

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 17 AUGUST 1910

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

WEDNESDAY, 17 AUGUST, 1910.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (W. D. Armstrong, Esq., *Lockyer*) took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE.

INTERIM REPORT.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER, as chairman of the Standing Orders Committee, presented to the House an interim report from the Standing Orders Committee.

Ordered to be printed.

The PREMIER (Hon. W. Kidston, *Rockhampton*) gave notice of motion in connection with the report.

ESTIMATES-IN-CHIEF FOR 1910-11.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from His Excellency the Governor, transmitting the Estimates of the Probable Ways and Means and Expenditure for the year ending 30th June, 1911.

Ordered to be printed and referred to the Committee of Supply.

INTERIM REPORT OF STANDING
ORDERS COMMITTEE.

Mr. BOWMAN (*Fortitude Valley*): With regard to the new Sessional Orders read by the Premier, there seems to be some hurry in submitting a portion of the work that has been referred to the Standing Orders Committee—the alteration of the whole of the Standing Orders; and I think it would have been more seemly had they terminated their work before submitting their report, instead of submitting an interim report such as we have had submitted to us to-day. I do not think the Government have any cause to complain this session as to the discussion that has taken place on the business of Parliament. With one or two exceptions, the speeches made by members on this side on the Address in Reply were very limited; and there was not much discussion on the Bill to provide for the better representation in this House or on the Mines Regulation Bill, which passed its second reading yesterday. I think no complaint can be urged that we have unduly prolonged—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! There is no question before the House. The Standing Orders Committee agreed that an interim report should be laid before the House; and the leader of the House has taken the ordinary course in giving notice of motion. When the motion in connection with the new Sessional Orders comes before the House, the fullest opportunity for discussion will be given to every member of the House.

Mr. BOWMAN: Has no member a right to object?

The PREMIER: To a notice of motion?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no motion before the House to which an hon. member can object.

TREASURER'S FINANCIAL TABLES.

The TREASURER (Hon. A. G. C. Hawthorn, *Enoggera*) presented the tables relating to his Financial Statement, and moved that they be printed.

Question put and passed.

QUESTIONS.

ALLEGED BRUTAL TREATMENT OF STATE ORPHAN.

Mr. COYNE asked the Home Secretary—

1. Has his attention been drawn to a police court case at Warwick, and reported in *Truth* of the 14th instant, in which a Mrs. Weston was convicted and fined for brutally ill-using a State orphan named Grace Yaxley?

2. In view of the shocking disclosures in that and other similar cases that have occurred from time to time, does he propose to reform the system of boarding-out State orphans with the view of ensuring better protection for these poor friendless and homeless waifs at the hands of those with whom they are placed?

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. G. Appel, *Albert*) replied—

1. Yes; and immediate action was taken by the department.

2. There is no record of a similar case of assault by an employer for the last four years. This girl was not boarded-out, but was in hired service, and was the first girl Mrs. Weston has had from the department. There is no record for many years of children boarded-out having been assaulted. It is not proposed to reform the system of boarding-out State children.

Mr. COYNE: Don't you think it is better to give the lawful natural mothers the same amount of money as the foster-mothers, after all this has happened?

CONVEYANCE OF COPPER BY TRAIN.

Mr. MAY (*Flinders*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

Seeing that copper has been conveyed by train from Mount Elliott to the coast, why cannot the same facilities be given to the Labour Victory and other mines situated between Hampden and Mount Elliott?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. W. T. Paget, *Mackay*) replied—

The carriage of all material on unopened railway lines is necessarily subject to special arrangements, and instruction has been issued to the resident engineer to carry ore from station at 66 miles 70 chains if it will not interfere with the construction of the line.

NEW MAP OF STOCK ROUTES.

Mr. HAMILTON (*Gregory*) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

When will the new map of stock routes, which has been in process of compilation for the last two or three years, be ready for issue?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: (Hon. D. F. Denham, *Oxley*) replied—

Within a fortnight.

