

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**WEDNESDAY, 1 APRIL 1908**

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

WEDNESDAY, 1 APRIL, 1908.

The SPEAKER (Hon. John Leahy, *Bulloo*) took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

## QUESTIONS.

## WHARFAGE AT PINKENBA.

Mr. PETRIE (*Toombul*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

1. Now that the mail contract between the Government and the Orient Steamship Company has been definitely settled and the probability of communication being opened up between Great Britain and the East *via* Torres Straits by a further line of mail steamers, is it the intention of the Government to allow the Commissioner of Railways to call tenders at an early date, on the plans already prepared by the Chief Engineer for Railways, to provide the necessary additional accommodation required to the Railway Wharves at Pinkenba?

2. Will the terminus for both these services be at the deep-water port, Pinkenba, and will up-to-date facilities be provided for the comfort of those travelling to and from the mail and other steamers by the train connecting Pinkenba with the city?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. G. Kerr, *Barcoo*) replied—

1. It has been decided to extend the wharfage accommodation at Pinkenba, and action will be taken without delay.

2. This will be considered when the wharf has been extended.

## LABOUR AT GIN GIN CENTRAL MILL.

Mr. BARBER (*Bundaberg*) asked the Treasurer—

1. Is it a fact that the manager of the Gin Gin Central Mill, which is under direct control of the Government, during last crushing season, secured most of his labour through the medium of private labour agencies?

2. Seeing that there is a Government Labour Bureau in Bundaberg and Brisbane, will the Treasurer insist that the men required for the above mill for the coming season be secured through the Government agencies?

The TREASURER (Hon. P. Airey, *Brisbane South*) replied—

1. The Gin Gin Mill has obtained labour through the Brisbane and Bundaberg Government Labour Bureaus, and also through private agencies. The private agencies were used when the Labour bureaus could not supply on short and urgent notice. Information is not available at present as to the relative numbers of workmen that were obtained through the respective sources, but the manager of the mill has been requested to furnish full and exact data.

2. The Government Labour Bureau will be the agency through which men will be engaged whenever possible.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

## AGREEMENT FOR A PAIR.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER (*Maranoa*): I desire to make a personal explanation. I had arranged, before I left Brisbane, to pair with the hon. member for Aubigny, Mr. Thorn, on the Religious Instruction in State Schools Referendum Bill, on which a division was taken last night, but that pair does not appear on the paper to-day.

Mr. PAGET: You paired on all Government business.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: I understand that the reason is that the Opposition voted with the Government on that question. I make this explanation because, during the election, I promised that I would support that Bill when it came before the House.

*Mr. J. M. Hunter.]*

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN STATE  
SCHOOLS REFERENDUM BILL.

COMMITTEE.

Clause 1 put and passed.

On clause 2—"Interpretation"—

Mr. BOWMAN (*Fortitude Valley*) desired to move an amendment by omitting the word "Commonwealth" on line 11, and inserting the word "State;" and he did so for the following reasons: He did not think it a fair thing that they, as a Parliament, should ask that the question to be put to the electors should be submitted at the time of a Federal election. They themselves, evidently from what had been said, would find it unpleasant to have that particular question brought under the notice of the electors during a State election, and what was obnoxious to them as State members would probably be just as obnoxious if associated with a Commonwealth election. To his mind it seemed as if they were shelling the responsibility, and putting it on to the shoulders of someone else, so that it might not directly affect questions concerning a State election. His own opinion was that the referendum should be taken entirely apart from any election—that it should be decided by the people when there was no other question before the country.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. A. G. C. Hawthorn, *Encoggera*) did not think there was any great objection to the amendment. They would hold the election under the electoral laws whenever it was held, whether at the time of the Commonwealth or State election. He was prepared to accept the amendment. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. KENNA was rather sorry that the Minister accepted the amendment, because at a State election there were so many other matters of local interest mixed up together that it would be next to impossible to get a clear and unprejudiced decision of the people. A thousand and one other matters would come in to interfere with the decision to be arrived at by the people.

Mr. JENKINSON: Why not hold it apart from the elections altogether? (Hear, hear!)

Mr. KENNA: Then they would add to the expense. If the machinery had to be put into operation on a special occasion it would cost no end of money. He thought at a Commonwealth election, when local matters did not sway the minds of the people, and when broader issues were at stake, it would be more desirable to take a vote than at a time when burning State questions were being decided. It was a question around which a good deal of feeling would centre, and it would be a mistake to mix it up with party matters at a State election.

Mr. JENKINSON: Would that not operate in Commonwealth elections also?

Mr. KENNA: No; it would not, because there were not a lot of little local matters at issue.

HON. R. PHILP hoped it was not the intention of the Government to have the referendum taken at the next State election.

The PREMIER: I hope it will be held before that.

HON. R. PHILP: He knew what that would mean.

The PREMIER: We will discuss that matter later on.

HON. R. PHILP: The amendment only provided for the use of the State election machinery instead of the Commonwealth machinery.

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes.

Amendment agreed to.

[*Mr. Bowman.*

Mr. BOWMAN moved, on lines 13 and 14, the omission of the words "the Commonwealth," with a view of inserting the words "of Queensland."

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. BOWMAN moved the omission of the word "Commonwealth" on line 16, with the view of inserting the word "State."

Mr. JENKINSON suggested that the definition of "Elector" should be amended so as to read "An elector registered under the State electoral laws." At present the clause defined an elector as "An elector registered within the State of Queensland," which was surplusage, as we did not register electors outside the State of Queensland.

The HOME SECRETARY thought they might insert the words "within the State of Queensland," and make the clause read, "An elector registered under the State Electoral Acts within the State of Queensland."

Amendment (*Mr. Bowman's*) agreed to.

Mr. LESINA thought a consequential amendment was necessary in the definition of "General Election." He suggested that they should omit the words "electoral divisions of Queensland for the return of members of the House of Representatives of the Parliament of the Commonwealth."

The HOME SECRETARY: It would probably meet the wishes of hon. members if the definition of "General Election" was altered so as to cover both Commonwealth and State elections. He moved that all the words after "General Elections" be omitted with the view of inserting the words—

An election held for the return of members of the House of Representatives of the Parliament of the Commonwealth, or for the return of members of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland.

Mr. BOWMAN thought that amendment was not consistent with the amendments previously made in the clause. They had laid down in the 2nd paragraph that the laws under which the referendum should take place should be the State Electoral Acts, and the amendment now proposed would apply to an election for the return of members of the House of Representatives in the Commonwealth Parliament, or for the return of members of the Queensland Legislative Assembly.

The HOME SECRETARY: The clause made it quite clear that at whatever election the referendum was taken the State rolls and State machinery should be employed.

The PREMIER: The leading idea in the business was to take the referendum during a general election, for the excellent reason that then they would get the largest number of electors to record their votes on the question. To take this referendum at any other time than a general election would perhaps result in a small minority of the people of Queensland who were specially interested in the matter altering the law.

Mr. JENKINSON: Make a minimum.

The PREMIER: No; they should not make a minimum. It was far better to hold the poll at such a time, as they knew the great bulk of electors would be taking an interest in the general election, and would be there to vote on this question. The clause under consideration did not settle whether that general election should be a Federal election or a State election, and that did not matter very much; but the question should be dealt with at a general election. It would be a misfortune if the question were settled by only a small proportion of the

electors of Queensland, and the clause as proposed to be amended by the Home Secretary would leave them free to take the referendum at the most convenient general election, either Commonwealth or State.

Mr. BOWMAN disagreed with the proposition of the Premier that this referendum should be taken at a general election, either for the Commonwealth Parliament or for the Queensland Legislative Assembly. The Government recognised that there was some difficulty in the matter when they wanted to take the poll at a Commonwealth general election. The hon. member for Bowen stated that the same difficulty would arise if the question were submitted at a Commonwealth election as would arise if it were submitted at a State election; but that argument did not alter the fact that a good deal of feeling would be created among those who participated in the referendum. Most hon. members would agree with the statement of the leader of the Opposition that the voting on this question might defeat any party in the House, because it might be made a leading issue at the general election, and that was a thing which they should avoid. If the people were desirous of taking a referendum, it should be taken at a time when there was no election contest. He would

[4 p.m.] strongly oppose taking it at election time; and what he did not care for as a State member, he would not inflict upon candidates at the Commonwealth elections. As State members, they were directly implicated in the business; but it would be unfair to cause trouble to the other chap, who had to fight his battle on altogether different issues.

The PREMIER: This will have nothing to do with the Commonwealth elections.

Mr. BOWMAN: The question was bound to be raised, and the main issues in Federal politics might be completely overshadowed by a question with which they had absolutely no concern.

The PREMIER: They will not need to express an opinion upon it.

Mr. BOWMAN would like to anticipate as easy a passage for the measure as the hon. gentleman seemed to expect; but he thought there would be a good deal of feeling, and they should strive to allay that feeling, particularly at election time. He did not suppose the Premier or any of his colleagues would care to have the referendum taken at the time of the next State elections, for fear that it might materially affect candidates' interests; and there was a danger that Federal candidates' chances might be affected in the same way, if it came up for settlement at a Federal election.

The TREASURER: If he mistook not, when the Bill was originally introduced, the time for taking the referendum was fixed for the Commonwealth general election, because that election was likely to come off before the State general election, and it was desired to have the matter settled without any undue delay. If the referendum was to be taken at a time other than a general election, there was some danger of a small vote being polled. Suppose the thing was carried by a small vote of 10,000, and the Government refused to pay any attention to the vote, because it was so small that it did not indicate the opinion of the people, they would lie under the reproach of having taken a referendum and of not having the courage to give effect to the verdict of the people, and nobody would be satisfied. The thing would continue to be a burning question and a standing sore for a long time to come in the minds of those people who wanted the question settled in this way. It had been suggested that the difficulty might be over-

come by fixing a minimum; but the moment they deviated from accepting the verdict of the majority, whatever that majority might be, they would land themselves in endless difficulties.

Mr. JENKINSON: We did it in the case of the referendum on the Commonwealth.

The TREASURER: That was perfectly true, but he was not inclined to say that the verdict given on that occasion could be accepted as conclusive proof of the benefits of the system.

Mr. BOWMAN: They do it in connection with a licensing poll in New Zealand.

Mr. MAY: And in New South Wales, too.

The TREASURER: The advantage of taking the referendum at a general election was that it gave the people who wanted the referendum the opportunity of having two elections at which to decide the matter, as it was only fair, if they were going to have this thing in existence, that it should be brought into operation without unnecessary delay.

Mr. KENNA (*Bowen*): A point that the leader of the Labour party seemed to miss was that by passing the amendment they were not necessarily fixing the taking of the referendum for either the State or the Commonwealth election. Another point the hon. member seemed to miss was the difference between taking it at a State and a Commonwealth election. A candidate at the Commonwealth election need not say a single word about the question. If he were asked a question about it, he could say that it did not concern him, as the Commonwealth had no power over the matter, and that it was purely a State matter. That removed him from having to become a partisan either way, and it did not prejudice his chances of election in any way. At a Commonwealth election there were big questions to consider, altogether outside the little local party questions that were brought into the State elections, and that made the Commonwealth election a peculiarly appropriate time for the taking of this vote. It was desirable that State candidates should not be compelled to risk their chances of election by having to take one side or the other. What they wanted was to get an impartial verdict of the electors, and they could not get an untrammelled verdict at the time of a State election. If it was to be taken at any other time than a general election it would involve a tremendous amount of expense.

The HOME SECRETARY: It would cost £7,000 or £8,000.

Mr. LESINA: Well, make them pay it.

Mr. KENNA: If it were taken at a general election it would cost practically nothing beyond the expense of printing the ballot-papers. Now that they had embarked on this business, it was desirable they should see it through as soon as possible, and, the Commonwealth election coming first, it was a particularly fitting time for the referendum.

Mr. LESINA: The Treasurer appeared to think that they strengthened their position by insisting that, if the referendum were taken at a general election, they would get a bigger vote. The Premier argued that if it were taken between elections, when public opinion was practically moribund, they might only get an insignificant vote, and a small majority might succeed in carrying the question. If that were so, why were they asked to waste their time in considering the matter at all? He was led to believe there were thousands of people clamouring at Ministers' doors for a chance to take this referendum, but it was evident there was no large demand for it. He thought there was a bigger demand outside

*Mr. Lesina.]*

for a referendum on the question of the abolition of the Upper House, or possibly on the question of a reduction of members, or some other urgent matter of policy. He hoped there would be a vote taken on this point, as they did not want either State or Commonwealth elections mixed up with the sectarian brawlings that were likely to take place. He would do all he could to keep that out of politics.

The PREMIER: The only people who are making any sectarian brawling are those who profess to deprecate it.

Mr. LESINA: Did the hon. gentleman believe it would be possible to fight this question at a general election without having the question cropping up to the exclusion, perhaps, of more important matters? He might wish to address his constituents on matters of urgent public importance, like the abolition of the Upper House, a compulsory Eight Hours Day, and wages boards for farmers; and wherever he went he might be met with a clamorous demand to tell them about the Bible in State schools. His opponent might be practically new to political life; but, because of public feeling on this question, he might win the seat. He was opposed to the referendum being taken at either the Commonwealth or State elections time, and, when they came to the next clause, they should definitely fix the date of the referendum. They might fix it for a date after the Premier had gone away, when he would be unable to act as a disturbing influence. Let them take it in May, June, or July. It was a dangerous principle to introduce and discuss at either a State or Federal election. The argument of the hon. member was somewhat ingenious to shoulder our responsibility in the matter on to the shoulders of our Federal legislators. Why should the Federal legislators come up against it? What had they done to deserve this issue being thrust upon them at the next Federal election? The hon. member for Bowen thought it would be better to hold it on the Commonwealth election day, because the Commonwealth dealt with large questions, and, as this was purely a local matter, it would not interfere with the issue. Because it was a local matter might be used as an argument why it should be tacked on to a State election, and the argument would be stronger for taking it at a State than at a Commonwealth election. They had passed the second reading of the Bill, and if the referendum were taken at the next State election, those members who voted for the second reading would have to take the responsibility for the election taking place on that day. He acquitted himself of all responsibility in that matter because he voted against the second reading, but those who voted for it would be responsible for the issue being introduced at the next State election.

Mr. JENKINSON: We voted for the second reading on principle.

Mr. LESINA: The members who voted for the second reading wanted to save themselves from any responsibility by shoving it on to Commonwealth election day. He hoped the vote of the hon. member for Fassifern would be recorded against the taking of the referendum on any election day. The Home Secretary was determined to take the referendum on either a State or Commonwealth election day. Were the majority of members of the Committee prepared to give him that power? He hoped to see all elections conducted in peace and quietness, and they would be well advised if they knocked that paragraph of the clause out altogether.

Mr. JENKINSON (*Fassifern*) was in sympathy with a good deal that had been said by

[*Mr. Lesina.*

the senior member for Fortitude Valley. He held all along that it was a mistake to mix up this particular matter with any general election. The hon. member for Bowen said that this was not a large question; but when it got before the electors it would be one of the biggest questions, arousing the greatest amount of heartburnings that had ever been before them. They were practically dividing the people into separate camps; practically setting them at each other's throats in this matter. It did not matter whether it was held at the time of a State general election or at a Commonwealth election, it was impossible to disassociate the candidates from this question. Members who represented provincial electorates knew that the ignorance of the ordinary electors was such that they would ask State parliamentary candidates questions about the local post offices, about the telegraph office, about getting a telephone service established, and about running a new mail service, and such like. If the candidate said, "That is a Federal matter and has nothing to do with the State Parliament," he would be greeted with the reply, "You are evading the question. Why don't you say you are in favour of it or not?" (Laughter.) Ask the member for any provincial district, and see if he had not had that question put to him. In the case of a Commonwealth election, although the Federal parliamentary candidate might get up on his hind legs and say that he would have nothing to do with this question of Bible in State schools, as it was a matter for the State, the elector would say, "You have an opinion on the matter, and you ought to say whether you are in favour of herding up our children in different pens for the purpose of getting theological instruction or not." If the candidate did not say "Aye" or "Nay" to that, then the vote of the elector would be recorded against him so far as his own religious principles were concerned. The hon. member for Bowen said it would be a question of cost if they held the referendum at any time other than when a general election was taking place. He (Mr. Jenkinson) was opposed to the taking of the referendum at any general election, either for the State or the Federal Parliament. (Hear, hear!) The majority of members were agreed on that. They were told that it would be specially favourable to hold it at the time of the Commonwealth election. They knew that the Commonwealth authorities would not allow their servants to be interested in this matter at all. Sir William Lyne, or whoever happened to be Secretary for Home Affairs at that time, would definitely say, "We will not allow any Commonwealth officer, who is a presiding officer or a returning officer at an election, to assist the State in dealing with this referendum of the Bible in State schools." That would mean that separate polling-booths would have to be provided, and that the State would have to get its own returning officers, its own presiding officers, and its own poll clerks; so the cost would be practically the same as if the referendum were taken at a time apart from a general election. That disposed of the question of cost. He had no reason to believe that the Commonwealth people would back down from the attitude they adopted less than two years ago on that particular matter. Taking everything into consideration that had been adduced so far, the majority of the members would agree that it was in the best interests of the people of Queensland, and particularly in the interests of the candidate, if the four lines of the paragraph they were now discussing were eliminated altogether. Let them have a new clause introduced, fixing the date for the taking of the referendum. If that were done, he would

support it; or, if they liked, he would move an amendment himself to put it in order.

Mr. RYLAND: Vote against the amendment.

Mr. JENKINSON: The better plan would be to move an amendment omitting the whole of the words from "general election" down to "Commonwealth," and they would have the matter properly before them. If they accepted the alternative offered by the Home Secretary, they would be committed to holding the referendum on the day of a general election, and later on the Chairman would not allow them to go back to move an alteration in the clause. They could vote against the amendment of the Home Secretary and negative the paragraph, but that would not make it any better.

Mr. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*) hoped the Home Secretary would see his way clear to delete that portion which referred to a State election. He agreed with the hon. member for Bowen that in connection with the Federal election there would not be much heartburning caused by the introduction of this question, as it would not be a matter for Federal members to consider at all. But in connection with the State election, there was no doubt a good deal of feeling would be imparted into the question. It would then not be a question of parties at all, and a candidate might find himself with certain sects arrayed against him, not because they were against him politically, but because they were against him on this question.

Mr. KENNA: And they could not give a cool, deliberate decision.

Mr. W. H. BARNES: That was quite correct. The members standing for the Commonwealth Parliament, however, need not bother themselves one bit about the question at all.

The TREASURER: For their own sakes they would not do so.

Mr. W. H. BARNES: The Treasurer was quite right. No man would run up against a snag if he could help it. But he would say, "I have nothing whatever to do with this question"; and no one would blame him if he took up that stand. He hoped the Home Secretary would make the clause apply only to the Commonwealth election. While he wanted to assist the Government to pass this legislation, he could not vote for the referendum being taken at a State election.

The PREMIER: Under ordinary circumstances it would be held at a Federal election.

Mr. W. H. BARNES: But it might so happen that there might be extraordinary circumstances.

The TREASURER: There might be another State election.

Mr. W. H. BARNES: They could never tell, although it did not look at all likely that there would be another State election. This question should not be thrust into the contest at the time of a State election, because it would create strong feeling in the minds of a great number of electors. That was why he wanted the Home Secretary to leave it apply only to the Commonwealth election.

Mr. MANN (*Cairns*): If a referendum was to be taken on this question, they must make it in such a way that it could be taken in the cheapest and most expeditious manner. If they had a special referendum they would have to get all the paraphernalia of a general election to carry it out.

The PREMIER: And all the cost.

Mr. MANN: If they had to do that on every occasion that they wanted to take a referendum, it would make the taking of a referendum so dear that it would practically be a dead letter.

Mr. COYNE: This is an extraordinary question.

Mr. MANN: They would make every question an extraordinary one. They might want to have a referendum of the people to say whether a land tax should be imposed or not; and a number of members might object to the referendum being taken at the time of a State election, because they might be put down in the category of seeking to have a land tax imposed. The question was to come up at either a State election or a Commonwealth election, whichever happened first, so they took equal risks with the Federal members in that matter. He thought it was clearly shown, at the time of the last general election, the opinions that the State members held on this question. He believed that every member of the House, with the exception of one, had to a certain extent pledged themselves against the introduction of the Bible in State schools. The Federal members had not, so far as he was aware, expressed any opinion on the matter one way or the other.

Mr. BOWMAN: My word, they have.

Mr. KEOGH: Mr. Fisher has.

