections are likely to take place, the Government have not yet definitely settled the matter; but, taking one consideration with another, my present personal opinion is that it would be a convenience to the country if we held the elections, approximately, about May.

Mr. FORSYTH: May?

The PREMIER: If the hon. gentleman would say whether that is too soon or too late, I should be obliged to him. I have no preference in the matter myself.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: April.

Mr. MURPHY: Could you not put it off until December?

The PREMIER: I have no personal predictions myself, only it is desirable to consider the period of the rainy season up North, and the fact that it is desirable that whatever Government the country chooses should have some little time before meeting Parliament after the elections. I therefore think that some time about May, approximately, should be chosen.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: I am not making any promise in regard to the matter, for I have not yet consulted my colleagues. I am expressing my own opinion, and possibly I am near the truth when I mention May.

Mr. WOODS: Ministers will not be able to see the country by that time.

Mr. PAGET: There is plenty of time between now and May.

The PREMIER: I have nothing further to say than that if, as leader of the House, I have offended the leader of the Opposition in any way, I had no desire to do so. (Hear, hear!) I never wish to offend a man personally, and if I have done so I am sorry for it. I wish to do my duty here, and, notwithstanding any imperfections of a personal character, I wish to do it without offending anyone or hurting anyone personally. I wish hon. members on both sides "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year."

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. R. PHILP: As I do not intend to be here next Tuesday, I want to say that personally I thank the Premier for the explanation he has given to the House. I hope the elections will be held in May. It is a very convenient month, and it is cool.

Mr. WOODS: It is not convenient as far as the North is concerned.

HON. R. PHILP: I think it is convenient as far as the North is concerned. It is the best month for travelling through the country, and I do not see how the elections can be held much later, unless the Premier wants a short session. I hope the elections will take place in May, and, whatever the result, I hope they will be fought fairly.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. KERR: Take the gloves off.

HON. R. PHILP: I would remind the Premier that his party, as a rule, do not give very attentive hearings to the other side.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

The PREMIER: You must admit, I think, that they are not worth it. (Laughter.)

HON. R. PHILP: I was only remarking last night what a difference there was between the two parties—what a contrast there was. At every meeting that is held by our party there are three or four scoundrels in the hall who make a noise, and at every meeting of the Labour party you could hear a pin drop in the hall.

The HOME SECRETARY: You do not blame the party for three or four scoundrels?

HON. R. PHILP: In Victoria they are bringing in a Bill to prevent that sort of thing happening; and, whoever is in power next year, I hope a Bill will be passed to see if we cannot preserve decorum at public meetings. The present state of affairs is a scandal and disgrace not only to Brisbane but to other parts of the State. Personally, I wish every member "A Merry

1906—6 T

Christmas and a Happy New Year." I do not suppose my temper is much better than the Premier's, but I have no personal feeling against anyone.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. R. PHILP: Not even against the Secretary for Lands. (Laughter.) I hope the Labour party will come back next year a little more capable.

The PREMIER: Did I hear you say that you hoped they would come back?

HON. R. PHILP: We cannot hope that with a number of the Labour party. Of course, we cannot dispense with the hon. member for Barcoo, but there are plenty of his followers whom I hope will not come back. I do not wish to see them come back. I hope we will have a good time at the next election. I am going to fight with the desire to win.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. R. PHILP: If I do not win, I shall not be broken-hearted over it. I am much more comfortable on this side than on the other. Perhaps it makes less difference to me than it does to the Premier whether I get a majority or not, but I can assure him that we intend to test every electorate in Queensland.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. R. PHILP: And we will do our best to get a majority.

The PREMIER: How many candidates will you have for each constituency?

HON. R. PHILP: I think the Premier will have a little more than one for some of his constituencies. We hope to confine ourselves to one candidate for each, and in double electorates we will have two. We intend to make as strong a fight as possible—as strong a fight as in the federal elections, and if we do not win it will be the fault of the electors.

Mr. WOODS: You cannot win every one.

HON. R. PHILP: We would not think of taking the seat from the hon. member for Woothakata. We could not do without him.