1910—2 G

EXPENDITURE BY MINES DEPARTMENT—ROMA BORE.

Mr. MURPHY (*Croydon*), for Mr. Lesina, asked the Secretary for Mines—

What is the total amount expended up to date by Mines Department in connection with the Roma bore?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. J. G. Appel, *Albert*) replied—
£2,500.

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT.

Mr. BOWMAN (*Fortitude Valley*): I desire to ask the Treasurer, without notice, when we are likely to get the Auditor-General's report? We shall probably discuss the Financial Statement next week, and it will be a very great assistance to hon. members if they can have the Auditor-General's report before that discussion takes place.

The TREASURER replied: I do not know. The Auditor-General is not in my department, but I will see if I can expedite the presentation of his report.

SUPPLY.

OPENING OF COMMITTEE.

The TREASURER: Mr. Deputy Speaker,—I move that you do now leave the chair.

Mr. MANN (*Cairns*): Before you leave the chair, Sir, I should like to ask the Treasurer if we shall be able to get the return, asked for in a motion of which the hon. member for Flinders has given notice, before the discussion of the Estimates? The hon. member asks for a tabulated scale of the increases recently made in the payment of the lower-paid employees in the Railway Department, including those on construction works, together with the rate of pay previous to the proposed increases. I should like very much to know what employees are granted increases—whether the increases are to men in the railway service only, or whether they are to men in all branches of the service. There are, in the employ of the Harbours and Rivers Department, boatmen who receive very low wages, and I should like to know if they are to get increases. There are in the Cairns Railway Yard some workers who have been in the employ of the department for nearly two years, and they are getting only 7s. 6d. a day. I should like to know if they are to receive increases, and if the men whose wages are increased will get back pay on the increased scale.

The TREASURER: The matter to which the hon. member refers is the subject of a motion of which the hon. member for Flinders has given notice, and until that motion is discussed I cannot say whether the House will decide that the information asked for should be given; so that I cannot say whether the return will be furnished before the consideration of the Estimates.

Question put and passed.

COMMITTEE.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

(Mr. K. M. Grant in the chair.)

The TREASURER said: Mr. Grant,—I have again the pleasure of submitting to the Committee my annual review of the financial

Hon. A. G. C. Hawthorn.]

position of the State, and it affords me considerable satisfaction to be able to say that the anticipations made in the last Statement have been more than realised. Good seasons continue to afford to Queensland that material prosperity which has marked its progress during the last few years, and the prospects of the State have never looked better. Revenue has increased in a most satisfactory manner, and expenditure seems to have been allowed to keep pace with the great increase in revenue; but, as I will show later on, this increase of expenditure is more apparent than real. It is considered that two things are absolutely essential to the progress of the State—one is extension of railway facilities, and the other is immigration combined with land settlement; and money devoted to opening up the country, and in giving every facility to practical settlers to occupy it, is money well spent.

LAST YEAR'S ESTIMATES AND RESULTS.

	Esti- mated.	Actual.	
Revenue ...	£ 4,837,817	£ 5,119,253	Over the estimate, £281,436
Expenditure	4,834,041	5,113,578	Over the estimate, £279,537
Surplus ...	3,776	5,675	

Hon. members will see that the total increase of revenue over the estimate was £281,436, while the expenditure exceeded the estimate by £279,537, and that the year wound up with a surplus of £5,675, which has been handed to the trustees of the public debt reduction fund, who will, I anticipate, follow their usual practice and purchase a debenture, the proceeds of which will be placed to the credit of the loan account, the surplus thus becoming available for public works.