Mr. MANN: If Mr. Fisher had done that he had gone outside his duties as a Federal member, because this question did not concern the Federal Parliament at all. It was simply a Queensland matter, and did not come before the Federal Parliament.

Mr. BOWMAN: It was not brought before the Federal Parliament.

Mr. MANN: Then Mr. Fisher was just stating his opinion as an elector of Queensland; and this matter did not concern him as a member of the Federal Parliament at all.

Mr. BOWMAN: Why not shoulder the responsibility?

Mr. MANN: He was not afraid of shouldering the responsibility. They took their chance equally with the Federal members, although a question like this would dominate a State election much more than a Federal election. Anyone who had taken note of Federal elections would know that there was much more feeling at State elections. Any number of people who voted for the leader of the Opposition voted also for Mr. Bamford at the Federal election. It did not follow that because a man supported a Labour candidate at a State election he would do so at a Federal election. He did not see that any unnecessary heat should be imported into the matter, because it was a question of which very little notice was taken at the last State election. He never heard the matter mentioned, although at the previous election it was raised by himself, and even he would not have raised it but for the fact that he got a circular on the subject from Mr. Garland. He was under the impression that the question was dead until he saw it on the Government programme. He was willing to take his chance of a State election coming before a Federal election, but, if the referendum was to be taken at all, it must be taken either at a State or a Commonwealth election, otherwise the cost would kill it.

Mr. RYLAND (*Gympie*) thought the Home Secretary should do away with the provision that the referendum should be held either at a State or Commonwealth election. It was going to be one of the hottest and most keenly contested questions that had been before the

*Mr. Ryland.]*

people for a long time. It was going to fire the political heather, and he thought it should be considered apart from a general election. He, for one, would far sooner take the responsibility of having it held at a State election than put it on to the Commonwealth election. Then, again, there would be a difficulty in regard to the number of ballot-papers to be dealt with at a Federal election. There were the ballot-papers for the House of Representatives and also for the Senate. There might be a couple of dozen names, and three to be selected from them. Then, as at the last Federal election, there would probably be a vote or two to be given on some alterations of the Constitution. All those ballot-papers would be very embarrassing. There would be a "Yes" or "No" vote in connection with a proposed alteration of the Federal Constitution. Many of the electors did not know what to do with that vote at the last Federal election, and if, in addition, they had to give a "Yes" or "No" vote in connection with Bible reading in State schools, and also vote for members of the House of Representatives and the Senate, there would be no end to the confusion which would prevail. Another matter he would like the Home Secretary to consider was this: He did not think the Federal authorities would be justified in having a vote like that taken during their election, and they might pass a law prohibiting it. He knew that the Commonwealth law would override the State law every time.

The HOME SECRETARY: There is no fear of that. All they can do is not to allow the use of their machinery.

Mr. RYLAND: He questioned whether they could not prohibit the election being held on the same day. He thought the vote should be taken on a special day set apart for it, when they would have an opportunity of discussing the matter without mixing it up with any other questions. They all recognised the importance of the question, and they had been before the electors explaining and expounding it. It was very difficult to make the average elector grasp such a question, and he certainly thought there was sufficient within the four corners of the Bill to talk to the electors about. There was a lot of matter they discussed last night, and they could go before the electors quoting the authorities and opinions of advanced thinkers in favour of or against the proposal. There was plenty of work to do without mixing up either Federal or State politics. He was also informed that it was the wish of the movers in the movement and those who advocated a change in the educational system that the referendum should be taken at the earliest possible moment. They had even approached the Government to have it held at the last general election.

The TREASURER: I should think they would.

Mr. RYLAND: They put forward their very best men to advocate that. If they wished to fall in with the views of those people, I maintain that they should do so in their entirety. They wanted a referendum taken under circumstances when it would not be side-tracked. They wanted the minds of the people centred on the question, and they did not think it should be surrounded with the strife and turmoil of a general election. If it was a religious question, let it be a religious one, and devote one day in the year to it. Let them have one big holiday, or one big Sunday, to discuss and vote on that religious question. He was entirely against mixing up the matter either with a State or Federal election.

[*Mr. Ryland.*]

The HOME SECRETARY: You would make it a sort of annual festival.

Mr. GRANT (*Rockhampton*) did not see any great objection to having the referendum held during a State or Federal election, and the Commonwealth members would have far less to fear. They had nothing to do with the question, and were in no way responsible. They could wipe their hands of the matter and say, "It is altogether outside of our province." He could quite understand that at a State election there might be some friction over the matter, but so would there be in connection with other questions. In New Zealand they held an election in connection with the licensing question, and it made no difference. Candidates standing at the last election there took very little notice of it, merely saying that the question was before the electors, and that they had the right of voting upon it. Therefore, it would simply be a question of how the electors stood upon it. He thought the temperance question was almost as bitterly contested as even the Bible reading in State schools, and yet in New Zealand there was no objection to it being put before the people at a general election. He was not at all in favour of holding a referendum on a special day unless the people who so desired it paid for it themselves. It meant the expenditure of a big lot of money, and that was a sound reason for opposing such a proposal. He would certainly vote for the referendum being held at the first general election, whether it be a State or a Federal election. A number of members who had been arguing against that were really adopting that means of dodging out of the difficulty.

Mr. BOWMAN: It is not a question of dodging out of it.

Mr. GRANT: That was his opinion. If it had come up at the last election, he would not have had any hesitation in telling the electors that he was opposed to Bible reading in State schools. He had told them so already, but he was willing to give them the option of deciding the question for themselves. It looked to him as if it were a case of funk and dodging the issue.

Mr. BOWMAN: Our voting did not show that.

Mr. GRANT: But it looked as if hon. members were trying to get out of it by a side wind. Everyone knew that if the referendum was not going to be held at a general election it would not be held at all.

Mr. BOWMAN: Have you the authority of the Government for saying so?

Mr. GRANT: No, he had no authority; but any Government would be exceedingly foolish to spend £10,000 on a question which might be decided as easily by the expenditure of as many hundreds.

The PREMIER: He had already explained that they considered the best time at which to hold the election, apart altogether from the question of cost, was at the time of a general election, because at that time they were likely to get the largest number of electors expressing their opinions. That, he thought, was the primary consideration. Then there was the secondary consideration of cost. He did not think they would be justified in spending £7,000 or £8,000 in holding a referendum on that subject, and particularly a referendum on which, perhaps, not 30,000 people would vote, and when each vote recorded would cost 4s. or 5s. That would be the result of it. He would not think of passing a Bill to take a referendum at any other time except at election

time, and he thought that the best election time would be Federal election time. He had not the slightest objection to discussing the matter with the electors of Rockhampton, and telling them his opinions upon it. As a matter of fact, they knew his opinion already, and he was not afraid of the sectarian bogey being raised to any serious extent. But he recognised that in many cases members would think that their chances of re-election would be interfered with if this referendum were held at the time of the State general election. He admitted that there was something in that, because the electors who were voting for those candidates and voting on the referendum would know that the members they were electing would have the carrying out of the thing after the electors had decided what they wished to have done; so that it would affect appreciably the position of candidates at a State election. It was for that reason that he thought the Federal election was the most convenient time for taking the referendum, because Federal candidates would have nothing whatever to do with the question. It was quite true that the same electors would vote in the referendum as would vote for the Federal candidates, but the Federal candidates would have nothing whatever to do with the question to be decided by the referendum, and the very men who were trying to get the electors to vote in the referendum would be careful to see that this question was kept away from the Federal candidates.

Mr. BOWMAN: Didn't you state last night that you would use your best endeavours to induce the electors not to vote for religious instruction in State schools?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. BOWMAN: Would you do that at the Federal election?

The PREMIER: Why should he not do it at the Federal election? He might take a larger part in Federal elections if Federal members came up here interfering in our State elections. They would find that two parties could play at that game.

Mr. BOWMAN: The two questions are inseparable—the question involved in this referendum and the question of politics.

The PREMIER: That was pure nonsense, and if it was not pure nonsense the people who were in favour of the referendum proposal had better abandon the idea, because no sensible Parliament would consent to submit questions to the electors time after time if it was going to cost £8,000 to do it. That House would settle the question instead of spending £8,000 in submitting it to the people by means of a referendum. In a question of this kind, beset with the danger of setting up sectarian differences, the very advantage of having it remitted to the people by way of a referendum was that it took the responsibility of settling it one way or the other off the shoulders of members of Parliament. What need a candidate care if this referendum were taken at a general election? He would say to the electors, "Whatever my opinion is about the matter, it is not for me to settle, and before I am elected you will have decided the question." And the people would decide the question whatever the candidates' opinions on the subject were, and would elect the candidate on questions of general policy. Hundreds of men who differed with him on this question would vote for him as their representative in the Assembly. The merit of adopting the

referendum method was that it removed questions like this from the turmoil of a State election.

Mr. JENKINSON: As far as possible—you cannot do it completely.

The PREMIER: They could not altogether remove it from State politics, but he did not think that if the referendum were taken at a State election it would seriously interfere with a State candidate's chances of election, because the great bulk of the electors would vote their own way in the referendum, and would also vote for the man they preferred on general political or personal grounds. But taking the referendum at the time of the Federal elections would not interfere with Federal candidates to any extent whatever. They might as well take it at a local government election, and, as a matter of fact, it would be just as convenient to do so if all our local government elections throughout Queensland took place on the one day, except that the law was different and the electors were different in those elections. The thing was simply to choose a day for holding the referendum when it could be taken at a minimum cost, and when they could get a verdict from the great body of electors.

Mr. HARDACRE: You cannot separate this from ordinary questions of politics.

The PREMIER: Of course they could, and the electors would separate them. He thought a number of hon. members opposite were too supersensitive as to the danger of submitting this question at the time of a general election. It would not interfere at all with candidates in a Federal election, and it would interfere only to an infinitesimal extent with candidates at a State election. What Federal candidate would for one moment think of expressing his opinion on this question, or what ordinary elector would ask him for his opinion? Whatever his opinion on the subject was, it would not matter a snap of the fingers, because he would have nothing to do with carrying it out afterwards. There were two alternatives in the matter before the Committee. One was that they might hold this referendum at election time, when it would cost a trifle—they might hold it at the time of a Federal or State election—or they might adopt the method of taking the referendum when there was no election. He would not be responsible for taking the referendum at a time when there was no election. He would not expend £8,000 for the purpose of getting an incomplete vote—perhaps there would not be 30,000 people in Queensland who would give a vote on this subject if the referendum were taken at a time when there was no election. The other alternative was that they could defeat this Bill, and let the matter become a matter of current politics in Queensland, to be settled in the ordinary way at elections. Was there any man in the House who believed that that was a good way to settle this question?

Mr. HARDACRE: You are making this a matter of current politics which will never die.

The PREMIER: They were taking the most sensible way of settling this question, a way that would to the least extent bring sectarian questions into a general election, and a way in which they could get the verdict of the people at a minimum of cost. Of course, those hon. members who did not want the referendum at all were quite right in raising objections—they should object to everything; but to those who voted for the second reading

*Hon. W. Kidston.]*

of this Bill, and honestly desired to see the question settled and out of the way, he would say that the wisest method to adopt was to get the matter settled at a general election.

Hon. E. B. FORREST: A Federal election?

The PREMIER: He preferred to take it at a Federal election, but would rather take it at a State election than not take it at all.

Mr. JENKINSON: Have you consulted the Federal authorities about taking it at the Federal elections?

The PREMIER: No. Why should he consult the Commonwealth Government? The Government would take this referendum without asking the leave of the Federal authorities to do so.

Mr. JACKSON: It will cost you money if you have to take the referendum with your own officers.

The PREMIER: The polling officers were State officers to the extent of 70 or 80 per cent.

Mr. BARBER: You will almost duplicate the work with two rolls.

The PREMIER: He would like to draw attention to what the hon. member for Cairns, Mr. Mann, said, that to insist upon a referendum being taken at a different time than that of a general election would kill the referendum question completely. The House would not proceed to put question after question to the people if it were going to cost £8,000 every time—

The HOME SECRETARY: And get an unsatisfactory vote.

The PREMIER: And get an unsatisfactory vote after they had spent that money. Even at a general election it would cost money to take a referendum, because they could not have the papers put in the same ballot-box with the election papers. There must be another ballot-box, and there must be another clerk to look after it. For instance, at Rockhampton there was one returning officer, and there were also four poll clerks sitting at four ballot-boxes, and if a referendum were taken at the same time they would require to have another ballot-box and another clerk.

Hon. E. B. FORREST: What do you estimate the cost of the referendum would be at a Federal election?

The PREMIER: He could not say, and it would be rather foolish for him to give an estimate of the cost, but it would be a very different thing from the cost that would be involved in taking it when there was no general election. He thought that, on the whole, the best way was to take the referendum at the first time when they had the electors there to vote, whether that time happened to be a Federal or State election. He frankly confessed that he preferred the Federal election, simply because it was an election which had less to do with the question on which the electors would vote in the referendum. He hoped the Committee would take a vote and settle the matter.

Hon. R. PHILP hoped the Premier would stick to his intention to take the referendum at the time of the Commonwealth election.

(Hear, hear!) It would not affect [5 p.m.] Federal candidates one iota. If they were asked about the question, they could say that it had nothing to do with the Commonwealth, but was purely a State matter. He would not object to its being taken at some other time. It would cost a good deal of money; but they had a Bill now

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before the House which proposed to take a constitutional referendum, and there could be no objection to inserting in this Bill an amendment allowing this referendum to be taken at the same time as the constitutional referendum. They might have a referendum three or four months hence, and they could take the two at the same time. He strongly objected to the referendum being held at a State election, as he was satisfied that this would be the big issue, and might have a very material effect upon the elections. It was quite possible to have a big poll at some other time, despite what the Premier said.

Mr. BOWMAN: Listening to the Premier, one would naturally come to the conclusion that no referendum was ever to be held at any other time than a general election.

The PREMIER: That is when it should take place.

Mr. BOWMAN: The hon. gentleman had been very definite in his statement. The principle of the referendum became a farce if people could not get one at the time when they wanted it. There were certain members on his side who had shown hostility to this referendum. He had supported it, and he believed that less friction would arise between the sects concerned if the referendum was taken at some other time than a general election, either Commonwealth or State. The leader of the Opposition admitted that he would be sorry to see the question come up at a State election. Why? Because there would be a sectarian spirit engendered that would obscure many more important issues. The Premier thought that there would be no feeling at a Commonwealth election, and that a Federal candidate could say that he had nothing at all to do with the question. The hon. gentleman admitted that he was prepared to do his best on the platform to defeat certain Federal candidates; but how could the hon. gentleman, or any other member, stand up on the platform and advocate the cause of any particular candidate, at the same time that he was speaking on the question of Bible teaching in State schools, without raising some ill-feeling? He thought the contention was absurd.

Hon. R. PHILP: The members of this House should be out of it altogether.

Mr. BOWMAN: If this question was of such importance that they were asked to decide it, it was of equal importance that hon. members should do their best to advocate the views they enunciated in that Chamber. The Premier spoke of Federal members interfering in State elections. He remembered that the hon. gentleman took a very important part in the first Federal election. Why should not a Federal member, if he was a citizen of Queensland, come up during his recess and assist the party he believed in? Who could stop him?

The PREMIER: Nobody.

Mr. BOWMAN: Then why fall out about it?

The PREMIER: I do not fall out about it. Should not a State elector, who also happens to be a State member of Parliament, also take a hand in the Federal elections?

Mr. BOWMAN: He felt proud to be able to take a part in helping Federal candidates into the Commonwealth Parliament when they belonged to his party. The same applied to those who believed in anti-socialist candidates. He was going to vote against the referendum being taken at a general election, whether Commonwealth or State, because it was more likely to engender a spirit of bitterness than

anything they were likely to have before them; and it was wise to keep that apart from both Commonwealth and State elections.

Mr. JENKINSON: Neither the Premier nor the leader of the Opposition had clarified the situation by their remarks. He was certainly of opinion that it was going to do a good deal of damage to candidates standing at the general election when this referendum was taken. The Premier had stated that he intended to take an active part at the next Federal election, presumably because some Federal members took an active part in the last State election. He did not dispute the hon. gentleman's right, as a citizen of Queensland, to help any candidate he liked; but the hon. gentleman had also stated that he intended to take an active part in getting the Bible in State schools proposal defeated. Now, if the hon. gentleman was speaking at any meeting on the Bible in State schools proposal, he would naturally at the same meeting speak about the candidature of the particular candidate whom he was in favour of.

Mr. MAXWELL: He need say nothing in favour of this.

Mr. JENKINSON: It was nonsense to say that. If the hon. gentleman went to Townsville, or to some distant part of the State, to speak against the Bible in State schools, would he not take advantage of the opportunity to advocate the cause of the Federal candidate he believed in? The Premier was apparently trying to mislead hon. members with regard to this matter. He stated first that there would be no mixing up. He (Mr. Jenkinson) pointed out that there would be a mixing up. He would not go to help a Federal candidate if he did not speak on this question; and, if he spoke on this question, the electors would identify the candidate he supported with the views he (Mr. Jenkinson) expressed on this subject.

Mr. NEVITT: The candidate would not allow you.

Mr. JENKINSON: If he were speaking on the question of the Bible in State schools, the probability was that the candidate might hold the same opinions as he, and might ask him to say a few words in favour of his candidature.

The TREASURER: The chances are he would ask you to say nothing at all about it.

Mr. JENKINSON: The chances were that the candidate would ask him to say a few words for him, and it would be very hard for that candidate to dissociate himself from his (Mr. Jenkinson's) views on this question. The hon. member for Kennedy pertinently pointed out that it would be impossible to reduce the cost, and the Premier stated that the cost would be a minimum amount; but, seeing the referendum would be taken on a different roll, that was not so.

Mr. JACKSON: And they get their guinea or two guineas for doing Commonwealth work.

Mr. JENKINSON: Exactly; and to do State work they would require more pay. They would find that it would be impossible to work on the two rolls at once, or else there would be a congestion.

Mr. MURPHY: Not in outside places.

Mr. JENKINSON admitted that there were outside centres where the officials were not engaged during the whole time, and in that direction there might be a small lessening of expense, but that did not apply to towns and cities.

Mr. MURPHY: The big cost in an election is caused by sending men to the outside centres.

Mr. JENKINSON did not think that cost so much. The point raised by the hon. member for Kennedy was a very pertinent one, and one that would have to be taken into consideration. The officials, being engaged in conducting a Commonwealth election, would naturally expect extra pay for extra work. If it was advisable to hold the referendum, then it should be held on a separate day. If they had to hold a referendum in connection with the Parliamentary Bills Referendum Bill, what was to prevent them from taking them both on the same occasion? He hoped that hon. members would remember that the Premier had laid it down as a rule that the referendum should be taken on election day because it would save expense and—

The PREMIER: I did not lay down any such rule.

Mr. JENKINSON: That was the inference he drew from the hon. member's statement, and the senior member for the Valley drew the same inference, but if the Premier wished to withdraw it—

The PREMIER: I would not have any objection to laying down the rule, but, as a matter of fact, I did not lay it down then.

Mr. JENKINSON: That was the inference he drew from the Premier's remarks, but if the Premier wanted to hedge he could do so. He asked the Home Secretary to withdraw the amendment and let the Committee decide if it was to be held on a special day or on a general election day. Let the Committee take a vote on the word "general" and it would settle the matter once and for all.

Mr. SUMNER: If the referendum were held on a Commonwealth election day, the cost would be just the same as if the referendum were taken on a special day set apart for the purpose; and, not only that, it would also lead to endless confusion to hold it on a Commonwealth election day, because some people would be on the Federal roll and not on the State roll. It should not be taken on a general election day at all. At the first election which he contested he was blackballed by Archdeacon Garland, who told the electors to vote against him. He was also blackballed in the *Advocate* and in the newspapers, although he had promised to vote for the Bill to submit the question to a referendum of the people. However, it did not matter a snap of the fingers. If a man stood up on the platform and said he was against the introduction of religious instruction in State schools he would be returned every time. If this referendum was carried in favour of the introduction of religious instruction in State schools it would have a serious effect on the educational system in the State. In spite of what the leader of the Opposition said, he (Mr. Sumner) would take every opportunity he could on every platform to defeat this proposal. It was the duty, not only of members of Parliament but of citizens in the country to do that. He had a large family himself, and had half a dozen going to the State schools, but he did not want the religious lessons introduced into the State schools in the form mentioned in the Bill.

The HOME SECRETARY: We are not to decide that. It is the people who have to decide that.