Mr. PAGET: There will be a Secretary for Railways wanted.

HON. R. PHILP: I hope we will come back a little more amiable than we have been during this session.

The PREMIER: Is that possible?

HON. R. PHILP: Well, there is room for improvement, I must admit. The Premier is not quite as courteous as he might be. Personally, I have met with a good deal of courtesy from all sides. Sometimes the hon. member for Barcoo is in a bad temper. Even to-night he said a thing he was sorry for, and I did not reply. I can tell the Premier that he does not extend that courtesy to the leader of the Opposition that his predecessors have done. I wish hon. members "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year."

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. P. J. LEAHY: He will be humble enough after the elections.

Mr. KERR: I thank the Premier and leader of the Opposition for their kindly expression of good wishes towards members of this party. I know it is not likely that we will all be back here again. There will be changes, and some who are here now will not be here next year.

*Mr. Kerr.*]

There is an omission that has been made, and I would like to express the good wishes of the House to you, Sir, to the Clerk, and officers of the House, and wish them "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year."

HONOURABLE MEMBERS : Hear, hear !

Mr. KERR : They have had to put up with a great deal this session. Some of us no doubt have not always been as amiable as we might have been, and, like the leader of the Opposition, I can only say that if I have sinned I ask the forgiveness of hon. members. (Laughter. I hope what the leader of the Opposition has said will not injure me in my electorate. He says he wishes to see me back here, and that will be used very strongly against me. (Laughter.)

Question put and passed.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER : I beg to move that this House do now adjourn. I would just like to say that the offence of interrupting a public meeting does not belong to any one section or any one party.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS : Hear, hear !

The PREMIER : No reasonable man or intelligent man will approve of any public man being insulted at a public meeting. I never knew any public man who approved of that kind of thing. Whatever a public man may be entitled to, he is certainly entitled to a hearing, and it is often a foolish thing for people to try to prevent him from getting a hearing. I dare say most men would be glad if they could stop it ;

but, so long as there are ignorant members of the community, it will be impossible to stop it. I move that the House do now adjourn.

Question put and passed.

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

#### BILLS ASSENTED TO AT CLOSE OF SESSION.

On Saturday, 15th December, a *Gazette Extraordinary* was issued, signifying the assent of His Excellency the Governor to the following Bills :—

Appropriation Bill No. 4 ;  
Warwick School of Arts Land Sale  
Weights and Measures ;  
State Forests and National Parks ;  
Explosives ;  
Cairns School of Arts ;  
Rockhampton Harbour Board Acts Amendment ;  
Succession ;  
Harbour Boards Acts Amendment ;  
Lands for Closer Settlement Special Purchase ;  
Gatton School of Arts ;  
Dalby to Cattle Creek Railway District ;  
City of South Brisbane Loan ;  
Brisbane Cricket Ground ;  
Contractors' and Workmen's Lien ;  
Shearers and Sugar Workers Accommodation Act Amendment ;  
Trustees and Executors Acts Amendment ;  
Closer Settlement.

#### [PROROGATION.]

*Parliament prorogued by following Proclamation in Gazette Extraordinary, Saturday, 15th December, 1906 :—*

A PROCLAMATION by His Excellency the Right Honourable FREDERIC JOHN NAPIER, Baron Chelmsford, of Chelmsford, in the county of Essex, in the Peerage of the United Kingdom, Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, Governor of the State of Queensland and its Dependencies, in the Commonwealth of Australia.

[L.S.]

CHELMSFORD,

*Governor.*

IN pursuance of the power and authority vested in me as Governor of the State aforesaid, I, FREDERIC JOHN NAPIER, Baron Chelmsford, do, by this my Proclamation, Prorogue the Parliament of Queensland to Tuesday, the twenty-ninth day of January, 1907.

Given under my Hand and Seal, at Government House, Brisbane, this fourteenth day of December, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and six, and in the sixth year of His Majesty's reign.

By Command,

W. KIDSTON

GOD SAVE THE KING !