The following table shows the estimated and actual revenue for 1909-10:—

Head of Revenue.	Esti- mated.	Actual.	Increase.	De- crease
	£	£	£	£
Commonwealth	949,117	1,071,261	122,144	...
Taxation ...	557,000	584,997	27,997	...
Land ...	663,000	722,105	59,105	...
Mining ...	37,400	34,295	...	3,105
Railways ...	2,250,000	2,318,623	68,623	...
Miscellaneous ...	381,300	387,972	6,672	...
Totals ...	4,837,817	5,119,253	284,541	3,105

From this it will be seen that all the items except "Mining" have exceeded the estimate. Land revenue has this year shown a notable increase, while railways have again largely improved their revenue, and the Commonwealth has also shown a considerable advance. The Commonwealth revenue was actually larger than the receipts show, as a sum of £25,385 was kept back from last year's payment by the Federal Treasury. This balance was paid to the State late last week. The Cairns, Cooktown, and Normanton lines of railway show decreases, and in the case of Cairns the falling off was considerable. The actual figures will be seen on reference to Budget Table A.

It may be of interest to hon. members to compare our revenue now and in 1860—a period of fifty years. The population then was 28,056, and revenue £178,589, as compared with last year's population 578,548 and revenue £5,119,253, showing the wonderful progress made in the interval.

The details of the year's expenditure compared with the appropriations are as follows:—

	Appropriation for 1909-10.	Expended, 1909-10.	Saving.	Excess.
	£	£	£	£
Schedules ...	102,102	102,834	...	732
Interest on public debt ...	1,634,789	1,635,270	...	481
Executive and Legislative	16,148	16,023	125	...
Chief Secretary ...	147,805	169,042	...	21,237
Home Secretary ...	523,731	571,650	...	47,919
Public Works ...	198,021	215,343	...	16,422
Justice ...	74,224	78,605	...	4,381
Treasurer ...	163,738	240,252	...	76,514
Public Lands ...	198,636	209,136	...	10,500
Agriculture and Stock ...	51,078	49,856	1,220	...
Public Instruction ...	375,796	371,806	3,990	...
Mines ...	49,307	41,656	7,651	...
Railways ...	1,297,768	1,412,105	...	114,337
Total ...	4,834,041	5,113,578	12,986	292,523
Net excess ...		279,537		279,537

The expenditure thus shows an increase of £279,537 over the estimate, which at first glance may seem to indicate great lack of control at the Treasury—(hear, hear!)—but, as a matter of fact, the expenditure of each department was closely scrutinised month by month throughout the year. We had constantly before our minds the probability of a decrease in our revenue from the Commonwealth of from £300,000 to £400,000, and, in anticipation of that, extreme care was necessary lest so large

[Hon. A. G. C. Hawthorn.

a decrease in our revenue should dislocate our finances. The ordinary expenditure was kept down close to the estimate, so that at the end of the year we had the full advantage of the large increase of revenue, allowing us to make a number of prepayments and adjustments which will greatly strengthen our financial position this year, and enable us to face the enormous reduction in the revenue from the Commonwealth without resorting to fresh taxation.

In the first place, we succeeded in getting in a large number of accounts, amounting in the aggregate to £146,000, which ordinarily would not have been charged until July. Then the £50,000 voted by Parliament last year towards the cost of the University and technical college buildings, together with an additional sum of £20,000 for the same purpose, was placed to credit of a trust account. This provision will relieve the revenue this year and next by a corresponding amount, and further we have paid into loan account a sum of £55,261, being one-half of the depreciation on the recent £2,000,000 loan; and if we are fortunately able to continue this policy and pay off the remaining moiety of the depreciation, the loan will then stand in our books at par, carrying a net interest charge of 3½ per

centum. We also took the opportunity to adjust certain overdrawn trust accounts, and to relieve loan account of the cost of a number of wooden school buildings originally charged to that fund. These items amounted to £28,000. These adjustments, together with the additional £20,000 provided for the University, have been charged to unforeseen expenditure, and will come before hon. members in due course in the Supplementary Estimates.

It will be seen that the items which I may term extraordinary and non-recurring expenditure amount to £249,000; it is thus evident that the ordinary expenditure for the year only exceeded the estimate by about £30,000, which on a total expenditure for the year of over £5,000,000, may be claimed to be fairly careful financing.