Mr. SUMNER: Every member of the House should get in touch with the people on the question. It was an impossibility to do that at a general election, especially at a Commonwealth election, where they would have two

*Mr. Sumner.]*

different rolls, and in that way they would not be able to get a verdict of the people at all. He believed that, if it were left that the referendum should be carried out on the Commonwealth rolls, it would be much better than having it carried out on the State rolls, because with two rolls it would cost as much as having the referendum carried out on a separate day altogether. It was said that they would not get a very large vote if the referendum were taken on a separate day, but his opinion was that they would get a bigger vote.

Mr. NEVITT: Not in the country districts.

Mr. SUMNER: He believed that the forces would all roll up. He would rather that the Bill was left as it was originally introduced, leaving the referendum to be taken on the Commonwealth rolls. He did not think it would interfere with either a State member or a Federal member one bit, because they could easily say to the people, "You are the masters of the situation and you have to give your votes on it."

Mr. KENNA was strongly in favour of Commonwealth election day being the time fixed for the taking of the referendum, but however anxious he was for that, there appeared to be a difficulty in the way. On the Commonwealth election day all the returning officers and presiding officers were for that day day Commonwealth servants. They were in the employ of the Commonwealth, and paid by the Commonwealth, and to all intents and purposes were Commonwealth servants. Supposing that the Commonwealth Government said distinctly to the State Parliament, "This is our affair, and we resent any intrusion of your State matters." While he was strongly in favour of the Commonwealth election day being the day appointed for holding the referendum, he did not want to see any difficulty of that kind occurring.

The TREASURER: We must hold the State election day in reserve.

Mr. KENNA: If they could not hold it on Commonwealth election day, because of this difficulty, then it would be shoved on to the State, and that was what he did not want to see.

Mr. BOWMAN: It would be fairer to take it on State election day than on Commonwealth election day.

Mr. KENNA: He would be in favour of an amendment to exclude the State election day altogether. He preferred to see it held on Commonwealth election day, but he would like to know from the Home Secretary what would happen if the Commonwealth Government refused to allow them to use their officers on that day for the purposes of this referendum?

The HOME SECRETARY: We have a second string to our bow with the State election day.

Mr. KENNA: That was the danger.

Hon. D. F. DENHAM: You want to take away that second string altogether.

Mr. KENNA hoped there would not be any difficulty with the Commonwealth, as it would be much cheaper to hold the referendum on Commonwealth election day.

The HOME SECRETARY: If they left in the State election day it would give them a second string to their bow.

Mr. HARDACRE: No, it will not.

The HOME SECRETARY: If by any possibility the Federal Government could block them from holding it on Commonwealth elec-

tion day—and he did not say that they could, but there might be a possibility—then they would fall back on the State election day. If the State election came earlier than the Federal election, then they would have the referendum taken as early as possible.

Mr. JENKINSON: You are not looking for another election, are you?

The HOME SECRETARY: He hoped not. He did not think there was any member in the House seeking it. (Laughter.)

Mr. PAGET: I thought we were to have another election in six months.

The HOME SECRETARY: Was that the hon. gentleman's prophecy?

Mr. PAGET: No.

The HOME SECRETARY: The Government did not think it advisable to hold the referendum on the day of a State election. In the first place, it would cost £8,000, and he did not think they should spend £8,000 on a question like that if it were possible to avoid it. They had 200,000 electors on the State rolls, and at a general election—whether Federal or State—they would get 160,000 electors at the polling-place to vote. They would then get a large majority of the electors to say what they wanted one way or the other. If they held the referendum on a special occasion, then, as the Premier said, they would probably get only 60,000 to vote.

Mr. JENKINSON: That shows the want of interest.

The HOME SECRETARY: They had that experience in local government matters. In places where there were 2,000 or 3,000 ratepayers on the roll, and they had a local option poll, perhaps only 300 ratepayers would take enough interest in it to record their votes. The same thing would happen if they had the Bible in State schools referendum on a special day. Then the people who were now agitating for it would not be satisfied with the result, and the question would not be at rest. If a full vote were taken—as full as they could get at a general election—the result would be similar to South Australia, where a big vote was taken and the whole thing was set at rest, and had never been agitated for in the last ten years.

Mr. BARBER: You are wrong there. They raised it last year.

The HOME SECRETARY: They should have the State election day included, so that if anything happened to prevent it being held on Commonwealth election day they would be able to take it at the earliest State election.

The TREASURER: After listening to the discussion for the last half-hour, he was convinced that there could be only one result of the amendment fixing the referendum for a separate day, and that would be the killing of the referendum for all practical purposes. If they were honest in this matter, and wished to refer it to the people to give them a fair chance of recording their opinions, they should provide every facility for the electors recording their votes without loss of expense and time and trouble to themselves. Did anybody who knew Queensland, and particularly the country districts, think for a moment that in a large district like Gregory, or Fianders, or Carpentaria, the people would ride scores and scores of miles to record a vote on a mere referendum question?

Hon. D. F. DENHAM: They would use the postal vote.

Mr. JENKINSON: Yes; the postal vote will come in there.

[*Mr. Sumner.*]

The TREASURER: He sincerely hoped the postal vote would be a thing of the past before then. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. JENKINSON: That is an argument in favour of the postal vote.

The TREASURER: Whatever vote was recorded on this question would be a town vote, and the country districts would [5.30 p.m.] practically not vote at all if it were left to a special day. The hon. member for Bowen touched a real difficulty in connection with the question, and they could not shut their eyes to it. The Federal Government might object to the referendum being taken on Commonwealth election day. On the other hand, it might be said that they had a certain power of coercion, inasmuch as about 90 per cent. of the officers were State officers.

Mr. W. H. BARNES: The Premier said he could get over that.

The TREASURER: But supposing the objection was raised by the Federal Government, it was necessary to have something in reserve. Then they fell back on the State election. The question was whether they were going to hold it on a State general election day or a special day. If they held it on a special day, he sincerely doubted if they would get 20,000 persons to record their votes.

Mr. JENKINSON: That shows that it is not a live question.

The TREASURER: They had introduced the question into the House in a *bona fide* spirit. They wanted to give the people the opportunity of saying what they thought on a big question.

Mr. MAXWELL: You have introduced it because so many are pledged to it.

The TREASURER: If they introduced it in such a way that they knew Parliament and the vast majority of the people would not have an opportunity of recording their votes—and he contended that would be the result on a special day—then they would be going back on the question with the country. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley put it in this way: He said he believed in holding the election on a special day for the reason that there would be less friction and bad feeling and heartburning. He quite agreed with the hon. member that there would be a great deal less friction and heartburning on a special day, because the majority of the people would not vote at all. He could quite understand hon. members who voted against the Bill taking up that attitude, because he could see by the occasional smiles on their countenances that it would defeat the object of the Bill, but hon. members who voted for the Bill wanted to see the question put honestly and decently before the country, and that was what the amendment would not permit to be done.

Mr. RYLAND: That is not correct.

The TREASURER: He would invite hon. members' attention to the result of the referendum held at the last Federal election. He forgot the number of votes polled, but it was something trivial.

Mr. JENKINSON: That is an argument against your proposal.

The TREASURER: Although it was a Federal election, and thousands of persons voted, still the vote recorded at the referendum was small. Surely, then, if a day was specially set apart for holding the proposed referendum, and there was no Federal or State election going on at the time, there would not

be thousands of people coming up to vote for the candidates, and the result would be that the chance of getting even a very small vote would be greatly decreased. The holding of the referendum on a special day would be an effective means of preventing a fair expression of public opinion. The hon. member for Nundah thought there would be a more effective vote on a special day, and in one sense he was right. There would be a much more effective vote on the part of persons in favour of Bible teaching in State schools. They would roll up and vote, while other people would sit back and fold their arms because they were indifferent. Hon. members who acted in such a way as to secure the holding of the referendum on a special day would then have the onus cast on their shoulders of having what he believed to be a mischievous system introduced into the State schools.

Mr. HARDACRE: Evidently they were on the horns of a dilemma. There were three alternatives, and to each one there were strong objections. The Government did not want the referendum held on a special day, and they excluded that because they thought that the people would not vote in sufficient numbers.

The TREASURER: One section of them will.

Mr. HARDACRE: But on the whole there would not be a sufficient number of votes to make it a true reflex of the opinion of the people. If that were so, it was the clearest condemnation of the proposal to have a referendum at all. If the people would not vote, then by all means let them take the consequences. They would have given them facilities, and, if they would not take advantage of them, Parliament should not be forced into the other alternative of fixing the referendum to be held on the date of a State or Federal election. Two sections of the House were in favour of other alternatives. The Labour party were opposed to the referendum being held on a State or Commonwealth election day, and the Opposition generally, he took it, were rather in favour of it being held on a Commonwealth than a State election day, but the bulk of members were opposed to a special day being appointed. There was an old adage that it was easy to bear the other fellow's sorrows. His party were opposed to having the referendum held on a State election day, because they recognised it would mix up the issues with the religious question. It was therefore desired by some to take the vote on a Federal election day; but was it not apparent that the Federal members of Parliament would have quite as much objection to having the vote taken on a Federal election day as State members had to it being taken on a State election day? There was not the slightest doubt that, in spite of what the Premier said, other issues would be mixed up with the religious issue. He heard the hon. gentleman point out that the issue had really nothing to do with the Commonwealth elections, and in one respect he was quite right, but it was inevitable that it would be mixed up with Commonwealth questions. Take the case of a New South Wales election, when the question of a land tax and free trade *tariffs* protection were being discussed. It was quite clear that those issues had nothing whatever to do with the religious or sectarian question, and yet, in spite of that, see how the sectarian question was dragged into the New South Wales elections. It was, in fact, very often the dominant question, although it had nothing whatever to do with the questions at issue. They knew how candidates were supported for a great variety of reasons. A candidate

*Mr. Hardacre.]*

might be supported because he was a member of a particular party, who took up a particular attitude, and, therefore, the electors would say they would vote for or against that candidate, as the case might be. In his opinion, undoubtedly the Commonwealth had power to veto the holding of the referendum on a Federal election day.

Mr. MAXWELL: Prove it. Do not make a statement without proving it.

Mr. HARDACRE: In the Federal Constitution Act, the 2nd paragraph of section 9 said—

The Parliament of the State may make laws for determining the times and place of election of senators for the State.

Then, later on, section 109 said—

When a law of a State is inconsistent with the law of the Commonwealth, the latter shall prevail, and the former shall, to the extent of the inconsistency, be invalid.

They were now providing, in clause 3, that—

A referendum poll of the electors shall be taken under this Act on the same day as the day of the first general election which ensues after the passing of this Act.

The Commonwealth had power to say at what time and in what place a general election should be taken.

The HOME SECRETARY: For senators.

Mr. HARDACRE: Just at the same time as the election of representatives.

The HOME SECRETARY: Not necessarily.

Mr. HARDACRE: It might be so. Now, they had power under their Act to say that their election should not be held on the same day as a referendum.

The HOME SECRETARY: But we do not fix our referendum until they have fixed their election.

Mr. HARDACRE: They said a referendum of the electors should be taken on the same day as the day of the first general election. They did not fix a date. They fixed an occasion, and the Commonwealth Government likewise could say that no election should be held on the same day as a State referendum, and by the very fact of the State law being repugnant to the Commonwealth law, and inconsistent with it, then the State law became invalid. There was not the slightest doubt that after the expression of opinion by Federal members, and more particularly by Sir Wm. Lyne, the Federal Government would veto the proposal now being made, and would provide that their election should not be held on the same day as the State referendum.

The PREMIER: You might as well argue that they have power to prevent us taking our breakfast.

Mr. HARDACRE: That was absurd, but the Federal Parliament had power under the Constitution to do what he was contending they would do.

The PREMIER: We can hold a State election on the same day as their election.

Mr. HARDACRE: Not if the Federal Parliament said that no Federal election should take place on the date fixed for a State election. Their law would overrule the State law.

The PREMIER: They would have the option of shifting their day.

Mr. HARDACRE: No; they would have the option of making the State law invalid, because they had the power to do so.

The PREMIER: Nonsense!

Mr. HARDACRE: That was perfectly clear to his mind. The State said that the referen-

[*Mr. Hardacre.*

dum should be taken on a Commonwealth election day, and the Commonwealth had power to say it should not be taken on that day.

The PREMIER: They have no such power.

Mr. HARDACRE: Absolutely so.

Hon. R. PHILP: That has nothing to do with this measure.

Mr. MAXWELL: As a lawyer you are a failure.

Mr. HARDACRE: Well, as a matter of fact, he generally found he was right in the interpretation of the law, although he was only a bush lawyer. He had generally found that his interpretation of the law was perfectly correct, and he had no hesitation in saying that it could not be disputed that the Commonwealth had power to upset what they were doing if it interfered with their election day. Then there was another difficulty, because the clause said that the referendum should take place at the first general election; and if the Commonwealth excluded them from holding the referendum at the first general election there was nothing in the clause to say that it should be taken after that. The Bill stated that the referendum should be taken on the same day as the first general election which ensued after the passing of the Bill. If the Commonwealth Government objected to the referendum being taken at a Federal election, then it could not be held at the first general election, and, according to the wording of the clause, it could not afterwards be held at a second general election. If they were driven to any alternative at all, it should be the alternative of taking the referendum on a special day, and if the people did not vote that would be their fault, not the fault of Parliament.

Mr. JACKSON (*Kennedy*): It did not follow that because a member voted for the second reading of the Bill he was tied to the details of the Bill. Some members, like himself, voted for the second reading, but did not do so very enthusiastically, and on the question of Bible reading in State schools he took the same view as the Premier. He was not in favour of the referendum being taken at a State election. He thought the majority of hon. members favoured the referendum being taken at a Federal election, though there might be some who favoured taking it on a special day. The objections to holding it on a special day were—(1) the expense, and (2) the fact that there would not be many electors who would record their votes at such a time. The second objection was more important than the objection on the score of expense. If the Commonwealth Parliament objected to the State using their officers for the purpose of taking this referendum, we should have to incur considerable expense on that score, but even that would be better than taking the referendum on a special day, because they would not have many electors voting on a special day. He suggested that the Government should provide in the Bill against taking the referendum on a State election day. That might be done by providing that the referendum should be taken on the same day as the day for the general election of members of the Commonwealth Parliament; but that, if the Commonwealth authorities objected to their officers being used for that purpose, the Government should have the option of selecting a special day for the referendum, provided that day was not the day of a State election. This was a special question—a question of religion, which excited the people's feelings, and for that reason he did not want to see it dragged into the State

elections, because it would be one of the bitterest questions that had been before the people of Queensland for many years, if they excepted the big constitutional question which was at issue at the last election. Possibly the Federal Government might be taking a referendum on some question, and in that case we might take our referendum at the same time.

HON. D. F. DENHAM: It was quite clear that the majority of hon. members objected to the referendum being taken at the State elections, and that quite a number were agreeable to its being taken at the Commonwealth elections. He would, therefore, suggest to the Minister that he should allow the clause to remain as it was introduced, and recommit the clause later on in order to reinstate the provisions in a previous part of the clause which had been amended.

MR. REDWOOD (*Drayton and Toowoomba*): He thought it would be better to leave the clause as it stood. He intended to vote against the referendum being taken at a State election, because, if it was held then, other questions would have to take a back seat. At the election before last he stated that if they introduced Bible reading into State schools they would have to support denominational schools, and that statement was repeatedly brought up against him during the last election. Should the referendum be taken during a State election, all other questions would be clouded, and the election would really be fought on the religious question. The referendum should be taken either at the time of a Federal election or on a day specially set apart for that purpose. With regard to the expense of a referendum, he would point out that that was a matter of no great consideration, since if the referendum were held on the same day as the Federal elections they would have to employ separate officers and provide separate rolls, so that the expense would be very little less than it would if the referendum were taken on a special day.

HON. D. F. DENHAM: You would not get as many to vote on a special day.

MR. REDWOOD: He agreed with the hon. member that they would not get as many electors to vote on a special day as they would if the referendum were taken on an election day. He intended to vote against the amendment.

MR. MITCHELL: It was quite evident that those that were in favour of this Bill were in no hurry to get the question settled, because they proposed that the referendum should be held at the time of a general election, and no Federal election was likely to take place before the expiration of two years from next May. The settlement of the question would, therefore, be postponed for at least two years. Some hon. members seemed to have forgotten that the same persons who voted for the different candidates at State elections also voted for the different candidates at Federal elections. There was not the slightest doubt that when Federal candidates were before the electors State members who were directly interested in this question of religious teaching in State schools would take a very active part in the Federal elections. This would enliven the spirit of contention, and votes would be given to the candidates on the ground that they were in favour of or against religious teaching in State schools. It was very unfair for hon. members to shift the responsibility in connection with this question from their own shoulders on to the shoulders of Federal members, and

that is what would happen if the referendum were taken on the day of the Federal elections. Whatever antagonism, whatever spirit of sectarianism, might be engendered in connection with State members, would also be engendered in the case of Federal members.

THE HOME SECRETARY: That has nothing to do with it.

MR. MITCHELL: That was a statement of which there was not the slightest proof, because the same people elected members of both the Federal and State Legislatures. It was said that if they insisted on the referendum being taken at any other time than that of a general election they would kill the referendum. There might be an important principle rejected by a certain House at the beginning of a session, and if we could not take a referendum before the next general election it would be three years before the question was settled. With regard to the objection that only 10,000 or 20,000 electors might vote on this question if the referendum were not taken at a general election, he held that if that was likely to be the case there was no justification in asking for the referendum. Two arguments had been used in favour of taking a referendum at the same time as the Federal election. The first was that less sectarian spirit would be manifested than if it were taken at the time of the State election; but various speakers have

[7 p.m.] proved that it would be just as contentious. The other argument was that by having a referendum at the time of the Federal election it would cost less. Hon. members had shown that the question of cost could not have been taken into consideration, and that there was a strong likelihood that the Federal Government would oppose their officers doing work in connection with a State referendum. If the Federal Government took that stand, there would be no economy in having the referendum on the day of the Federal election. The Home Secretary should, therefore, consider the advisability of taking the referendum on a day when there was no election. It was a question that would, no doubt, take some time to settle, and the only way to settle it properly was to have it on a day when there was no other question before the country. If they did not do that, those who were contending for a referendum would argue that, if it had been taken at a time when there was no other question before the country, they would have been sure to get a majority; and they would keep on asking for another referendum to settle the question properly. Seeing they had gone so far, they should so amend the Bill that it would be acceptable to those who had been fighting for it for so long, and the only way in which it could go before the electors with anything like acceptance would be to give them a day of their own. They would need to have their own officers and halls, and everything else, just as if it were a State election; and, if it was going to be such a contentious matter as was anticipated, the question should be settled at some other time than a general election. He hoped that the Home Secretary would either amend the clause or withdraw it altogether. He thought it could be amended by omitting the words "general election," and inserting some other words providing that the referendum should take place on a day appointed by the Government, and not on a general election day.

MR. MURPHY (*Croydon*): The Assembly having agreed to take a referendum, the question of cost should not be considered at all. He intended to vote that the referendum

*Mr. Murphy.]*

should be taken at an election time, because the people would have an opportunity of recording their votes for or against any alteration in the present educational system. Any day would suit townspeople; but what opportunity would the men and women in isolated centres have of recording their votes except on the occasion of a general election? The hon. member for Carpentaria, the other night, read a letter which he had received from some constituents, stating that they had to ride 75 miles to record their votes in his favour. It was hardly likely that, if the referendum were taken on what might be termed an "off" day, people situated as those people were would travel that distance to vote upon a question upon which they were doubtless absolutely indifferent. He could not see why there should be sectarian bitterness over the matter. It was to be referred by Parliament to the people for decision, and there was no necessity for any sectarian bitterness or intolerance; and he did not think there would be. The good sense of the people would show them that Parliament had acted rightly in referring the matter to them. When he was in the House before, he voted against the second reading of the Bill, because he was under the impression that, if they could squelch it here, the thing would be ended. But it was not ended. When he was not a member of the House at all, the matter was brought up, and it was brought up again now; and they wanted to settle it for good and all. They wanted to let the people say whether they would have any alteration in the present educational system or not, and the best time to take a vote was on the occasion of a general election.

The HOME SECRETARY: When he moved the amendment allowing an alternative for taking the referendum at a State election, he thought it would meet the wishes of a majority of members of the Committee. As it seemed to have done nothing but prolong the Committee stage, he begged leave to withdraw the amendment.

LABOUR MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Question—That clause 2, as amended, stand part of the Bill—put and passed.

The CHAIRMAN: The question is that clause 3 stand part of the Bill.

Mr. HARDACRE AND OTHER HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No, no!

The CHAIRMAN: The question is that clause 3 stand part of the Bill.

Mr. HARDACRE: There were two hon. members who wished to speak on clause 2.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: They did not address the Chair.

Mr. HARDACRE: There were two hon. members ready to speak, and they urged the question should not be put. He hoped the Government were not going to debar hon. members from speaking on the matter.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What is the question before the Committee?

Mr. HARDACRE: It was a question of ruling, and he would fight it on that point.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What is the point of order?

Mr. HARDACRE: The point of order was that, when the Chairman put the question, certain hon. members indicated they wished to speak, and the question was put without allowing them to speak. Under such circumstances,

[*Mr. Murphy.*

were hon. members to be debarred from speaking? Should the question be put and decided whilst hon. members were on their feet?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: You were sitting down.

The CHAIRMAN: I would like to point out to hon. members that immediately the Home Secretary asked leave to withdraw his amendment, I put it to the Committee, and the Committee resolved that it be withdrawn. I then put deliberately—by no means quickly, but deliberately—that clause 2, as amended, stand part of the Bill. The hon. junior member for Gympie rose in his place, but he did not indicate to me that he was going to speak.

Mr. HARDACRE: Several hon. members wished to speak.

The CHAIRMAN: Order, order! The Committee had already disposed of clause 2, and as no hon. members called me by name, I did not think that the hon. member for Gympie, Mr. Rylands, intended to speak on clause 2. I have no wish, and the Committee know quite well I have no wish, to unduly push through the business. In fact, I looked directly at the hon. member, and as I was not addressed by him I simply went on with business and did what I considered my duty.

Mr. HARDACRE: We both indicated—

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: You did not address the Chair.

The CHAIRMAN: The question is that clause 3 stand part of the Bill.

Mr. HARDACRE said he would move that the ruling be disagreed to.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Order, order!

The PREMIER: In order to avoid any ruling—

Mr. HARDACRE: On a point of order I am in order.

The HOME SECRETARY: As the Minister in charge of the Bill, he wished every member should get full opportunity to discuss it. If the Chairman would allow him, he would prefer the hon. member be allowed to speak.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: He has given his ruling.

The CHAIRMAN: I put the question that clause 2, as amended, stand part of the Bill, and I have decided that the "Ayes" have it. I cannot go back to clause 2. Clause 3 is now before the Committee, and if the hon. member for Leichhardt desires to raise a point of order now, he is quite in order in doing it.

Mr. HARDACRE: I—

The PREMIER: He wanted to settle the matter without a question of ruling. If it was the desire of the Committee to reconsider clause 2, they would recommit the Bill and consider it. He did not want hon. members to understand that the Government, or those in charge of the Bill, had a desire to block any member from expressing his opinion. The Chairman had done the only thing he could do. He decided that the "Ayes" had it on clause 2, and clause 3 was before the Committee. He had no desire to block discussion, and it would be better to go on with clause 3.

Mr. HARDACRE merely wished to protect the rights of hon. members. He was sure the Chairman had no desire to override hon. members, and, on the promise of the Premier, he wished to withdraw the point of order he had raised.

On clause 3—"Poll when to be taken"—

Mr. RYLAND: The 1st paragraph fixed the poll to be taken on the same day as the general

election. He objected to that, and contended that the poll should be taken on some other day independent altogether of the general elections. Hon. members had stated that those who were opposed to having the poll on a general election day were against having a referendum at all. He referred more particularly to the remarks of the Treasurer, and he denied that. He voted for the referendum on this question, and supported it in the House, but he was entirely against it being held on a general election day.

The HOME SECRETARY: You said all that on the last clause.

Mr. RYLAND: He thought there should be some other time appointed for the holding of the referendum.

Hon. R. PHILP: Why do not you just vote against this clause?

Mr. RYLAND: This was a big question, and they wanted to deal with it in a thorough manner. In New Zealand the local option polls were taken at the same time as a general election, and, notwithstanding all that had been said in regard to local option votes being taken on a separate day, he knew that those who had taken an active part in the question of local option in New Zealand wanted the Act amended so that the poll could be taken on any other day than on an election day. What was the result of the last general election in New Zealand in connection with this matter? Every one of the chieftains of the temperance movement who had been advocating prohibition lost their seats in Parliament, although the people decided, by a majority of 16,000 votes in favour of prohibition. They won so far as carrying the temperance movement further ahead was concerned, but the leaders all went down.

Mr. MURPHY: That happens to every party.

Mr. RYLAND: Of course it was a small matter; and when a man was defeated in that way, he died in a good cause. As one of those who were defeated said, he would sooner gain in the majority vote and lose his seat.

Hon. R. PHILP: He was a true patriot.

Mr. RYLAND: Yes, and they stood in the same position here. (Laughter.) There was one thing that they ought to be all prepared to fight for, and that was that no change should be made in our present educational system, and they should be prepared to go down in the fight to preserve the Education Act as it was. But why should they be asked to sacrifice themselves in doing that, as they would probably be doing if the referendum were held on a general election day? Even the Bible in State Schools League had asked for this referendum to be taken at some other time than at a general election.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No, no!

Mr. RYLAND: Yes; at a deputation that was one of the requests which they made. In New South Wales the other day they had a vote on the temperance question, and what was the result? All the papers there had since advocated to amend the Act so that the vote could be taken at another time than at general election times, because the questions got so mixed up that it did not get the attention it should have. He hoped the Premier and the Home Secretary would allow the clause to be amended in such a way that it would not be held on State election day. He was certain that if they held it on a Federal election day it would clash with Federal law. If the Federal members had any sense they would pass a law stating that they would not allow the poll to be taken on Federal election day, and as Federal law would override the State law that would have to be carried out.

The hon. member for Kennedy suggested an alternative—that the referendum should be confined to the Federal election day, or some other day appointed by the Governor in Council.

The PREMIER: We have had all this over and over again on other clauses.

Mr. RYLAND: He did not know whether it would be better to negative clause 3 or to move an amendment.

The HOME SECRETARY: You can do that with a division.

Mr. RYLAND: He moved that the 1st paragraph of clause 3—

A referendum poll of the electors shall be taken under this Act on the same day as the day of the first general election which ensues after the passing of this Act, and during the same hours and at the same places as are appointed therefor—

be omitted altogether.

The PREMIER: That will be a fair division.

Mr. RYLAND: Yes; he thought it would be. He believed that he could get the same result by moving the omission of the words, on lines 11 and 12, "on the same day as the day of the first general election," and he would move that amendment accordingly. Then, if that were passed, they could fix the date on which the referendum should be held.

Mr. KENNA: The amendment is absurd.

Mr. BOWMAN (to Mr. Kenna): It is not more absurd than you are.

Mr. KENNA: He is not doing it the right way.

Mr. BOWMAN: We have our own way of doing these things, and we are not going to ask you how to do it.

\* Mr. MULLAN (*Charters Towers*) hoped the Home Secretary would not insist upon taking this referendum on a day set apart for a State or Federal election. The paramount principle involved was that they did not wish to mix up politics with religion, and if this referendum were held on either of those days it would be impossible to separate them. Hon. members were almost unanimous in their desire not to hold the referendum on a special day set apart for a State election. They did not want it held on a State election day. Why? Because they realised if it were held on such a day it might interfere very seriously with their chances of being returned. What was true of a State election was just as true of a Federal election to a considerable extent. It was not fair that members of the House should shelter themselves behind the Federal members, and ask them to carry the baby for them. If there was any risk at all, then the State members should take that risk, but he was of opinion that neither the Federal nor State members should take it. The Premier and other members had said that it would not affect the Federal members at all. Although it might not affect a Federal member to the same extent as a State member, it would affect him to a considerable extent, for the reason that if the Federal member wished to take advantage of this referendum he could rig up a question with one of his friends to ask him on the platform how he would like to vote on this question. It would then be a very easy matter for him to get up and say that he was in favour of religious teaching in State schools or against it, as the case might be. And so he would mislead the electors, or, if he did not mislead them, he would influence them to vote for him on the straight vote as to whether he was for or against religious teaching in State schools. Another and more important reason why it should not come at the same time as a State or Federal election was this—either the referendum would cloud the political issue or the political issue

*Mr. Mullan.]*

would cloud the referendum, and whichever happened it was undesirable for the country. If a great political question was before the country, it was desirable that that question should be settled apart from what was practically a religious question, and in the same way if a referendum was before the country it should be settled apart from every other question. So everything seemed to be in favour of holding the election on some day apart from an election day. Some people said that a Federal member had no right to express his opinion on this matter at all, as it was not a matter that concerned him.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I should like to draw the attention of hon. members to the fact that a member of the Committee is on his feet addressing the Committee. I do not know how the hon. gentleman can connect his arguments with such a noise going on—

Mr. MULLAN: It did not affect him in the slightest. (Laughter.) The position was this: He held that when a man entered the Federal Parliament he did not sacrifice his [7.30 p.m.] rights as a citizen, and he should be free on any platform to say whether or not he believed in religious teaching in State schools. So that by holding the referendum at the time of a Federal election they would to some extent handicap the Federal members. He was one of the leading citizens of Queensland by the fact of his candidature, and being a candidate, and knowing that he might be compromised by expressing an opinion, he would hesitate to express one at all. So that by holding the election apart altogether from the State or Federal election, they would be securing the cream of Queensland to take part in the discussion for or against the referendum. There had been an argument that the referendum would cost £7,000 or £8,000, but he held that if a question was of sufficient importance to hold a referendum upon, it should be worth even more than that to settle the issue. Even if held during the Federal election, the referendum would cost a considerable amount of money, and the maximum being, say, £8,000, he did not think the minimum would be less than £3,000 or £4,000. Surely they should be ready, in the interests of getting a clear-cut issue, to expend £4,000 on such a question! He held, further, that it should not be within the province of any member of the House to get up and say that unless the referendum was held on a particular day it would be abandoned. The general consensus of opinion should be accepted as to the most desirable day on which to hold it. He protested against holding the referendum on any day set apart for a State or Federal election. He hoped the wisdom of the Committee would assert itself, and that the referendum would be held at a time when the issue would be clear and unmistakable, and the question would be settled once and for all.

The PREMIER would ask hon. members to let the question go to a division. They had been discussing this one question since half-past 3 o'clock.

Mr. BOWMAN: It is a very important question.

The PREMIER: It was a very important question, but he thought it had been very fairly discussed. They had a long way to go, and it was a fair thing to take a division.

Messrs. NEVITT and MANN having risen—

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. members for Carpentaria and Cairns both rose, and gave way to the Chief Secretary when he rose to speak. I noticed the hon. member for Carpentaria rise in his place first, and I called upon him. He is, therefore, in possession of the floor.

[*Mr. Mullan.*]

Mr. NEVITT: He had not spoken on the question before, and considered it to be his duty to give his reasons why he would vote against the amendment of the hon. member for Gympie. Personally, he was of opinion that if any other day was appointed except a State or Federal election day for the taking of the poll the great majority of electors in his electorate would have no opportunity of recording their votes. He would go further. The majority of the people in his electorate, he was quite convinced, were opposed to any alteration in the present scheme of secular education, and it was for that reason he considered they should have an opportunity of recording their votes. If possible, he should like to see the vote taken on any other day but a State or Federal election day, but, unfortunately, he did not see how that was possible except at enormous expense. Some people said it would only cost £3,000 or £4,000; but it must be remembered that it would not only cost the amount of money paid to the presiding officers. In the Carpentaria electorate there were about thirty polling-places, at which the presiding officers received £2 2s. a day, or about £63; but, in order to get one of those presiding officers to one of the polling booths it would cost £60. The object he had in view was to give as many people in his electorate as possible the opportunity of recording their votes, and he believed he would be acting in the best interests of those whom he represented if he opposed the amendment.

\* Mr. MANN thought it was the wish of members generally that they should get as decided and definite an expression of opinion on the question as possible, but unless they had the referendum taken on an election day they would not get any great number of people to come in and give their views on the question. He and other members remembered that when a vote was taken upon the question whether Queensland should join the federation it was a particularly small vote. At the place at which he recorded his vote only thirty people voted, whereas at a State or Federal election there were usually over 100. It was impossible to work up the same local enthusiasm because the question was too big a one to appeal to the local people. They could always get more enthusiasm and interest taken in a State election than in a Federal election, and that fact was proved at the last Federal election. People would not roll up to record their votes, and consequently the number of votes recorded in the different divisions was very small. That being so, if members insisted upon the referendum being taken at any time but that of a State or Federal election, the onus would lie upon them of an undecided verdict being given, and the result would be that possibly another referendum would have to be taken at a general election. He did not fear the question being brought up at the next general election, for the reason that he did not think the people in his district cared the snap of a finger about it. He had told the church people that he did not want their votes under any misapprehension, for, while he was going to vote for the referendum, he would put forth every effort he could to prevent the Bible being introduced into the State schools. He did not think that if the referendum was taken during the Federal election any feeling would be manifested against candidates on account of the attitude they might take up.

Mr. MULCAHY (*Gympie*) believed if a vote was taken as to whether they would have the referendum held at a State election or otherwise, it would be against it. On the other hand, members contended that, while they were not willing that the vote should be taken at a State

election, they were perfectly willing to have it recorded at a Federal election. He thought that would be unfair. When the question was put to the electors he believed it would be a live question, and the people would be asked whether they were going to make any alteration in an educational system which had stood the test of time, and had done splendid work. He thought the people should be given an opportunity of deciding the question, without any side issues being brought to secure their decision. The question should be put to them straight. If the referendum were taken at the time of a State or Federal election, many men and women would vote in a very different way from that in which they would vote under other circumstances. He believed that when the referendum was taken we should have a big vote, and, unless he was very much mistaken, the people would be against the proposed change in our educational system. He had always been prepared to allow the people to settle this matter in their own way, and without any side issues being introduced, but he was totally opposed to the referendum being taken at the time of a State or Federal election.

Mr. KEOGH (*Rosewood*): From what he could gather, the consensus of opinion in the Committee was against this referendum being taken at the time of a State or a Federal election, and that was his sentiment. At the last general election a document was sent to nearly every candidate by a certain party, stating that, if the candidate was not prepared for Bible reading in State schools, the electors should down him. He would support a referendum, but he would certainly never support anything of the kind which was to be found in the New South Wales school curriculum. If the referendum was taken at the time of the general election, it would cloud the election issues. Most hon. members objected to the referendum being held during a State general election. Why, then, should they throw their dirty water over to the Federal candidates? The Federal Parliament would have a perfect right to throw back the dirty water, and tell them to keep it for themselves. The hon. member for Fassifern had shown conclusively that, even if the referendum were held on the date of the Federal elections, certain expense would have to be incurred, because the Federal authorities would not consent to put this referendum question on their ballot-papers. The result would be that we should have to employ our own officers just the same as if the referendum were held at any other time. The hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill would do well to withdraw his proposal, because he was going to be defeated. Personally, while supporting a referendum, he was decidedly opposed to the introduction of religious instruction into our State schools. The present education system had worked successfully for the past twenty or thirty years, and no hon. member who had spoken had advanced any reason for altering the system, as proposed by those who advocated religious instruction in State schools.

Mr. McLACHLAN (*Fortitude Valley*): There was no doubt whatever that the Bill would be carried through the House, and that being so, the duty that devolved upon opponents of the measure and upon those who desired that the referendum should be taken was to see that the referendum was taken in a proper form and at a proper time. The amendment which had been moved by the hon. member for Gympie, Mr. Ryland, was to delete certain words, with the view of creating a blank in which might be inserted words definitely fixing the date for taking the referendum. He thought the hon. member had gone hardly far enough in his amend-

ment, and that they should omit all the words in the twelfth line down to the word "Act." As the clause stood, it meant that the referendum should be taken at the time of a general election, and, judging by the debate, the Commonwealth election was favoured by a number of members. It had been argued that bitter sectarian feeling would not be engendered if the referendum was taken at the time of the Commonwealth election. He differed with those who made that assertion. No matter at what election it was taken, some bitterness would be displayed, and the spirit of sectarianism was sure to be brought into the campaign. If it was the intention of hon. members who were opposed to Bible instruction in State schools to stump the country and try to arouse the people into voting against the proposal, surely they were going to introduce into the Federal campaign the question of Bible reading in State schools; and, although it might not affect the candidates, still the question would be one that would be uppermost in the minds of the electors. They could not discuss the question at a Federal election without introducing some sectarian bitterness, and that was to be deplored. At present they were practically free from sectarianism in their elections. That did not obtain in other States, and it was a great pity to do anything likely to introduce it here. Another question was raised by the hon. member for Bowen. It was probable that the Federal authorities might take exception to the referendum being taken on the day that they were holding their elections. The Premier had said that that would not interfere with the taking of the referendum; but there would be two separate ballot-papers, and electors would have to vote on two distinct questions at the one time. Although it was admitted that the officers conducting the Commonwealth election would be principally State officials, who for the time being would be Federal officers, if the Commonwealth authorities objected to the referendum being taken on that day, and the Government of Queensland were going to prevent the Commonwealth authorities from using their officers, the Commonwealth Government would get other officers, and perhaps have their poll in another part of the town. Now, was it likely, if that should happen, that the electors were going to vote for their representatives at one place and on this question at another place? Such a contingency might arise, and it was just as well to consider the matter. The better plan would be to fix a date for taking a referendum when there would be no election at all. If a settlement of the question was of the importance which some members would lead them to believe, why delay that settlement for perhaps two years? They should settle it at once. By carrying the second reading of the Bill, they had decided that the referendum was to be taken, and he trusted an amendment would be carried that would prevent the poll being taken at either a Federal or a State election, and that it would be taken in the very near future. He would ask the Home Secretary whether the Bill, in the event of its being carried, would be only law so far as this one referendum was concerned, or would it become a machinery Bill for other referendums on the same question?

The HOME SECRETARY: It will only apply to a referendum at a particular election.

Mr. McLACHLAN: And then the Bill was finished?

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes.

Mr. McLACHLAN: He was very glad to have that information. He hoped the amendment would be carried, and that words would be

*Mr. McLachlan.]*

inserted which would definitely fix the time of the election, and that it would be at no distant date.

Mr. HARDACRE wished to point out clearly the effect of the vote they were going to give. If the word were deleted, those who voted against that would be voting that the referendum should be taken at a general election; but it did not say at which general election. The question of whether it should be the State election day or the Commonwealth election day would have to be held over until later; but it really meant that there were two chances that it would be on the State election day. Now, there was a large number of hon. members who were strongly opposed to the referendum being taken on the State election day. Those who voted against it being taken on a special day, as proposed by the hon. member who wished to delete those words,

[S p.m.] were going to vote for two chances that it would come on a State elections day—they were going to vote in a direction most objectionable to a considerable number of hon. members.

The HOME SECRETARY: That is not the clause we are dealing with at the present time.

Mr. HARDACRE: The proposal was to delete a portion of the clause, and if they voted against the deletion of those words it meant they were going to vote that the poll should be on some election day, and there were two chances that it would be on a State election day and one chance that it would be on a Commonwealth election day. When they recommitted the clause it would be a question for the Committee to decide whether it would be on a Commonwealth or State election day. Suppose it was decided that the poll should be taken on a Commonwealth election day, there was still another chance that in spite of their decision—notwithstanding anything the Committee desired—they still had left the possibility of the Commonwealth Parliament refusing to permit the poll to be taken on a Commonwealth election day. It was clearly within the power of the Commonwealth, no matter what the Committee decided, to override any Act passed by the State Parliament, so far as it affected anything in connection with the Commonwealth Parliament.

Mr. MAXWELL: We fix a date.

Mr. HARDACRE: The hon. member was mistaken. They were not fixing a date—they were fixing a day, and that day was the day on which the Commonwealth elections would be taken, and the Commonwealth Parliament could say that the Commonwealth elections should not be taken on a day on which a State referendum was taken.

Mr. MAXWELL: That is nonsense.

Mr. HARDACRE: It was as clear as possible that the Commonwealth law could override the State law in so far as it infringed or was inconsistent with Commonwealth law. They had said so, and in all probability would do so, and the Committee were thrown back upon a State election day. The bulk of hon. members did not want it on a State election day, and if they voted for the amendment of the hon. member for Gympie, they would vote for two chances that it would be on a State election day. They had heard that all hon. members were going to take an active part in the campaign against religious instruction in State schools—the leader of the Labour party, and the Premier himself, and the leader of the Opposition would do so. They would be holding meetings for candidates, and they would be holding meetings also against religious instruction in State schools. Besides members of the

Committee taking part in the matter, there would also be the religious section taking part in meetings, and there would also be those opposed to religious instruction. The two questions would be before the public—strong feeling would be raised—sectarianism and passions would be aroused, and in all the tempest they would be asked to decide some political issue. However they might think it would not conflict with political issues, experience had shown that religious issues had been mixed up with political issues. He hoped that hon. members would vote so that the referendum would not be taken on a State election day. If they fixed a special day, it should be at an early date. It was reasonable they ought to get it over as soon as possible.