LOAN FUND.

The loan transactions during the year were as follows:—

	Cash at Call or Short Notice.	Extended Deposits.	Total Credit.
	£	£	£
Cash balance at credit, 1st July, 1909	1,469,957	938,973	2,408,930
Surplus 1908-9 used in purchase of loan debentures subsequently destroyed	9,940		
Part proceeds of £2,000,000 loan	534,477		
Repayments by local authorities, sugar-mills, railways, etc., etc.	161,717		
Receipts under the Land Sales Proceeds Act of 1902	23,485		
Depreciation and charges on 1908 loan	55,261		
Depreciation on debentures under 1912 loan	440		
Repayments of extended deposits by banks	347,101	347,101	
	12,602,078	591,872	
EXPENDITURE—			
Buildings	18,268		
Water supply	1,679		
Loans to local bodies	185,431		
Loans under Mining Machinery Advances Act	1,491		
Wire netting, Rabbit Boards Act	16,570		
Railways	1,262,776		
	1,486,215		
Cash balance at credit, 30th June, 1910	£1,115,863	£591,872	£1,707,735

It has not been necessary to obtain any further advances under the power given by the last Loan Act, nor is it likely that the requirements for the coming year will necessitate any resort to the money market. There has been a large expenditure of loan money during the year, but, as hon. members doubtless realise, it is impossible to carry on an active policy of railway construction without dipping deeply into the loan account. When it is remembered that the railways are the main highways of a country practically devoid of large navigable rivers, and that they provide little short of one-half of Queensland's revenue as a State, the importance of development in this direction will be manifest.

Full particulars of the loan fund can be seen by reference to Budget Tables E to E4.

TRUST FUNDS.

The expenditure from the various trust funds during the year amounted to £457,636, the principal items being advances and expenses under the Agricultural Bank Act, £54,800; for purchase of cane and working expenses of the Government central sugar-mills, £104,900; interest and other charges under the Closer Settlement Acts, £50,700; on harbour improvement, £103,800; and from the public estate improvement fund, £33,900. The receipts under the trust funds during the year

totalled £561,433. Full details are furnished in Budget Tables D to D6.

The transactions of the Government Savings Bank for the year totalled £5,819,129. The following return shows the progress of this popular and useful institution since 1902-3. This is a very useful table, and will be very interesting to hon. members:—

Year.	Excess of Withdrawals over Deposits.	Excess of Deposits over Withdrawals.	Number of Depositors.	Total Amount to Credit.
	£	£		£
1902-3	452,250	...	80,043	3,772,686
1903-4	131,005	...	80,959	3,741,967
1904-5	...	30,140	84,165	3,875,197
1905-6	...	162,099	88,028	4,142,791
1906-7	...	286,329	92,912	4,543,104
1907-8	...	252,901	100,324	4,921,681
1908-9	...	103,693	108,627	5,158,219
1909-10	...	323,603	114,720	5,622,986

From this it will be observed that the improvement drawn attention to last year still continues. The satisfactory condition of the Savings Bank is highly gratifying, as it is such a reliable manifestation of the great prosperity of the people of the State.

Hon. A. G. C. Hawthorn.]

WATER CONSERVATION.

Since the delivery of the last Financial Statement we have had a visit from Dr. Elwood Mead, the chairman of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission of Victoria, who is recognised as one of the foremost authorities on this important matter; and he has furnished a report which has been printed and tabled in this House. This report has laid down the lines on which the water problem should be dealt with, and a Bill will shortly be presented to the House embodying many of his recommendations, together with provisions that have been shown by local experience to be necessary in order to deal effectively with the subject, which is recognised as one of far-reaching importance to the State, and more particularly to those portions where the rainfall is limited. The staff of the Hydraulic Engineer's Department has already been considerably increased, and opportunity will be taken to put the department on a footing to cope most expeditiously with the increased requirements, and for this purpose the House will be asked to grant an increased amount on this year's Estimates. It may be mentioned that there is at present great difficulty in obtaining in Australia professional men suitable for the work, owing to the general demand for their services here and elsewhere.