Mr. RYLAND: He did not think the Committee were aware of the exact words he wanted to insert when he made a blank. His amendment would leave a blank, and he wished to insert the following, so that the section would then read—

A referendum poll of electors shall be taken under this Act on some day during the month of September, one thousand nine hundred and eight, or at any other day that may be appointed by the Governor in Council, other than a general election day.

Consequently, it left the course clear for the Government to appoint any day. He thought September would be a very good time. That would be in about six months' time. His amendment proposed a blank, and those were the words he wished to insert.

Mr. ARMSTRONG (*Lockyer*) was just as desirous as any other member of the Committee to get to a vote on this question, but he did not want it to go through without saying a word or two on it. It was the general opinion of members that they did not want the referendum taken on a State election day or on a Commonwealth election day. It was said that if the referendum was taken on a separate day they would not get a full vote on the question. That was very questionable after all said and done, and he thought it would be wiser to take the conscientious opinions of representatives there. Although he admitted there had been a good deal of feeling shown which should not have been shown, he thought it would be better to have a clear-cut issue put before the people, even if it was going to be costly, and he would like the head of the Administration to decide that it would be wiser to set apart a separate day for taking the referendum, and allow the people to take the responsibility themselves whether they gave an affirmative or a negative vote on it. The cost of the referendum would amount to not more than 1s. per head of the effective voting power of the country. At the last general election 138,500 voters voted, and as the cost of the referendum was to be £7,000, it would only amount to 1s. per head. He did not think that the members of Parliament should shoulder the responsibility of any religious question at all, and if they were divided on the question—as they were—it was better to unburden themselves in regard to religious matters, and throw the responsibilities on to the people. They had heard the arguments pro and con, and they were told that it was the minority who wanted this question solved. He was not prepared to subscribe to that dictum, but, if they were in the minority, let them decide it by taking a referendum and paying the £7,000 to have it taken on a day apart from the State or Commonwealth election, and that would settle the question once and for all.

Mr. BOWMAN supported the amendment. The more he listened to the debate the more he was convinced that it was the right thing to have a special day set apart for the referendum.

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The argument was used by the hon. member for Cairns that there were so many little questions that came up during the State election that it would not be unwise to have a referendum on that day—

Mr. MANN: I did not say that. I said that there were not many little questions coming up at a Commonwealth election.

Mr. BOWMAN: Those who were advocating that it should be held on a Federal election day were taking a very selfish view indeed. It was simply a question of members keeping themselves clear, so that it would not touch them, but that it would touch "the other fellow." Irrespective of what the Premier and others had said, seeing that the Premier and himself and others were going to take the platform during the referendum, it was going to affect the candidate at the Federal election. The very fact that members of Parliament were standing on the platform would make it a live question, and they would impart all the heat they could into it in order to win their case. Even if they held it at the Federal election time, look at the forces that would be arrayed during the campaign against the candidates! They would have ministers of religion and laymen taking the platform, and they would make this question the bone of contention right through that election campaign. The Premier would be very wise, in the interests of the Assembly and in the interests of the community, if he granted a special day, so that the question could be put without raising any political business during either of the election campaigns during which it was to be held.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: The Premier's argument was that you would not get a sufficient majority on a special day set apart for the referendum.

Mr. BOWMAN: They did not know what particular vote they would get on the question at either a Federal or State election. They did not know how many would abstain from voting. That would rest with the people themselves. If the people were not satisfied to vote on that question, they could not force them to do so. His desire was that there should be no interference with this particular question, which was a sectarian one, and that it should not be brought in to the detriment of any party. It looked as if the referendum was going to be a pure farce. As the senior member for Maryborough said that afternoon, if, in the event of the Constitutional Referendum Bill being passed, there might be certain measures rejected by the Council and they might have to wait two years before they would get a referendum on the question, because they would have to wait for an election to hold the referendum. That was unreasonable. If the referendum principle was a good one, they should not begrudge the amount of money being spent to carry out the principle which he and others voted for on the previous night.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: It will only cost 1s. per head.

Mr. BOWMAN: He did not know what the cost would be. There was a selfishness on the part of members who wanted to avoid the question coming up at their own State election. They did not want to be interfered with in any way. They said, "Let us keep clear of it; but force it on to a body of men who will come up for election in two years' time. It is a matter of indifference to us." That was the attitude taken up by hon. members, but he would far sooner vote for it to take place at a State election than at a Commonwealth election. (Hear, hear!) They could then take the responsibility themselves instead of placing it on the shoulders of others. Let them be fair and square. If they

were going to go down on the question, let them take the responsibility themselves, and not shoulder it on to a body of men who had nothing to do with it. He would oppose it, and force it to a division against the referendum being held either on a State or Commonwealth election day.

\*Mr. SOMERSET (*Stanley*): Several hon. members had admitted that there was certainly a want of interest and want of enthusiasm shown at the Federal elections. If this referendum were held on the Federal election day it would impart some enthusiasm and interest into the election, and there would be more electors at the poll.

The HOME SECRETARY: You think you would get a better poll.

Mr. SOMERSET: He thought they would get a better poll at the Federal election. He contended that the poll should be taken at the Federal election, and if the question went to a division he would support the clause as it stood.

Mr. MITCHELL: Before the question went to a division, he thought the Minister should give consideration to the amendment moved by the member for Gympie.

The PREMIER: That is what he has been doing.

Mr. MITCHELL thought the hon. gentleman should consider it to such an extent as to accept it. It came to this: That if any question was of sufficient importance to induce a member to bring in a Bill to deal with it by referring it to a referendum, then the people who wanted it so referred should be content for the referendum to be taken on a special day. The argument that they would not be able to get a large number of voters to come to the poll on a special day was an indication of weakness.

The PREMIER: No; it is a statement of fact.

Mr. MITCHELL: It might be a statement of fact, but it was also an indication of weakness. The very fact of it being a statement of fact made the weakness all the more discernible when they saw that the people advocating the referendum were absolutely so uninterested in it that they would not vote for it.

The HOME SECRETARY: Those people will vote for it.

Mr. MITCHELL: He did not think the Government should under the circumstances have taken the responsibility of introducing the Bill. It had been contended, and he thought very successfully, that they should not hold the referendum on either a State or Federal election day, and an amendment had been moved by the junior member for Gympie, setting forth that it should be held at a time when there was no other question before the people, so that there might be a clear-cut issue. He hoped the Minister would accept the amendment, and have the words referring to a general election deleted, and that the referendum would be held this year so that the question would be settled once and for all.

Mr. WOODS (*Woothakata*) had no desire to give a silent vote on the question. At the last election it was a burning question in his district. Some members had had the good fortune not to have the question raised in their electorates, but when it was raised in his electorate, he said he would vote for a referendum, but gave the electors to understand that he would use his right as a citizen to go upon every public platform he chose and induce the people to block the introduction of the Bible into State schools, as it deserved to be blocked. He wanted it to be a clear-cut issue, so that they would have a

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fair go, and a fair field, and a separate day for the fight. He was therefore not in favor of the referendum being taken on an election day.

Mr. DOUGLAS (*look*): This being a non-party question, it was as well for members to express their opinions, and to do so in as few words as possible. He could not see his way to support the amendment, and would prefer to have the election held in connection with the Commonwealth election, for this reason: The State controlled the educational system. The Commonwealth had nothing whatever to do with it, and he did not think there was as much chance of sectarian strife being introduced if the referendum was held in connection with the Commonwealth elections. Of course, it was needless to deny that there would be a certain amount of sectarian feeling introduced, whether the poll was taken at the State or Commonwealth elections; but he did not think it would affect Federal candidates so much as State candidates. He believed their elections should be kept as free from sectarian strife as possible. They had decided to hold a referendum, and the sooner they got it over the better, but they were not justified in spending a very large sum of money in holding it on a special day.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted (*Mr. Ryland's amendment*) stand part of the clause—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 41.

Mr. Airey	Mr. Hunter, D.
„ Appel	„ Jackson
„ Barnes, G. P.	„ Kenna
„ Barnes, W. H.	„ Kerr
„ Barton	„ Kidston
„ Bell	„ Mackintosh
„ Blair	„ Mann
„ Brennan	„ Maxwell
„ Campbell	„ Murphy
„ Cottell	„ Nevitt
„ Cowap	„ Paget
„ Denham	„ Petrie
„ Douglas	„ Philp
„ Forrest	„ Redwood
„ Fox	„ Roberts
„ Grant	„ Somerset
„ Grayson	„ Stodart
„ Gunn	„ Swayne
„ Hanran	„ Walker
„ Hawthorn	„ White
„ Herbertson	

Tellers: Mr. Douglas and Mr. Mann.

NOES, 22.

Mr. Adamson	Mr. Lennon
„ Barber	„ Lesina
„ Bowman	„ McLachlan
„ Coyne	„ Mitchell
„ Hamilton	„ Mulcahy
„ Hardacre	„ Mullan
„ Hunter, J. M.	„ Payne
„ Huxham	„ Ryland
„ Jenkinson	„ Sumner
„ Keogh	„ Winstanley
„ Land	„ Woods

Tellers: Mr. Hardacre and Mr. Ryland.

PATR.

Aye—Mr. Rankin. No—Mr. May.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clause 3 put and passed.

On clause 4—“Referendum writs directed to returning officers”—

Mr. COYNE: It appeared to him that there was something wrong in the form of the writ, in which the word “division” was [8.30 p.m.] used instead of the word “district.”

A Commonwealth electorate was known as a “division,” whereas a State electorate was known as a “district,” and in some dis-

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tricts there were as many as five or six divisions, so that some confusion was likely to arise if that word “division” were retained in the writ.

The HOME SECRETARY: In the definition of “General Election” they used the phrase “electoral divisions of Queensland,” and he thought they should retain the phraseology of this clause, in order to make it conform to the interpretation.

Mr. COYNE: In that case it would be necessary to have a returning officer in each division of an electorate, should the referendum take place at a State election.

The HOME SECRETARY: In order that there might be no misconception about the matter, he moved that the word “division,” on line 24, be omitted, with the view of inserting the word “district.”

Mr. JENKINSON: We have the same word in clause 3.

Mr. CAMPBELL: The word “division” was used in the Commonwealth Elections Act, and he understood that the referendum would take place at the time of a Commonwealth election.

The PREMIER: We have already provided that the referendum shall be taken under the State Electoral Acts.

Mr. CAMPBELL: Then the Bill would have to be recommitted to alter the definition of “general election.”

The PREMIER: We will have to recommit the Bill.

Mr. HARDACRE: The proposed amendment was perfectly right, because whether the referendum was taken at a Commonwealth or State election the writs would be addressed to the returning officers of the electoral districts of the State, and the electors voting would be the electors on the State rolls.

Amendment agreed to.

The HOME SECRETARY moved that the word “division,” on line 29, be omitted, with the view of inserting the word “district.”

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

Clauses 5 and 6 put and passed.

On clause 7—“Application of Commonwealth Acts”—

The HOME SECRETARY moved the omission, in line 52, of the word “Commonwealth” with a view of inserting the word “State.”

Amendment agreed to.

The HOME SECRETARY moved the omission of the following proviso at the end of the 2nd paragraph:—

Provided that the provisions of the Commonwealth Electoral Acts with respect to voting by post shall not apply.

Mr. LESINA asked whether the amendment meant that the postal vote was not to apply.

The HOME SECRETARY: The Commonwealth postal vote. The poll would be taken under the State Electoral Act.

The PREMIER: The Bill was drafted on the assumption that the referendum was going to be taken at the Commonwealth election, under the Commonwealth law, and on the Commonwealth roll. They were altering that, and providing that it should be taken under the State law, and all these amendments were consequential.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause passed with further consequential amendments.

Clause 8—"Ballot-papers"—put and passed.

On clause 9, as follows:—

The mode of voting in favour of the question set forth in the ballot-paper shall be by striking out the word "No;" and the mode of voting in opposition thereto shall be by striking out the word "Yes."

Mr. LENNON: Having regard to the fact that the schedule might be altered, and that one question might be submitted, and not two or three, he suggested that this clause should be postponed until after the schedule was decided upon. He was in favour of submitting one question, and not two very involved questions.

The PREMIER: There is only one question in the schedule now.

Mr. LESINA: It is very involved.

Mr. LENNON thought it would be wise to postpone the clause until they had dealt with the schedule, or they might find themselves tied in a knot.

The PREMIER: So far as clause 9 was concerned, it would really not matter whether the Committee decided to put several questions on the ballot-paper. The method of answering them would be by striking out the word "No" or striking out the word "Yes," however many questions there might be. The method of voting was the same as in connection with State elections—striking out what they did not want.

Mr. HARDACRE added his plea to the request of the hon. member for Herbert, that they should postpone this clause until they settled the form of the schedule and the method of voting. It was no use making two bites at a cherry. The schedule at present was confusing. If they altered the method of voting in the schedule this clause would be inconsistent with the schedule; and it would save time if they postponed the consideration of the clause until they had dealt with the schedule.

The HOME SECRETARY: Perhaps the better plan would be to delete the clause altogether. It might be surplusage, seeing that it was provided for in the schedule.

Mr. JENKINSON called attention to the fact that the Committee had already decided that the consideration of clause 9 be postponed.

Clause 9 put and negatived.

On clause 10—"Vote of returning officer"—

Mr. LENNON: The Premier had stated that he desired the poll should be in form as nearly as possible to the State elections. Under clause 10 the returning officer had a vote, but at the State elections he had no vote.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He has a casting vote at the State elections.

Clause put and passed.

On clause 11—"Publication of result"—

Mr. HARDACRE: This was somewhat involved. There was a possibility of an alteration to the clause in favour of and in opposition to the question—whether it was question or questions.

Mr. JENKINSON: There is only one question now.

Mr. HARDACRE: There might be two questions. However, the Bill could be recommitted, if necessary.

Clause put and passed.

Mr. COYNE (*Warrego*) moved that the following new clause be inserted after clause 11:—

If the return published by the Home Secretary in pursuance of the last preceding section shows that the gross number of votes recorded at the poll does not amount to at least fifty per centum of the total number of electors whose names were on the electoral roll at the time of taking the poll, then, notwithstanding that the number of electors who voted in favour of the

question may have exceeded the number of those who voted in opposition to the question, no alteration shall be made in the giving of instruction in State schools as at present by law established, and no Bill having for its purpose the giving of religious instruction in State schools in school hours shall, during the life of the Parliament elected at the general election at which the referendum poll is taken, be introduced into or initiated in either House of Parliament.

He thought it was only right if the referendum was taken when Parliament was being elected they should decide the course of action to be taken for the next three years, or the life of that Parliament. They knew what they were doing; they were going there with their eyes open. The candidates who came up for election at that particular time would know that there was a provision in the law which they were agreeable, as candidates, to conform to, when they stood for election. That was not imposing any hardship, and he did not think it was taking away any particular rights a candidate might have during the life of the Parliament for which he was elected. He thought it was also necessary to have some guarantee that the matter was required by the people of Queensland—a guarantee in the way of at least one-half of the people of Queensland voting on the question. If they had only 10 per cent. of the electors voting on the question, it would make the position of the Government who introduced the question a miserable and pitiable one. The referendum would cost about £8,000, and if the Government were in any way generous, and gave that £8,000 towards putting down artesian bores in his electorate—(laughter)—it would settle some 600 or 700 square miles of country that was not occupied at the present time, and country they would be able to do very well off if they had water.

Mr. CAMPBELL: Is that your price?

Mr. COYNE: It was not his price; but he was pointing out where that money could be spent to a better purpose than taking a referendum. If there was to be some indication that the people required the referendum, the only way of showing their indication was by casting their vote either for or against it. If a sufficient number of people did not vote for it—and he claimed there would not be a sufficient number voting for it unless one-half of the electors voted—they should not then go to any more bother or trouble, and the expense of thrashing out clause after clause and section after section of the Bill that would be introduced to provide for what was contained in the referendum, if it was carried by the people. If only 10 per cent. of the people voted for or against religious instruction in State schools, he did not think it would be right to impose taxation on the other 90 per cent. of the electors. That would not be right or just, and he would ask those hon. members who prated about majority rule to take that into consideration, and say that at least one-half of the electors of Queensland should cast their vote for or against the measure before it was passed into law.

The HOME SECRETARY could not see his way to accept the amendment. He did not

think it was right for this Parliament [9 p.m.] ment to put a restriction like that upon the electors. They gave the electors a full opportunity of showing at election time what they wanted done, and he did not think they should put a restriction of this kind upon them at all.

The PREMIER: He could quite understand the proposal moved by the hon. member for Warrego. In suggesting that clause the hon. member wanted to safeguard the education system from being changed with, perhaps, only a small vote in favour of the change; but the hon. member did not notice—in his anxiety to secure

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that—in which he quite agreed with him—that he was attempting to do something which this Parliament had not the power to do. It had not the power to tie the hands of the next Parliament.

Mr. JENKINSON: That is not so.

The PREMIER: Whatever this Parliament thought themselves, if the next Parliament wanted a change in the educational system they would change it, even if there was no referendum at all. He appealed to the democratic sentiment of the hon. member for Warrego not to push this matter, because he would see they were trying to do something which a Parliament should not try to do, and that was to tie the hands of its successors. They could not do that, even if they tried it. They could not settle what the Parliament would do, because the next Parliament, in one act, could repeal the clause and pass what they wanted themselves. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. LESINA: The Premier evaded the real position in telling them that Parliament could not do this. They could take up many Acts of Parliament in this State and in the other States of Australia where at some time or other, in domestic legislation, this was done. During the referendum taken in connection with the federation question in New South Wales they put on a minimum of 80,000 votes, which was the number that had to be recorded for the Commonwealth Bill in New South Wales to make it valid.

The PREMIER: That would be quite fair, because it would be saying that a certain number had to vote in the affirmative to declare it carried. That is another question entirely.

Mr. LESINA: He was entirely in accord with the hon. member for Warrego, although he thought the amendment was too long, too diffused, too cumbersome, and too verbose. It was not the kind of amendment that they wanted. They wanted a clear cut statement. He noticed in the New Zealand statutes that in the question of taking a referendum in connection with the liquor laws there was a proviso to one of the clauses reading as follows:—

The poll shall not be valid unless one-half of the total number of electors on the roll have recorded their votes.

That was plain English.

The PREMIER: You have to say that the question shall be decided in the negative unless a certain number of the people vote for it.

Mr. LESINA: That was decidedly what they wanted. He was pleased, indeed, that the Premier thought this was not only possible, but that it was legitimate. They did not want to overload these people who wanted the referendum, but they must give some guarantee of their sincerity, and they could show that by rolling up so that one-half the number of voters on the rolls would record their votes. If there was such a big measure of support for this question outside, then it ought to be shown by the numbers at the referendum. If the hon. member for Warrego would withdraw his amendment he (Mr. Lesina) would move the addition of the words which he had just quoted from the New Zealand Act, namely—

The poll shall not be valid unless one-half the total number of electors on the roll shall have recorded their votes.

There was no doubt about that, as it was plain English. He believed those who desired to take the poll would be anxious to secure as large a vote as possible. If they could not get 50 out of every 100 electors on the roll to vote either for or against Bible reading in State schools, then the question was not worth spending public money on at present. An agitation might grow up

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and enthusiasm on the question might inflame it, but if they could not get 50 out of 100 electors to vote one way or the other, then they should not spend money in taking a poll. He challenged their friends the Bible in State Schools League to take this matter up. Were they frightened? They were going to trust the people. It had been pointed out that there might be a small poll—that only 20,000 would record their votes. In that case Parliament would be compelled to introduce amending legislation to have religious instruction in our State schools. They put in a minimum vote. It did not bind Parliament. The next Parliament would do what this Parliament had done, and even go further. This would safeguard the interests of those who did not want this referendum, but had to pay their share of the cost of it.

Mr. COYNE asked leave to withdraw his proposed new clause.

Clause, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. LESINA: It looked as if he would have to move his amendment as a separate clause, but he would have preferred to have it as a proviso.

The HOME SECRETARY: I do not think you can add it to the last clause.

Mr. LESINA: Then he would move the following new clause:—

The poll shall not take effect unless one-half of the total number of electors on the roll shall have recorded their votes.

The TREASURER would like to draw the attention of the hon. member for Clermont to the fact that the clause failed to attain the object aimed at. He presumed the object was to obtain a large vote, or to get the majority of the people to vote, but of course it would not attain that, because the hon. member only provided for 50 out of every 100 voting. Supposing there were 200,000 on the roll; if 100,000 voted the hon. member's contention would be fulfilled. That was to say, that 55,000 electors out of the 200,000 might very easily carry the very point that the hon. member was endeavouring to safeguard. He admitted that it assured a poll of at least one-half.

Mr. COYNE: But not a representative vote.

The TREASURER: That depended upon what they called a representative vote. They might get a larger vote than they would otherwise get.

Mr. LESINA: I do not mind making it sixty out of every one hundred. (Laughter.)

The TREASURER: He had no doubt the hon. member was prepared to do that. He would ask why they should confine the principle of a minimum vote to such a Bill? There was absolutely no reason why they should confine themselves at general elections to the principle of a bare majority, irrespective of any minimum, as far as members of Parliament were concerned if the hon. member's principle was admitted.

Mr. COYNE: There is a precedent for this.

Mr. LESINA: In Switzerland they do it.

The TREASURER had no doubt there were precedents for it, but the other day a Bill of very much greater importance—the Constitution Act Amendment Bill—was passed on a bare majority, but the hon. member's amendment went in the direction of sanctioning a two-thirds majority.

Mr. SUMNER: By nearly 100 per cent. vote of the members.

The TREASURER: That did not alter the principle. Supposing there had only been twenty-five members in the House, and thirteen had voted for the measure, it would have been

carried, and surely, if that was a perfectly correct principle for a Bill of that kind, it should be a correct principle as applied to the present Bill. Another point was that the Bill did not bind a future Parliament, even if the referendum was carried by a big majority. There might be what was called a "moral obligation," and he believed there would be, to legislate upon the subject, but, nevertheless, Parliament would not be bound; and he submitted that it would be well to avoid trying to bind the hands of future Parliaments.

The HOME SECRETARY: The amendment said that the poll "shall not take effect." Well, the Bill did not provide that the poll should take effect.

Mr. LESINA: What is the use of taking the referendum then?

The HOME SECRETARY: There was absolutely nothing to be done on the referendum, and they could not possibly bind a future Parliament. In any case, he did not think Parliament would be likely to take up the question unless a very large vote was recorded.

Mr. BOWMAN: Why not specify it?

The HOME SECRETARY: Because it would be absolutely useless, as no duty was imposed upon Parliament.

Mr. COYNE: Why take a referendum at all?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is something for Parliament to go upon.

The HOME SECRETARY: He did not think there was anything in the amendment.

Mr. LESINA: That was the most astounding admission yet made in connection with the stormy passage of the Bill before them. They were assured that the referendum was being taken purely as a matter of national curiosity. The Government were anxious to find out how many people were in favour of religious instruction in the State schools. Perhaps ten, twenty-five, or thirty people might stroll up to express an opinion on the subject, and the Government said they were not bound to recognise that. But, supposing 25,000 came along and voted in favour of religious instruction, were the Government bound to recognise the effect of such a vote? If not, how many votes must be recorded before they would feel morally bound to give effect to the opinions of the people?

The HOME SECRETARY: That is for the next Parliament.

Mr. LESINA: Then all that the present Parliament could do was to arrange the machinery. Surely Parliament could make the conditions under which the vote should be taken, and impose a condition such as he now suggested?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You are imposing a condition as to what shall happen after the vote is taken.

Mr. LESINA: He was imposing a condition which would be some justification for the very large expenditure proposed to be undertaken, and which would prevent constant visits to Parliament to secure referenda on the same subject. He was suggesting that the people who were demanding the referendum should give some guarantee of their sincerity and strength in the country by making it compulsory that fifty votes out of every hundred should be recorded before the poll should take effect. If they did not do that, surely the Minister would admit that the expenditure of £8,000 was a waste of public funds. If the principle was established in connection with that Bill it might be necessary to establish it in connection with the general referendum, because the demand for the referendum was a growing demand. This Parliament advocated it, this Government believed in it, and he thought it was wise, in order to avoid the calling of Parliament by irresponsible bodies for referenda on various subjects, that they should safeguard the public Treasury to some extent. In order to test the sincerity and strength of a party moving for a referendum, they should always insist upon a minimum vote being recorded, otherwise every tinpot party which wanted to advertise its hobby might make requests for a referendum, and then get only 25 or 2,500 votes. He proposed this amendment in the interest of the Bible in State schools people as well as in the interests of those who were opposed to the measure. (Laughter.) The hon. member for Bulimba smiled, but if the hon. member knew how sincere he was, in his endeavour to secure a representative vote, he would not smile. Knowing what a serious question this was, he would like to see the referendum taken on a Sunday, and every church made a polling-booth, so as to give those persons who wanted to make this change in our educational system a chance of achieving their object. (Laughter.) A provision of this kind prevailed in New South Wales in connection with the license vote, which was taken all over the State on election day, and in New Zealand in connection with the local option poll. He thought it would be wise to adopt it here, otherwise everybody who had a pet hobby would be demanding a referendum, and when they had spent £8,000 in taking the referendum they would find that it was all to no purpose. He considered the proposition a very good one, and for that reason submitted it to the Committee.

Mr. JENKINSON intended to support the amendment, as it was an eminently reasonable one. If they could not get one-half of the people on the rolls to take enough interest in this matter to record their votes it was not worth while having a referendum. The Home Secretary had stated that there was nothing in this measure to compel this Parliament or the next Parliament to take any notice of the vote at the referendum.

The HOME SECRETARY: This Parliament won't take the referendum, probably.

Mr. JENKINSON: The Committee had passed clause 2, which provided that the referendum should be taken at the next Commonwealth general election.

The HOME SECRETARY: We are going to recommend that clause.

Mr. JENKINSON: He was dealing with things as they stood, and the Committee had decided that clauses 2 and 3 should stand, and those clauses provided that the referendum should be taken at the first Commonwealth general election. If this Parliament was not going to deal with the matter after the referendum had been taken, then all the strife and turmoil they had had at the last two elections would be dragged up again, and each candidate would be asked the question, "Are you in favour of carrying out the will of the people?" even if only 5,000 electors had voted in the affirmative and 3,000 in the negative.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is one of the responsibilities of public life.

Mr. JENKINSON: It was responsibility they should not be asked to take. If there was no business in the Bill, it was an absolute waste of time discussing it, and the sooner it was consigned to the waste-paper basket the better for all concerned. If the Government were in earnest in the matter they should take a referendum on a special day, and have the alteration made in the law before the next general election. That would do away with a lot of strife and

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turmoil. One of the best ways to settle the matter, and to prove the earnestness of those people who were urging the Government to go on with this measure against their will, was to show that at least one-half of the people on the electoral rolls would record their votes. He trusted that the amendment would be pressed to a division.

The PREMIER: This amendment was not so simple as it looked. While it was a quite permissible and legitimate amendment, still he did not think it was a good thing to insert in this Bill, because it would remove all incentive to those who were opposed to the proposed change in our education system to vote. They would say, "What is the use of our voting? Not one hundred thousand will vote on the question." And they would not vote at all. It was desirable that the electors should be incited to record their votes against the change, and not that they should be offered any encouragement to abstain from voting. They had better leave the matter to the people, and let the representatives of the people in that House afterwards settle what was the right thing to do. That was the honest and democratic way of dealing with the matter.

Mr. COYNE: The Premier blew hot and cold over this question. Only a few minutes ago he told the Committee that, if he (Mr. Coyne) had submitted his new clause in a form similar to that of the amendment now before the Committee, it would have been a sensible and permissible proposal.

The PREMIER: I say that now, but I did not say I would accept it.

Mr. COYNE: This amendment was all right a couple of minutes ago, when the hon. gentleman wanted him to withdraw his new clause, but now that the new clause was withdrawn, in accordance with the hon. gentleman's wishes,

[9.30 p.m.] he did not agree with the amendment. He (Mr. Coyne) thought the Committee should adopt the amendment of the hon. member for Clermont, because they would have to make some provision of this description some day or other, and they might as well commence now, otherwise some cranks here and there in the country would want referenda on their particular subjects. With regard to the statement of the Premier that the hon. member for Clermont would defeat his object by striving to get 50 per cent. of the electors to record their votes, he would point out that if he (Mr. Coyne) was desirous of defeating the object of this referendum he would not consider what the other fellow was going to do, but would do his duty and record his vote in the negative. He believed that the very fact of the 50 per cent. provision being in the Bill would conduce to a larger vote being cast than would otherwise be cast. He hoped the Home Secretary would accept the amendment, which was a very fair one. From what the Premier said he felt certain that the hon. gentleman would vote for the amendment, unless he wanted to prove that he was absolutely inconsistent, because it was pretty well on his suggestion that it was proposed.

Mr. RYLAND would sooner see an amendment proposed providing that they must have a 30 per cent. affirmative vote. In connection with local government loans, at one time a certain percentage had to vote, and the opponents used to get the electors to stop at home, and thus defeat the loan proposals. A 30 per cent. affirmative vote would mean a larger vote than was proposed by the amendment. If the amendment were passed as it stood, he was afraid influence would be used, and, perhaps, prayers put up for a flood, to keep people from voting.

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Mr. LENNON was surprised at the Premier declining to accept so reasonable an amendment after his suggestion. He evidently thought it was reasonable, but he did not think it was desirable. The amendment was likely to prevent a recurrence of referenda on other matters in the future. If only a small number recorded their votes in favour of changing their educational system, any Government would hesitate about giving effect to the vote. A fresh agitation would immediately ensue, and so it would go on; whereas, if they provided that the referendum should be inoperative unless 50 per cent of the electors took sufficient interest in it to record their votes, it would probably do away with the frequent use of the referendum. He was inclined to think that the great bulk of the people were not interested in this subject. Could anyone point to any public meetings held in the large centres in advocacy of this change in their system? He had never heard of any public meetings. The clerics, for reasons best known to themselves, were anxious to make this change. They would be able to go to the schools for an hour a day, and, by and by, they would dominate the schools. Those people were "the head and front" of the whole agitation. Until hon. members were satisfied that there was a real public interest in any matter, they should not be troubled with applications for frequent referenda. He sincerely hoped that the Home Secretary, after conferring with the Premier, would accept such a very reasonable and very desirable amendment.

Mr. MULLAN: In the course of a week or two they expected to have introduced a Constitutional Referendum Bill. When that Bill was introduced, would hon. members support a proposal that any questions submitted to the country must obtain a minimum vote? He would oppose such a proposal, and, to be consistent, he held that there should be no minimum in this Bill either. (Hear, hear!) The introduction of a minimum clause would conduce to the defeat of those who were opposed to the measure, because they would try to lead the people to believe that, instead of voting against it, they could beat it by staying away, and it might happen to be carried against their wishes. He wished to have the largest vote possible, so that they would have an emphatic verdict from the electors, and the most emphatic vote would be given by having a system of voting which would conduce to the largest number of electors going to the poll. A minimum vote was an inducement for people to remain away.

Mr. HARDACRE admitted that the Bill did not bind any Parliament to follow out what might happen as the result of the referendum. But, even if a large vote were cast, it might still happen that the next Parliament would not do anything.

The PREMIER: That is quite a possible thing.

Mr. HARDACRE: But it created a moral obligation. If they put in a minimum vote, they would also create a moral obligation that they should not go on with the matter, unless there was a sufficient demand for it on the part of the electors.

The PREMIER: What do you think of the argument of the hon. member for Charters Towers?

Mr. HARDACRE: A minimum vote was imposed in New South Wales in connection with the referendum on federation, and, as the vote was not up to the minimum, the New South Wales Parliament could not go on with the matter. As a matter of principle, he quite agreed that there should be some limitation as

to numbers. Unless there were sixteen members present in that Chamber, they could not go on with the business.

Mr. KENNA: Would you apply that limitation to the election of a member of this House—that unless a certain number of votes are recorded, a man shall not be elected?

Mr. HARDACRE: The question of a member was entirely different, because they must have some members. They required to have sixteen members present in that Chamber to go on with business. Ordinarily, on unimportant questions, even if there was not a quorum present, they did not call attention to it; but, if an important question was before the Chamber, some hon. member was bound to call attention to the fact that there was not a quorum present. The educational system had been settled for thirty-four years in Queensland, and before a decisive step was taken to alter it, there ought to be a sufficient guarantee from the electors that they required that important change. As regarded the argument of the hon. member for Charters Towers, that it would prevent a large vote being obtained by imposing a minimum number, it would have the opposite effect, because those interested in carrying it would see that they got a sufficient number in order to carry it, and they would use all their efforts to get that minimum vote cast, and the result would be a large vote. It was a reasonable thing to ask for some limitation or some minimum, whatever that minimum might be.

Mr. KEOGH thought the amendment was a very wise one, and would be very beneficial. It was only some of the Church of England ministers who wanted this referendum, but a majority of that church were not in favour of it, and a great number of Presbyterian clergymen were decidedly opposed to it. If they could all go to the one church, it would be far better, and it would do away with all this squabbling; but, seeing that there was no possibility of arriving at that conclusion, the best thing would be to accept the amendment.

Mr. MITCHELL: The discussion that had arisen was owing to the fact that they had not the initiative. The initiative would have indicated a certain number who wanted the referendum; and, not having the initiative previous to the referendum, hon. members were asking that the referendum should be a combination of the referendum and the initiative. They wanted a guarantee that there would be a certain number of electors sufficiently interested in the question to vote. It had been argued by some that there would be a large number who would stay away from the poll with the hope that there would not be sufficient to make it effectual; but it would have quite the opposite effect to that. Those who were opposed to the principle that was likely to be introduced by the granting of the referendum would come in sufficient numbers to prevent the question being carried; and he would like to point out that, if the amendment were carried, out of the 200,000 electors, all that would be required in order to carry the referendum in favour of Bible teaching in State schools would be about 50,100. That would be sufficient. That was the number that would require to vote in the affirmative. Seeing that it was a new principle being introduced into Queensland politics they could not be too careful, and not having the initiative they should certainly fix a number that should be required to enable the people to take the matter out of the hands of hon. members into their own hands. There ought to be a sufficient number to manifest to members of the Assembly that they were desirous of taking the matter into their own

hands, and he thought the Minister in charge of the Bill would be wise in accepting the amendment before the Committee.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER thought they were wasting time in discussing the amendment. It had been decided that the poll would take place on general or Commonwealth election day.

Mr. JENKINSON: Commonwealth election day only.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: In that case no doubt more than 50 per cent. of the electors would record their votes. Another reason why the discussion was a waste of time was the fact that it had no influence during the present Parliament. If they were having a referendum in three months' time, then it would be very desirable indeed that some provision should be made with regard to the number, but it was pretty certain if the poll were taken during the time of an election the number of people who recorded their votes would be considerably more than the number who would record their votes if there was no election, and it might be wise under those circumstances to make provision that unless a certain number of electors recorded their votes it would have no effect as far as their own Parliament was concerned. It did not apply to the present Parliament according to the Bill.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Charters Towers*) objected to the minimum of 50 per cent. He thought it was rather too high. It was a well-known fact that at the last Commonwealth elections only 50 per cent. of the electors recorded their votes. And if they could only rouse the people to record a 50 per cent. vote at the general elections in connection with the Commonwealth, it seemed to him they would get nothing like a 50 per cent. vote in connection with this referendum. The people who did not vote at all were given more consideration than the people who did vote. His opinion was that those people who were too lazy, or careless, or indifferent to roll up and cast their votes were not entitled to any consideration at all. Those people would tell them, as a general rule, that they were practically neutral on the subject, and were prepared to put up with the consequences, whatever they might be. He thought the minimum was too high.

A LABOUR MEMBER: Make it 25 per cent.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: He thought 25 per cent. would be better than 50 per cent.

Mr. LESINA had listened to the debate with considerable interest, and he had carefully tried to pick out some facts or reasons which would induce him to withdraw the proposition he had made. But none of those advanced so far appeared to him sufficiently strong to make him take up that attitude. He had already stated that this was the only guarantee they had got that this referendum was not a mere farcical piece of gallery play; that there was not some business in it; that the people behind it were not anxious to test their strength, and that when they did test their strength it would be discovered that a big percentage of the people were with it, or even, perhaps, half of the people on the rolls were with it. But, apparently, the Home Secretary could not make up his mind to adopt his suggestion. At one moment of the debate he really thought he had succeeded in securing the hon. gentleman's adhesion, but just at the psychological moment, just as the Home Secretary was about to bend that stubborn neck of his, who should spring up but the Hon. the Treasurer and take the Bill out of his colleague's hands, and declare most emphatically not to accept this proposition. It appeared to him that if he were in the Home Secretary's place and a colleague of

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his took a Bill out of his hands just as he was about to accept a suggestion, he would sit upon him, and very hard, too. His (Mr. Lesina's) golden opportunity had gone evidently. The Committee did not appear to be favourable to that proposition; but he always liked to die fighting, and on this particular occasion he was prepared to die fighting. He desired to press his proposition.

Amendment (Mr. Lesina's) put.

The CHAIRMAN: The "Ayes" have it—I should say, the "Noes" have it.

The HOME SECRETARY: Divide!

The CHAIRMAN: I said the "Noes" have it.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: What about "Divide"?

Mr. HARDACRE: Let it slide.

Mr. LESINA: How did you decide that amendment?

The CHAIRMAN: I decided that the "Noes" have it.

Clause 12 put and passed.

Mr. RYLAND: He had an amendment to this clause, reading: "Providing—"

The CHAIRMAN: I would point out to the hon. member that clause 12 has been put and passed.

Mr. COYNE: Is the new clause 12 agreed to?

Mr. RYLAND said he had an amendment to move in clause 12.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Make it a new clause.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Add it on to clause 13.

The CHAIRMAN: I would point out to the hon. member for Gympie that if he has a new clause to move that this is the time to move it.

Mr. COYNE: Seeing that there was some confusion in the Chamber, he would like to know if the new clause proposed by Mr. Lesina was carried? He distinctly heard the Chairman say that the "Ayes" had it, and he (Mr. Coyne) maintained that the "Ayes" did have it.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No, no!

Mr. COYNE asked if Mr. Lesina's new clause was part of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: No.

Mr. COYNE: You declared that the "Ayes" had it.

The CHAIRMAN: I did declare that the "Ayes" had it, but I immediately corrected myself.

Mr. MITCHELL: That decision misled the House, because the fact that the Chairman made that mistake induced the Home Secretary to call "Divide." Some members of the Labour party thought that the clause was carried; but, seeing that the Chairman admitted that he had made a mistake, he thought that the Labour section should be allowed to divide the Committee on it. When the Home Secretary called "Divide" they let it go, and it was really the Chairman's mistake.

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to remind the hon. member for Maryborough that the Home Secretary called "Divide".

The HOME SECRETARY: When you announced that the "Ayes" had it.

The CHAIRMAN: I then heard the hon. member for Clermont distinctly say, "Let it slide."

Mr. HARDACRE: I said that, but I spoke jocularly.

Mr. LESINA: You gave us the vote.

Mr. COYNE: He was suggesting to the Home Secretary to let it slide.

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Mr. CAMPBELL thought it would be advisable to put the question again. There was an amount of confusion, and it put members in a quandary. He intended to vote for the amendment, but it was boxed up to such an extent that no one knew what had happened.

The CHAIRMAN: Is it the wish of the Committee that I should recommit the new clause?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MAXWELL: No. He would point out that the Chairman had put through another clause since then—clause 12.

Mr. MITCHELL: We have been speaking on the amendment ever since.

Mr. MAXWELL: And would probably be speaking on the amendment till to-morrow morning if they were allowed to do so. The new clause moved by the hon. member for Clermont came in after clause 11.

Mr. MITCHELL: It was declared carried.

Mr. CAMPBELL: It will save time to have another vote.

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to point out to the Committee that clause 12 is carried, and the question before the Committee is that clause 13 stand part of the Bill.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. RYLAND had a new clause to propose before clause 13.

The HOME SECRETARY: You can move it now.

Mr. MITCHELL did not wish to dictate, but he thought it was the duty of [10 p.m.] the Chairman or Speaker to consider the sense of the Committee or the House.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The question before the Committee now is that clause 13 stand part of the Bill. I understand that it is the wish of the junior member for Gympie to move a new clause to follow clause 12, which has been carried. The hon. member will now be in order in moving that clause.

Mr. RYLAND moved the following new clause, to follow clause 12:—

Provided that the poll shall not take effect unless thirty per centum of the total number of electors on the roll shall have recorded their votes in the affirmative.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Has that not already been dealt with?