COMMONWEALTH AND STATES.

Hon. members will recollect that in view of the expiration of the Braddon clause in the Federal Constitution several conferences were held by the State Premiers and Treasurers, and that as a result of the last conference, held in August, 1909, in Melbourne, an agreement was arrived at providing for a permanent settlement of the financial relations between the Commonwealth and the States. It was agreed that the States should receive monthly from the Commonwealth a sum calculated at the rate of £1 5s. per head of population per annum, and also that the States should permit the Commonwealth to withhold a sum not exceeding £600,000 to provide for the actual shortage in the revenue for last year. In return for these financial proposals the Commonwealth Government agreed to bring before their Parliament the necessary legislation to enable the agreement to be submitted to the electors with a view to getting an alteration of the Constitution made to embody the terms of the agreement therein in lieu of the Braddon clause. The Federal Government submitted legislation accordingly, and passed it through both Houses, and a referendum was taken at the then ensuing Federal election. The agreement was, however, not ratified by the necessary majorities throughout Australia, although I am pleased to say the electors of Queensland by a large majority endorsed the agreement. (Opposition laughter.)

The States will now be faced with a very large reduction of their income without the compensating advantage of the term of extension being embodied in the Constitution. The Commonwealth Government have, in addition, reduced the payment of the three-fourths due to the States under the Constitution to 31st December next, by a sum of £450,000, being the amount of the deficiency in the Commonwealth revenue as at 30th June, 1910. This

[Hon. A. G. C. Hawthorn.

deficiency is to be charged to the States on a per capita basis. The Federal Government have also introduced a Bill to provide for an Australian note issue—(hear, hear!)—and this will have the effect of rendering our Treasury note issue valueless, and the result will be to cause Queensland to lose about £25,000 per annum. I am glad there is no "Hear, hear!" there. In addition to this we shall have to redeem, within six months after the passing of the Act, the whole amount of the Treasury notes issued, which amount to about £1,600,000. Fortunately our position is such that we shall be able to do this without undue pressure on our resources, and arrangements will be made whereby from the date of the passing of the Act gold will be available at the Treasury for the redemption of every note Queensland has issued.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

IMMIGRATION.

The TREASURER: There has been a steady flow of desirable immigrants into the State, during 1909 the number arriving from oversea being 6,899, who have been absorbed without any difficulty. (Opposition dissent.) There was remitted through the Agent-General's Office for these persons a sum of £32,713. In addition to the arrivals from oversea, a large number of persons have arrived from the Southern States and New Zealand, who have decided to make their homes in Queensland, and have accordingly purchased or selected areas of land for that purpose, and in many instances have brought with them considerable sums of money.

RAILWAYS.

The revenue for the past year increased on the former year by £207,915, and there is every prospect of a considerable advance on that amount during the present year. The bountiful rains which have lately fallen all over the State practically assure a successful sugar season, and as there was a considerable falling off in this traffic during the previous year, the anticipated increase will, no doubt, have a beneficial effect on the railway revenue. The cattle and sheep in the State on 31st December last show a considerable addition to the numbers recorded for the previous year, and the revenue from both live stock and wool traffic is, therefore, also expected to yield a large advance on the revenue received from this source during the year 1909-10.

The Boyne Valley Branch to Many Peaks (53 miles) was opened on the 25th ultimo, and the traffic from that place to Mount Morgan alone is estimated to bring in a revenue of about £50,000. The extension of the Clermont Branch, opened to Blair Athol (11 miles) on 25th April last, is expected to produce a heavy traffic in coal to Mount Morgan and Rockhampton. An extension of the line, Goondiwindi to Talwood (54 miles), was opened for traffic on 4th May last. The line from Cloncurry to Mount Elliott (72 miles) was opened for traffic to Friesland (54 miles) on 11th June last, and will probably be completed by the end of this month. The extension, Kannangur to Blackbutt (28 miles), will, it is anticipated, be opened to Linville (15 miles) about October next. The branch from Tolga to Johnstone River (19 miles) was opened to Yungaburra (10 miles) on 15th March last, and will probably be completed before the close of this month.