Mr. RYLAND: It was quite a different clause to the one formerly proposed. The previous clause required 50 per cent. of the electors to vote for or against, and that might have been used to influence voters in staying at home and not recording their votes. By his new clause it would be necessary that 30 per cent. should vote in the affirmative, so that no coercion would be used in order to secure a full vote.

Mr. HARDACRE: That was practically the same question they had been discussing for a long time, and on which they were about to take a division had there not been a misunderstanding. It was in slightly different words, but was the same in substance, and hon. members would now be able to vote upon it.

Question—That the new clause as read stand part of the Bill—put; and the Committee divided.

Before the division was recorded, and after the question had been put, Mr. MACKINTOSH, the hon. member for Cambooya, having crossed over from the "Noes" to the "Ayes"—

The CHAIRMAN: I must call upon the hon. member for Cambooya to take his place with the "Noes," he having crossed the floor after I had put the question, and the tellers appointed.

Mr. MACKINTOSH thereupon resumed his seat with the "Noes."

AYES, 27.

Mr. Barber	Mr. Lesina
„ Bowman	„ McLachlan
„ Campbell	„ Mitchell
„ Coyne	„ Mulcahy
„ Forrest	„ Paget
„ Fox	„ Payne
„ Hamilton	„ Philp
„ Harlan	„ Ryland
„ Hardacre	„ Somerset
„ Huxham	„ Stodart
„ Jenkinson	„ Sumner
„ Keogh	„ Swayne
„ Land	„ Walker
„ Lennon	

Tellers: Mr. Jenkinson and Mr. Lesina.

NOES, 33.

Mr. Airey	Mr. Hunter, J. M.
„ Appel	„ Jackson
„ Barnes, G. P.	„ Kenna
„ Barnes, W. H.	„ Kerr
„ Barton	„ Kidston
„ Bell	„ Mackintosh
„ Blair	„ Mann
„ Brennan	„ Maxwell
„ Cottell	„ Mullan
„ Cowap	„ Murphy
„ Douglas	„ Nevitt
„ Grant	„ Petrie
„ Grayson	„ Redwood
„ Gunn	„ Roberts
„ Hawthorn	„ Winstanley
„ Herbertson	„ Woods
„ Hunter, D.	

Tellers: Mr. Redwood and Mr. Woods.

PAIRS.

Aye—Mr. May. No—Mr. Rankin.

Resolved in the negative.

Mr. JENKINSON asked for the ruling of the Chairman with reference to an incident which took place in division. The hon. member for Cambooya moved from his seat on the "Noes" side to the "Ayes" side, and afterwards again took his seat among the "Noes"; but, before doing so, his vote was recorded by the tellers with the members voting "Aye."

The CHAIRMAN: During the division which has just taken place I noticed the hon. member for Cambooya move his seat from the left to the right of the chair. I immediately called the hon. member's attention to that fact, and asked him to resume the seat which he left, in accordance with Standing Order 141, which provides that—

A member may not move from his place after the tellers have been appointed.

The hon. member complied with my request. The thing is perfectly clear, and I hope the hon. member for Fassifern will not press the matter any further.

On clause 13—"Expenses"—

Mr. JENKINSON moved that all the words on lines 46 and 47 be omitted, with the view of inserting the words, "By the Bible in State Schools League." If the amendment were adopted, it would mean that all expenses incurred in the execution of the Bill and in the taking of the referendum would be defrayed by the people who asked for the referendum. As he gave reasons for this amendment the previous evening, and as it had already been discussed by other members, he would not take up any further time in debating the matter.

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to point out to the hon. member that in my opinion the amendment is not in order, for the reason that the Governor has already recommended the necessary appropriation to carry this measure into effect. There may be nothing in that point, but I am inclined to think there is. However, I should like to hear the opinion of hon. members on the subject.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Express your ruling.

The CHAIRMAN: I have already stated that, in my opinion, the proposition is out of order.

Mr. HARDACRE understood that the Chairman desired an expression of opinion from hon. members.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No, he did not; the Chairman gave his ruling.

The CHAIRMAN: I have no desire whatever to block debate on a matter of this kind.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is a bad precedent.

The CHAIRMAN: It is a matter of opinion whether it is a bad precedent to establish or not. I think hon. members will realise that it is important that a matter of this kind should be put clearly and fairly before the Committee. If it is the desire of members of the Committee to debate the question, then it is my duty to listen to them. I simply expressed my opinion.

Mr. JENKINSON: Without a ruling.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes. It is merely my opinion, and I am inclined to think that the debate which may take place will not alter that opinion. (Laughter.)

HON. R. PHILP: If this amendment went to a division he would vote against it. All the same, he thought it was within the province of the Committee to say whether the expense of carrying out the Bill should be borne by the State or by the Bible in State Schools League. They had received a message from the Governor recommending the necessary appropriation to give effect to the Bill, but they were not bound to incur the expenditure recommended. They could not increase the amount of the recommendation, but they could reduce it.

Mr. HARDACRE: It was quite true that they could not exceed the amount which was recommended by message from the Governor with regard to any measure, but they could diminish or reduce or abolish all expenses in connection with the Bill. It was laid down in "May" that they could not increase burdens proposed to be imposed upon the people, but that they could always reduce those burdens, and all that was proposed by the amendment was to reduce the burdens on the people.

The PREMIER regretted to say that he was unable to concur with the Chairman as to the amendment being out of order. He quite understood that the ridiculous nature of the amendment was apt to mislead any Chairman, the thing was so manifestly absurd. But, if the Chairman would permit him to say so, the shortest and most satisfactory course would be to allow the hon. member for Fassifern to move his amendment.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Withdraw it—it is absurd.

Mr. JENKINSON did not intend to withdraw it. Under the ruling given by the Chairman, it would be impossible to move any reduction in the Estimates, because they were recommended by His Excellency the Governor; but it was a well-recognised rule that they had power

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to reduce any amounts submitted to them, though they had no power to increase any sums placed on the Estimates. He maintained that the amendment was on all-fours with the Estimates. It would be far better to allow the amendment to go to a vote. If the Chairman would not allow it to be moved, it would be an easy matter to move that his ruling should be disagreed with, and he did not wish to do that, as the same end would be attained by voting for or against the amendment.

Mr. KENNA thought the Chairman's ruling involved a very important principle, which should be made quite clear, because, if it was to be sustained, it might be applied on subsequent occasions. The ruling was to the effect that it was not possible to allow the amendment, because of the fact that the Governor recommended that a certain sum should be taken from the consolidated revenue. He (Mr. Kenna) held that the Committee could reduce the expenditure.

Hon. R. PHILP: In the Estimates we can do that.

Mr. KENNA: There was a difference between the Estimates and a recommendation in a case like this. In the Estimates there was a fixed amount allocated; but in a measure of this kind there was only a general recommendation for an appropriation. When a message from His Excellency was couched in general terms, they could alter it whichever way they liked; but, if the message was for a fixed sum, as it was in the Estimates, they could reduce it, but they could not increase it. "May" was rather interesting on the point. On page 332 he said, with regard to Royal recommendations in general terms—

As is subsequently explained, the constitutional principle which vests in the Crown the sole responsibility of incurring national expenditure forbids an increase by the Commons of a sum demanded on behalf of the Crown for the service of the State. This principle, however, is apparently disregarded when the recommendation of the Crown is given to a resolution empowering the expenditure of public money which, framed in general terms, places no limitation on the amount of expenditure to be authorised by the resolution. . . . The Committee is not bound by the terms of the provisions which the Ministers of the Crown have inserted in the Bill; and any member may propose an increase of the grants specified in these clauses, or to extend the application of the provisions of the Bill, whatever may be the cost resulting therefrom, so long as the power conferred by the Royal recommendation is not exceeded. Acting on this principle, when, in 1812, a Committee was considering a message from the Prince Regent recommending, in general terms, provision to be made for the family of Mr. Spencer Percival, amendments were permitted for increasing the provision proposed by the Ministers; and this practice has been supported by rulings from the Chair, though, on the last occasion, not without remarks which deserve careful consideration.

The position, then, was that, when there was a definite and fixed sum mentioned in the message from the Governor, it was not possible to increase it; but, when the message was couched in general terms, it was possible to increase or reduce the amount of appropriation.

The CHAIRMAN: I would like to point out to the Committee that the larger experience of hon. members in connection with matters of this kind has weighed considerably with me during the last few minutes. I would also like to point out that I did not give any definite ruling. I simply gave expression to a certain opinion. I was really under the impression that, His Excellency having recommended a certain appropriation which provided for defraying from the consolidated revenue fund of Queensland a sufficient sum to cover the expenditure to be incurred under this Bill, any other proposal with regard to the financial arrangements would be out of order. Consequently, I gave the opinion I did.

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However, I bow to the will of the Committee, and am quite prepared to set my opinion on one side on this particular point.

Mr. LESINA asked what position they were in now? Had they power to levy a special charge on a private organisation, which he believed was unregistered, and had no standing as a corporation?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: No; it is ridiculous.

Mr. LESINA: He submitted that point to the Attorney-General. (Laughter.)

Mr. JENKINSON: The Attorney-General, by way of interjection, had stated that this was not a definite body. He (Mr. Jenkinson) gave that a flat contradiction. He had received innumerable communications from them, and the names of the president, the vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and members of the committee were shown on the paper. They had only to take up a telephone-book and see they were an established body, having their own telephone as well as their own secretary, and, seeing, apparently, that it was an active organisation which was agitating for this referendum, they [10:30 p.m.] should be willing to put their hands into their pockets and pay for it. He (Mr. Jenkinson), as opposed to the adoption of the principle of religious teaching in State schools, did not think it was fair that he should be called upon to pay anything to get information that he did not care a snap of the fingers for. It would mean, as far as his children were concerned, they would be removed at once from the State school, and any citizen who took a stand like that should not be asked to bear any of the cost in carrying through a particular measure that he considered detrimental to the welfare of himself and children.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted (*Mr. Jenkinson's amendment*) stand part of the clause—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 46.

Mr. Airey	Mr. Hunter, J. M.
" Appel	" Huxham
" Barnes, G. P.	" Jackson
" Barnes, W. H.	" Kenna
" Barton	" Kerr
" Bell	" Kidston
" Blair	" Mann
" Bowman	" Maxwell
" Brennan	" Muleshy
" Campbell	" Mullan
" Cottell	" Murphy
" Cowap	" Nevitt
" Denham	" Paget
" Douglas	" Petrie
" Forrest	" Philip
" Grant	" Redwood
" Grayson	" Roberts
" Gunn	" Ryland
" Hanvan	" Somerset
" Hardacre	" Stodart
" Hawthorn	" Swayne
" Herbertson	" Winstanley
" Hunter, D.	" Woods

Tellers: Mr. Cottell and Mr. Murphy.

NOES, 14.

Mr. Barber	Mr. Lesina
" Coyne	" Mackintosh
" Fox	" McLachlan
" Hamilton	" Mitchell
" Jenkinson	" Payne
" Land	" Sumner
" Lennon	" Walker

Tellers: Mr. Jenkinsou and Mr. Sumner.

PAIRS.

Ayes—Mr. Rankin and Mr. White.

Noes—Mr. May and Mr. Adamson.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Mr. LESINA asked the Home Secretary what was the duration of the measure? If it was a

temporary Bill, how was it that Standing Order 280, dealing with temporary measures, had not been observed? That Standing Order provided that the precise duration of every temporary law shall be expressed in a distinct clause at the end of the Bill. There was no description of the duration of the Bill, and he thought one ought to be added; but, as the time the referendum was to be taken was somewhat indefinite, he thought, on further consideration, that provision could not be made.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The duration is implied by the referendum.

Mr. LESINA: He was not sure that that covered the ground, because the Bill would remain on the statute-book for years.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Only until the referendum is taken.

Mr. LESINA: Then the referendum might be taken at a general election a month hence or three years hence?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It might be.

Mr. LESINA: And for the next two or three years the Bill would be on the statute-book?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Until the referendum is taken.

Clause 13 put and passed.

On the schedule—

\* Mr. REDWOOD proposed an additional paragraph to the schedule as follows:—

In the event of the above proposal being adopted, are you in favour of giving denominational schools State aid?

Mr. LESINA: Is this an additional question?

Mr. REDWOOD: Yes; he wished to make it question No. 2. When the Education Act was brought in thirty years ago religious instruction in the State schools was abolished; the State ceased to subsidise denominational schools, and the education was made entirely secular.

Mr. HARDACRE rose to a point of order. If this amendment were put, then other members would be debarred from making any amendments in the schedule. He did not want to interrupt the hon. member, and was favourable to what he proposed.

The PREMIER: That is not a point of order. He has the floor. Ask him to withdraw his amendment as you have a prior amendment. It is a matter of courtesy on his part whether he gives way or not.

Mr. HARDACRE asked that the amendment be withdrawn.

Mr. REDWOOD: As he understood that the hon. member had a prior amendment he would give way, and withdraw his amendment for the present.

\* HON. D. F. DENHAM: He intimated on the second reading that he would move an amendment in the schedule, which was the most important part of the Bill. He thought it would be far better to omit all reference to the New South Wales system and have a clear-cut question concerning Bible reading in State schools. He therefore moved that the entire schedule be deleted, and in place thereof the following words substituted:—

Are you in favour of selected portions from the Bible being read in school hours in State and Provisional schools?

Against that would be put the words "No" and "Yes," and the electors would give their answers accordingly.

Mr. HAMILTON: Who is to give the lessons—the schoolmaster or minister of religion?

HON. D. F. DENHAM: In the schedule reference was made to schoolmasters and ministers of religion. It was generally conceded that reading from the Bible direct was the best. In the Bible they had the finest code of morals and grandest teaching. Nobody objected to the Bible pure and simple. It was the interpretation that was placed upon its teachings that was objected to. In the schedule it was permissible for every school teacher during school hours to teach selected lessons from the Bible. The teacher might have conscientious scruples in the matter and might not wish to do it.

The PREMIER: A very excellent reason.

HON. D. F. DENHAM: An excellent reason. If a teacher were unsympathetic, then he would not be successful in his teaching. The schoolmaster had an immense influence with his pupils, and by a shrug of the shoulder or a gesture he might cause some doubt to exist in the minds of the children.

The PREMIER: An unbeliever giving children Bible lessons will make them all unbelievers.

HON. D. F. DENHAM: He had not so much objection to schoolmasters as he had to ministers of religion going into the schools, because they were likely to create sectarianism in the schools. It was a bad principle to point out children belonging to this camp or that camp in the school. He thought they should only have selected portions from the Bible read in the schools.

Mr. McLACHLAN: Who will select them?

Mr. LESINA: The Minister for Public Instruction. (Laughter.)

HON. D. F. DENHAM: Selected portions would be all right. There could be no objection to the Psalms, or to the historical portions, or the New Testament. If this amendment were accepted it would obviate the necessity of the amendment suggested by the hon. member for Toowoomba. It was undesirable that their schools should be made the medium for any particular dogma. If they only had Bible readings the objections of those who did not want denominational teaching were removed.

The HOME SECRETARY could not see his way to accept the amendment. The question as submitted in the schedule was the one that was agreed to by the present leader of the Opposition when Premier, by Mr. Morgan, and by the present Government. It was in the form in which it would be accepted practically as a final decision. In any other form he did not think the question would be accepted by the public as final, and would lead to further agitation.

Mr. BOWMAN thought, with the member for Oxley, that that was probably the most important part of the whole Bill.

The PREMIER: It is the Bill.

Mr. BOWMAN thought the schedule as laid down was very misleading, and he also thought the plainer they put the question to the electors the better it would be for them. He had an amendment to move, which he hoped the hon. member for Oxley would accept in place of his own. It read—

Are you in favour of religious instruction in State schools?

It did not matter whether it was teaching by the teacher or by a clergyman. Let them submit something plain and simple, and the more simple the more satisfactory it would be.

Mr. GRANT: Is not "religious" rather an indefinite term?

*Mr. Bowman.]*

Mr. BOWMAN: What more did hon. members want than a question which was framed on the title of the Bill? The schedule read—

The New South Wales system of religious teaching in the State schools is as follows:—

The State schoolmaster, in school hours, teaches selected Bible lessons from a reading-book provided for the purpose, but is not allowed to give sectarian teaching.

Any minister of religion is entitled, in school hours, to give the children of his own denomination an hour's religious instruction on such day or days as the school committee can arrange for.

Any parent is entitled to withdraw his child from all religious teaching if he chooses to do so.

He thought that if the matter was submitted with the one clause, it really covered all that was in the New South Wales schedule, and it certainly was more simple.

Mr. JENKINSON: You want some reference to the school hours.

Mr. BOWMAN: Well, he was prepared to go on with his amendment as it stood. If the hon. member for Oxley would accept it they could come to a decision upon it.

The PREMIER wished to point out, in addition to the argument of the Home Secretary, that the form of the schedule now in the Bill was the form of question on which the referendum had been asked. It was the form of question agreed to by the two Premiers who preceded him—Mr. Philp and Mr. Morgan—and it was the only form of question on which those who were wanting a referendum wanted it.

Mr. LESINA: They want to catch fish with their own bait.

The PREMIER: It was quite competent for the House to put any form of question in the schedule; but if they put a certain form of question in the schedule different from what those people were wanting a referendum upon, they might as well not take all the trouble to take a referendum. They would, if they put it to the people, have taken a referendum and have done nothing. It would be far better to knock the Bill out now, because they would have had all the trouble about having a referendum and given satisfaction to nobody. He wanted the Committee to recognise clearly that to materially alter the schedule from the question on which a referendum had been asked was to defeat the Bill. There was no good in going on with the Bill at all after that.

Mr. LESINA: We pay the bill and they want the bank.

The PREMIER: Yes, that was so.

Mr. LESINA. Then I object.

The PREMIER: Those men came to the House and said, "Will you submit this question to the people of Queensland," and the House could say "Yes" or "No," but to say, "We will not submit that question to the people of Queensland, but will submit some other question," was to invite the answer, "Well, you can submit any question you like to the people of Queensland, but that will not satisfy us; that is not the question we wanted submitted."

Mr. BOWMAN: What is it they want in short? The right to teach religion in schools.

The PREMIER: No, no! What they had asked the Government and the House to do was to submit a particular question to the people of Queensland.

Mr. HARDACRE: A leading question.

Mr. JENKINSON: A misleading question.

[*Mr. Bowman.*]

The PREMIER: The House might refuse to submit it, or it might agree to submit it, but that was the only alternative they had. They could say, "We will not submit this question."

Mr. HAMILTON: Who are these people?

The PREMIER: It did not matter who they were. If they were only the messenger in the lobby, or the little boy who sat down stairs, the House had a right to say "Yes" or "No". They asked, "Will you submit this question?" and the House should say, "Yes we will," or, "No, we will not." If they said, "We will not submit that, but we will submit this other," they would say at once, "That has nothing to do with us; you can take a referendum on that question, but we will go on with our agitation to get a referendum on this other question." So that it would be more sensible to give up the Bill.

Mr. BOWMAN: Do you think that is a fair way to submit it to the people?

The PREMIER: He would come to that in a moment. He was only pointing out the situation.

Mr. W. H. BARNES: Was not that the question submitted to the electors?

The PREMIER: Everyone understood that that was the question.

Mr. MURPHY: I did not understand that it was the question.

The PREMIER: Well, he regretted that the hon. member for Croydon did not understand it.

Mr. MURPHY: I did not understand it.

The HOME SECRETARY: He was in the House when the Bill was brought in in 1906.

The PREMIER: The Bill was nothing new. It had been before the House for two years.

Mr. SUMNER: A good many wanted a free hand on the question to be asked.

The PREMIER: He had tried to make it clear that they should either put the question in the schedule or defeat the Bill.

[11 p.m.] The hon. member for Oxley wanted religious instruction in State schools.

Hon. D. F. DENHAM: No; Bible reading without comment.

The PREMIER: Very well; the hon. member for Oxley wanted Bible reading in State schools, and moved this amendment in the schedule because he thought it was more likely to be carried in that way.

Hon. D. F. DENHAM: Yes.

The PREMIER: That was exactly his reason for objecting to the amendment. He did not want it carried; he wanted it defeated, and defeated by a very large vote. (Hear, hear!) He was quite willing to take the judgment of the country if it was against him in the matter. At the same time, he wanted the judgment of the country to be in the negative. As a matter of tactics, he objected to the proposed alteration in the question, because the hon. member for Oxley believed that by altering the schedule in this way he would increase the chance of getting an affirmative vote. He (Mr. Kidston) thought that even Bible reading in State schools was objectionable—that it would not be a particularly good thing for the children to receive Bible lessons from the teachers, some of whom, very capable and able teachers, were agnostics. The hon. member for the Valley suggested that in place of the schedule as printed, and of the question proposed by the hon. member for Oxley, they should put the question, "Are you in favour of religious instruction in State schools?" That was very vague indeed, objectionably vague.

Every man would give his own interpretation of what was the meaning of religious teaching in State schools. The hon. member for Oxley wanted religious teaching in State schools, but he called it "Bible reading."

HON. D. F. DENHAM: I mean Bible reading without any comment or teaching.

The PREMIER: Other people wanted religious teaching in State schools given by teachers and ministers of religion. He must confess that the schedule as printed, which contained the question as submitted by the Bible in State Schools League, had this to recommend it: that it clearly expressed what those people wanted.

Mr. HARDACRE: No, they are divided among themselves.

Mr. LENNON: Not 5 per cent. of the people know what they mean.

The PREMIER: He could not understand the idea some members seemed to have about the intelligence of the ordinary elector. He did not pretend to have more than ordinary intelligence, but he had not the slightest difficulty in understanding what that ballot-paper meant. Did any member of the House pretend that he did not know what it meant? If the questions submitted in that ballot-paper were answered in the affirmative that would mean (1) that the State schoolmaster in school hours would supervise the pupils getting Bible lessons, (2) that any minister of religion in school hours could give the children of his own denomination religious instruction, and (3) that any parent who did not want his children to get those Bible lessons or that religious instruction could withdraw his children. They could leave out all reference to New South Wales, so long as they submitted to the electors the questions which those who asked for a referendum wanted asked.

Mr. LESINA: Why did not you do the whole thing by Executive minute, and satisfy them, and ignore Parliament?

The PREMIER: Perhaps there would have been much wisdom in that course. It would certainly have involved much less trouble and worry. He began to think that he was rather a virtuous person when he took all this trouble to give a chance of a verdict on a question, notwithstanding that he was opposed to that question being asked; but he thought it was the proper thing to do. The question as given in the schedule fairly stated the matter in such a way that an ordinary elector could understand what was being asked him. If it did not fairly state the question, that would be an excellent reason for altering it. If it was likely to confuse the electors, that would be a valid reason for altering it. But to put another question altogether was simply defeating the Bill to all intents and purposes; and to alter the question in the way the hon. member for Oxley wanted to alter it was simply to facilitate his getting in the thin end of the wedge. It would be easier to carry what he proposed than what was contained in the schedule.

Mr. RYLAND: We want it as objectionable as possible.

The PREMIER: Yes, he thought so. It was no business of his to make it more objectionable than the proposers of the referendum had made it, but it was certainly his business to point out to the Committee that if the hon. member for Oxley got his way it would greatly increase the chances of obtaining an affirmative vote, and would get in the thin end of the wedge. He preferred to have the question put in a more objectionable way—in a way that he believed had exceedingly little chance of being carried. He hoped that hon. members would

not materially alter the schedule, except for the reason that it did not make the question clear, or was likely to confuse the electors.

Mr. KENNA: The first portion of the explanatory part of the schedule was indefinite, as it did not state who was to select the Bible lessons.

The PREMIER: They will be taken from a reading-book provided for the purpose. The Education Department will see to that.

Mr. KENNA: It was necessary that it should be made clear to the electors, because they might be under the impression that the lessons would be selected by ministers of religion, or by the teachers. It might prevent a lot of misunderstanding if the explanatory part of the schedule stated who was to make the selection.

\* HON. D. F. DENHAM: The Premier had very clearly indicated that he wished to submit the question in the most objectionable form.

The PREMIER: I did not put it as badly as that.

HON. D. F. DENHAM: When they saw *Hansard*, uncorrected, he thought it would be seen that he was right. He had no wish to put words into the hon. gentleman's mouth, but he understood him to express a desire to have the question put in an objectionable form in order to secure a negative answer. He (Mr. Denham) wished to have the question put in the form he had stated, in order to secure an affirmative answer. He had no desire to get in the thin end of the wedge. Like the Premier and other hon. members, he desired to have this question out of the way, and the best mode was being taken to get it out of the way. But, if his amendment were likely to be the means of securing religious instruction by undesirable teachers, or teachers who had no sympathy with what they taught, or if it would introduce ministers, he would wish his amendment to be defeated. For years past there had been a great agitation for Bible reading; but this religious instruction was quite a recent development. The original league was the Bible in State Schools League.

Mr. HAMILTON: There are many in favour of that who are against Bible teaching.

HON. D. F. DENHAM: Precisely. That was the original idea, but it had evolved into this idea of ministers coming in and dividing the schools into sectarian camps. He made no secret of his desire to have Bible reading in the schools, but he distinctly objected to what was called "religious instruction," for the reason that, in many cases, the teachers were not in sympathy with such teaching, and the impressions conveyed to the children might not be in accordance with the Scriptures, and would bring about a continuation of the sectarian spirit which was so undesirable in the community. It was clear that he was not going to receive much support, but he was ready to go to a division without delay.

Mr. HARDACRE said that, unless they submitted the question to the people exactly as the Bible in State Schools League asked, they might as well say "No" at once. It all depended on whether the question was fairly put, and he (Mr. Hardacre) maintained that the question was not fairly put. It first pointed out what was said to be done in New South Wales, and was practically a leading question, which placed the most favourable aspect upon what was being done in New South Wales in order to catch votes. It might lead the electors to imagine that the system was most successful in New South Wales, and was framed in a way that was calculated to get a favourable reply. They should not permit the question to be put in that

*Mr. Hardacre.]*

way. He agreed with the Premier that the essence of it should be stated; but they should omit all reference to New South Wales. They might therefore agree with the proposal of the hon. member for Oxley, to create a blank. Then they might insert the question suggested by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley—"Are you in favour of religious instruction in the State schools," and then they might add the essence of what was meant by such teaching, by saying that there should be—first, selected Bible readings; secondly, that there should be clerical entrance; and, thirdly, that parents were entitled to withdraw their children, and then ask for an answer "Yes" or "No."

Mr. LENNON: Notwithstanding what the Premier had said, he was certain the people would not thoroughly understand it. A certain body of people, who might be euphemistically described as "these people," had asked that the question be put in a certain way. Some of our previous Premiers had taken unfair advantage of the Education Act by permitting religious instruction in State schools when it had never been passed by the House. He believed there was an Executive minute permitting religious instruction in State schools outside school hours. The electors would not only not know what system was carried on in New South Wales, but they would not know what system was carried on in Queensland State schools. It was remarkable that Mr. Philp, Mr. Morgan, and Mr. Kidston had been so plastic in the hands of "these people" that they did not consider the general body of people in Queensland as well. He would suggest an amendment something like the following—"I am in favour of altering the present system of purely secular instruction in State schools, with a view of inserting religious teaching therein," and say "Yes" or "No." If we did not put that in, the schedule would say "the religious teaching in New South Wales is as follows." Unless it was put in a clear and intelligent manner before the electors he feared they would not understand it.

The PREMIER: If they altered the clause in the way suggested by the hon. member for Leichhardt—the objection which the hon. member had pointed out was, he thought, a legitimate objection—it did not alter the essential question. They could put it, "Are you in favour of introducing the following system into our State schools," and then state 1, 2, and 3.

The TREASURER: Abolish all reference to New South Wales.

The PREMIER: If they settled the hon. member for Oxley's question by either knocking out or carrying the thing that was done now, they could put that in afterwards; but if they knocked these words out they could not put them back. It might be better, if the hon. member for Oxley had no reason to hope that his amendment would be carried, for him to withdraw it.

HON. D. F. DENHAM: He saw there was no prospect of it being carried, and, as it would delay the House, he asked leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. LESINA: As far as he was able to grasp the explanation of the hon. member for Leichhardt, he simply proposed a transposition of the ballot-paper. He (Mr. Lesina) would like to have the ballot-paper knocked out altogether, and a new one put in without any

[*Mr. Hardacre.*

explanatory matter, but, as the Premier had pointed out, that would not square with the promise he had made to these people.

The PREMIER: It is quite a legitimate proposal.

Mr. LESINA: Although the ballot-paper was approved of by three Premiers, that did not necessarily bind members of the House which had been elected since with a mandate from their electors as to what they should do if the question was remitted to the people. His hands were not tied, except that he had pledged himself to vote against any system of religious instruction in State schools. He did not see why the question should be put in the form which the Bible in State Schools League wanted. He was justified in thinking that they were not sufficiently numerous to have the ballot prepared as they wanted it, and not as he or his constituents wanted it, and he thought there were more people in his district opposed to it than the whole of that organisation. The Premier stated, when opposing the suggestion of the leader of the Labour party, that we had put this matter before the people in the form of a question—Are you in favour of religious instruction in State schools?

The PREMIER: You may as well put this motion in—it will be something to discuss then.

The HOME SECRETARY moved the omission on lines 4 and 5 of "The New South Wales system of religious teaching in the State schools is as follows:—" and the omission of all the words on lines 15, 16, and 17, except "Yes. No."

Mr. McLACHLAN: In submitting a question like this to the people it was reasonable to assume there was a likelihood of [11.30 p.m.] its being carried, and in the event of the referendum being carried, he presumed that it would be an instruction to a following Government to introduce a Bill dealing with the matter. And the Government, no doubt, would prepare a Bill on the lines laid down in the schedule in accordance with the amendment of the Home Secretary. If that were so, they could not keep sectarianism out of it. The 1st clause said—

The State schoolmaster, in school hours, teaches selected Bible lessons from a reading-book provided for the purpose, but is not allowed to give sectarian teaching.

If the referendum was carried, that meant that religious instruction would be part and parcel of the curriculum of the State. Then the 2nd clause read—

Any minister of religion is entitled, in school hours, to give the children of his own denomination an hour's religious instruction on such day or days as the school committee can arrange for.

The arranging of these things was taken out of the hands of the Government altogether. It might happen that a pliable school committee might determine to have these lessons taking place every day.

The PREMIER: And on Saturday as well.

Mr. McLACHLAN: Every school day, at any rate.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Or one hour in twelve months.

Mr. McLACHLAN: The 3rd clause read—

Any parent is entitled to withdraw his child from all religious teaching if he chooses to do so.

That meant that a parent who sent his child to a State school had to deprive his child of one hour's teaching a day because he did not want to have this religious instruction. That

meant that the child would be deprived of one-fifth of his school hours every year. Was that fair?

Mr. W. H. BARNES: You are quite wrong in that.

Mr. McLACHLAN: It was laid down in the Bill.

Mr. D. HUNTER: In New South Wales they go to another part of the school.

Mr. RANKIN: That can be framed by regulation.

Mr. McLACHLAN: The Government in power might frame something altogether foreign to this matter by regulation if they so desired. The Premier said he was desirous of sending this measure to the people in a manner that would best defeat it. He also said that it would be much better to defeat the Bill altogether if they did not want to send it to the people in this form. Well, he hoped the Bill would be defeated or be withdrawn. He hoped that a better schedule would be submitted.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted (*Mr. Hawthorn's amendment*) stand part of the question—put and negatived.

The CHAIRMAN: The question now is that the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted.

Mr. BOWMAN: What are the words?

The CHAIRMAN: "Are you in favour of introducing the following system into State schools?"

Mr. BOWMAN said he wanted to move an amendment—"Are you in favour of religious instruction in State schools?"

Mr. HARDACRE thought that the question should be—"Are you in favour of introducing the following system of religious instruction in State schools?" They must have the word "religious" put in.

The PREMIER: They did not need that at all. The proposal provided two things—religious instruction and Bible reading.

Mr. BOWMAN: What is the difference? Accept my amendment and you will get over the difficulty.

The PREMIER: The whole question involved religious instruction and something more—Bible lessons—which it was assumed was not religious instruction.

Mr. GRANT: That is religious instruction.

The PREMIER: No; Bible teaching.

Mr. GRANT: They are synonymous.

The PREMIER: He believed in Bible teaching, but hon. members would not admit that he was very religious. (Laughter.) All that was wanted was, "Are you in favour of introducing the following system into State schools?" He would not put any name to it—whether it was religious teaching or irreligious teaching. They simply described what the system was.

Mr. BOWMAN: It is described there.

The PREMIER: It was described in the 2nd paragraph.

Mr. BOWMAN: And the first also.

The PREMIER: He thought, except where the schedule could be charged with being vague or unfairly stating the question, they should keep to it.

Mr. BOWMAN: You have simply omitted the reference to the New South Wales system.

The PREMIER: Just so; that was all that was wanted.

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Mr. BOWMAN: There are some objections even then.

Question—That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted—put and passed.

Question—That the words—

Are you in favour of the adoption of the New South Wales system of religious teaching in State schools as explained above?—

be omitted—put.

Mr. HARDACRE asked if it was in order to discuss the main body of the schedule?

The PREMIER: Certainly.

The CHAIRMAN: Do I understand that the hon. member for Leichhardt has an amendment to propose?

Mr. HARDACRE: He believed some member had. Apart from any amendment that might be proposed, he would point out that the words following the introduction were not very grammatical.

Question put and passed.

Mr. REDWOOD wished to move the addition of the following question:—

In the event of the above proposal being adopted, are you in favour of giving denominational State aid?

As he said before, he thought the two questions should be submitted together, otherwise an injustice would be done to one section of the community. His contention was that the schedule agreed to put before the people one side of the question which, thirty years ago, was abolished from the State schools. The other question—aid to denominational schools—was also abolished at the same time. During the election campaign he was asked whether if the religious instruction referendum was carried he would vote for the passage of a Bill giving effect to it. He distinctly stated then that if Bible reading was carried in the State schools he maintained that they must have denominational aid. They should not do an injustice to a section of the community, and all he asked in proposing this extra question was fair play to those people who were not in accord with Bible reading in State schools. He did not propose to alter the schedule, but simply to submit another question which would enable the people to state whether, in the event of its being decided that religious instruction should be given in State schools, they were in favour of State aid to denominational schools.

The CHAIRMAN: I would call the attention of the hon. member who has moved the amendment to the fact that the title of the Bill is "A Bill to refer to the electors of Queensland a certain question respecting religious instruction in State schools." The hon. member's amendment provides that another question shall be submitted—namely, "In the event of the above proposal being adopted, are you in favour of giving denominational schools State aid? Yes. No." I think that amendment raises an entirely new question, and, that being the case, I cannot accept it, on the ground that it is outside the scope of the Bill.

Mr. REDWOOD: He could not see that it was outside the scope of the Bill—

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Order, order!

Mr. GRANT: This referendum might be held at the time of a Federal general election, and, as it was the practice at Federal elections for electors to put a cross against the names of the candidates for whom they wished to vote, confusion might arise if, in the referendum, they were required to strike out the word "Yes" or "No." Would it not be better to

*Mr. Grant.]*

provide that the electors might put a cross on the ballot-paper to indicate how they wished to vote, and so have uniformity on that particular day?

The HOME SECRETARY thought that if electors were required to put a cross on the ballot-paper that would be misleading. His experience of the Federal system of voting was that it was not a good one, and that it was better not to use a cross. He moved that lines 19 and 20 be omitted, with the view of inserting the following:—

If you desire religious instruction in State schools, vote thus—

Yes.

No.

If you object to religious instruction in State schools, vote thus—

Yes.

No.

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

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with amendments.

The HOME SECRETARY said: I beg to move that the Speaker do now leave the chair, and that the Bill be recommitted for the purpose of reconsidering clause 2.

Question put and passed.

#### RECOMMITTAL.

On clause 2—"Interpretation"—

Mr. HARDACRE said that they had decided that the referendum should [12 p.m.] be held at some general election, but they had not decided whether it should be a State or a Commonwealth election. He, therefore, moved the omission of the word "an" before the word "election," with the view of inserting the words "a State" on the 1st line on page 2.

The PREMIER: That has been already settled.

The HOME SECRETARY: Put it in at the end of line 4, because it has been settled up to that point.

Mr. HARDACRE moved the insertion, after the word "Commonwealth," at the end of line 4, of the words "or an election for the return of members for the Legislative Assembly of Queensland." That made it optional, and the referendum would be taken at whichever election was held first.

Mr. BOWMAN asked if it was understood that the whole of the clause had to be recommitted. There had been a dispute, and the Chairman ruled two hon. members out of order, when the Home Secretary said he was prepared to recommit clause 2 at a future stage.

The PREMIER: On the particular question as to holding it at a Commonwealth or State election.

Mr. BOWMAN: What was the understanding?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! In reply to the hon. member, as I understand it, the clause has been recommitted, and the whole of the clause is open to discussion. I can quite understand it is not the intention of hon. members to labour the question.

[*Mr. Grant.*

Mr. HARDACRE was glad of that ruling. Their desire was that it should not be on the Commonwealth election day, but the State election day. They should get a division on it.

The PREMIER said that a reason for not taking a snapshot vote at this late hour was that so many members had gone home—and they were quite as much interested as those who had stayed—on the understanding that this question was settled.

Mr. BOWMAN: It was not settled.

The PREMIER thought it would be unfair to reverse the decision come to, but it would be quite fair and in accordance with the understanding arrived at this afternoon to make it optional, and not shut the matter up to the Federal election—make it possible to hold it at the State election as well as the Federal election.

Mr. BOWMAN: Their desire had been to fight against the clause in reference to a general election, and to vote against the Commonwealth election being included. It would not be fair to take advantage of a small House, but he thought when the clause was recommitted to-morrow they would have the same right to vote on it as when the question was put.

Mr. W. H. BARNES: They had already accepted this principle in clause 3, and, if they carried this amendment now, they would have to recommit clause 3.

Mr. RYLAND: His amendment on clause 3 was to get a separate day for the referendum, and keep it away from the general election, and he wanted a vote on it, although the House was against him.

Mr. HARDACRE said it was contended that they had settled the question in the afternoon, but what they settled was that it should not be on a special day. They did not settle whether it should be at a State or Federal election. Some of them desired to see it at the State election, as they did not want to throw a burden on the Federal members that they would not bear themselves. He agreed the vote should not be taken in a thin House, and suggested they should leave the division until a fuller Committee, but to take it without discussion. It could only be done by agreement. As they had discussed it so long, they should not discuss it any further to-morrow, but he thought they should leave the division over to a full House.

The PREMIER: I think one day for the discussion of this Bill in Committee is a fair thing.

Mr. HARDACRE wished to withdraw his amendment with the view of substituting another.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. HARDACRE proposed the omission of all the words in lines 1 to 4, inclusive, from the words "An election" down to "Commonwealth," with the view of inserting the words "A State election."

HON. D. F. DENHAM: For the last hour the Committee had been in a tangle, and the Chairman must have had some difficulty in unravelling it. They were now seeking to wipe out what took three or four hours to pass that afternoon.

Mr. McLACHLAN: They wanted to define what general election the question would be taken at. A few moments ago the Premier objected to take a division because there was a thin House, and the Labour party were pre-

pared to allow it to go to a full House at the next sitting to decide on the question. Since then heads had been counted, and the Premier, finding he had a majority, wanted to have a vote to-night.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted (*Mr. Hardacre's amendment*) stand part of the clause—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 30.

Mr. Airey	Mr. Kerr
„ Appel	„ Kidston
„ Barnes, W. H.	„ Mann
„ Barton	„ Maxwell
„ Bell	„ Mulcahy
„ Blair	„ Murphy
„ Cottell	„ Nevitt
„ Denham	„ Paget
„ Grant	„ Petrie
„ Grayson	„ Redwood
„ Gunn	„ Roberts
„ Hawthorn	„ Somerset
„ Herbertson	„ Sumner
„ Hunter, D.	„ Walker
„ Jackson	„ Woods

*Tellers*: Mr. Sumner and Mr. Walker.

NOES, 13.

Mr. Bowman	Mr. McLachlan
„ Coyne	„ Mitchell
„ Hardacre	„ Mullan
„ Huxham	„ Payne
„ Land	„ Ryland
„ Lennon	„ Winstanley
„ Lesina	

*Tellers*: Mr. Huxham and Mr. Lennon.

PAIRS.

Ayes—Mr. White and Mr. Rankin.

Noes—Mr. Adamson and Mr. May.

Resolved in the affirmative.

The HOME SECRETARY moved that in line 9 the word “Commonwealth” be omitted with the view of inserting the word “State.”

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

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with further amendments.

The third reading of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

#### MESSAGES FROM COUNCIL.

##### APPROVAL OF RAILWAY PROPOSALS.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of messages from the Legislative Council intimating that they had agreed to the following railway proposals:—Caboolture to Woodford, Boyne Valley, New Zealand Gully to Yeppoon, Kannangur to Blackbutt, and Atherton extension.

The House adjourned at twenty-four minutes to 1 o'clock, a.m.