Mr. MANN: Just about time.

The TREASURER: The extension from Atherton to Evelyn (31 miles) will, it is expected, be opened for traffic early next year.

Other lines under construction are:—

	Miles.
Kingsthorpe towards Main Range	21
Dalby to Tara	52
Talwood to Bullamon	39
Pittsworth to Millmerran	27
Warwick to Maryvale	19
Laidley Creek Branch	7
Port Alma Branch	17

(OPPOSITION Hear, hears! and laughter.)

Kingaroy to Nanango	16
McGregor and Cattle Creeks Branches Extensions	9

It is interesting to note the great advance that has been made in railway construction of late years in Queensland, there being now 3,727 miles actually completed and 293 miles under construction, which makes Queensland the possessor of the greatest mileage of any State in Australia—(hear, hear!)—and puts this State in the position of holding the world's record for mileage of railways in proportion to the population.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The TREASURER: Parliament has also authorised the construction of a further 147 miles of lines, and work on these will be commenced shortly. (Hear, hear!)

LAND SETTLEMENT.

The prospects of land settlement for the ensuing year are very bright. If the rate of new selection recedes it will not be likely to be from decreased demand, but from diminution of supply within reasonably accessible distance from the means of communication. During the past year the growing demand has been met so satisfactorily that the area selected aggregated nearly 6,000,000 acres, and exceeded by 1,000,000 acres the high record of the preceding financial year. (Hear, hear!) This increase has been well distributed over the various sorts of selection tenure. Prickly-pear lands were selected to the extent of 260,000 acres above the previous year's total, and other forms of tenure convertible to freehold—agricultural farms, etc.—to an increased extent of 127,000 acres, while grazing selections show an excess of 636,000 acres.

Mr. LENNON: Any perpetual leases?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: One or two.

The TREASURER: Under the Closer Settlement Act another section of the Jimbour Estate was taken over by the Government, the area being 40,353½ acres, and the purchase money paid being £141,237 16s. 8d. The total area of this estate that has come into the hands of the Government is 80,707½ acres, and the area selected is 39,678 acres. The total area repurchased under the Agricultural Lands Purchase Acts and the Closer Settlement Act to the end of the past financial year is 497,095 acres, for which a total price of £1,349,250 19s. 10d. has been paid. The area disposed of by the Government amounts to 430,266 acres, at prices aggregating £1,327,526 5s. 2d. The instalments of purchase money have been well paid up by the settlers. (Hear, hear!) The arrears

amount to £13,503, of which £11,106 is owing by settlers on the Gowrie Estate. The unfortunate experiences of the Gowrie settlers in regard to weather conditions, which were the cause of the arrears, were referred to last year. There is good reason to believe that the arrears will be met shortly.

MINING.

In the abounding prosperity generally manifest, mining alone of the greater industries does not participate, and Queensland, in common with every State of the Commonwealth, shows declining production. In the older goldfields the rich, easily won and easily treated deposits are becoming exhausted, and the extraction of the ores of the deeper ground is becoming more difficult and costly. No doubt the constant advance in mining practice and in metallurgical processes largely compensates for the fall in grade, and helps to make available much that would formerly have been rejected; but success can only be attained by a comparatively large expenditure, and, in this State at any rate, the flow of capital has latterly been directed towards industries that have been stimulated by, and are largely dependent on, a succession of remarkably favourable seasons. Our mineral fields are confronted by the low price of most of the industrial metals, and expansion has been retarded by the prohibitive cost of transport. (Hear, hear!) It is in the direction of railway extension that relief for this branch of the industry must be sought, and during the current year substantial results may, with some confidence, be expected to follow the completion of the Etheridge, the Hampden-Mount Elliott, and the Boyne Valley lines.

Coalmining alone shows distinct improvement. New mines are being opened, and with an increasing output prices are well maintained. Expansion, if slow, is solid, and the advance in the equipment of our leading mines is evidence of confidence in the soundness of the trade.

PASTORAL.

The last year has been one of prosperity and progress in the pastoral industry that has not been equalled during the last decade. The values for stock have been profitable, and for wool satisfactory, and the pressure of the increase of stock, owing to the good seasons, has induced the opening of meat factories that have long been idle. There are now seventeen meat factories in full operation in different parts of the State, the output of which for 1910 will be much higher than that for 1909, when it was valued at £1,778,709.

Compared with 1900, horses have increased 21.6 per cent.; cattle, 15.5 per cent.; sheep, 89.5 per cent.; and swine, 2.1 per cent.; the numbers for 1909 being—horses, 555,613; cattle, 4,711,782; sheep, 19,593,791; swine, 124,803. The percentage additions are indicative of the recuperative powers of the soil and climate, when it is remembered that the drought of 1902 is included in the period under comparison. (Hear, hear!)

The clip of wool was very satisfactory, and it is estimated that over 18,000,000 sheep were shorn for the return of 101,662,603 lb. of greasy and scoured wool, the average

Hon. A. G. C. Hawthorn.]

price for which was 9½d. per lb. for the former and 17½d. for the latter. (Hear, hear!)

In the latter half of 1909 the price of sheep fell, but the continued high price of wool, and good seasons, created a demand sufficient to absorb the surplus stock, and now prices are very firm and remunerative.

The stock-breeding industry is in practically the same position as it was twelve months ago, so far as prices are concerned. There is a very strong demand for good draught horses, and animals of this description bring very high prices.

The pastoral products exported represented 57.13 per cent. of the whole exports of the State, but this percentage is not to be accepted as the average, owing to the declension of the sugar output last year. The total value of the pastoral exports amounted to £8,276,598, of which wool represented £4,809,496, but this value represents only about half of the total wool exported as the produce of Queensland. Notwithstanding the establishment of wool sales in Brisbane, nearly 50 per cent. of the output is sent by way of the Southern States, to the profit of the merchants there instead of those in this State.

The export trade in horses remains about the same as in former years, 12,756 having been exported, of the value of £159,193, the greater number going to India either directly or through the Southern States.

Further experiments have been made in the export of chilled meat, and though this method has not been installed in more than one line of steamers, it is expected the trade will expand when difficulties have been overcome. (Hear, hear!)

AGRICULTURE.

As in the case of the pastoral industry, the year has been a profitable one, and there has been a general increase of 87,975 acres under cultivation, the area for 1909 being 733,447 acres, which produced crops valued at £3,485,416, and required machinery for its working to the value of £1,026,918, and of which the exports amounted to £2,264,274, an item that would have been much increased but for the shortage in the sugar crop, due to the low average weight of cane obtained from the area. The deficiency in raw sugar amounted to 16,514 tons compared with the preceding year, and if this be calculated at the low rate of £10 a ton, the industry lost for that year £165,140, which went to foreign countries. The bonus earned in handling the crop was £362,990, as against £435,282 in 1908.

This industry has not made the progress that might have been expected from an industry that offers such good returns, especially to the small proprietor, but it is anticipated that when the uncertainty at present prevailing as to the action of the Commonwealth Government is relieved, a larger area will at once be put under crop. The estimated output for the present year is 186,000 tons.

At one time it was feared that the wheat crop would be a partial failure, but with a change of conditions the crop of 1,571,589 bushels exceeded any year in the last decade excepting 1901, 1903, and 1904. The State has not yet supplied the local demand for

[Hon. A. G. C. Hawthorn.

this grain, and it is still necessary to import more foodstuffs than we produce. It is difficult to understand why the production of wheat is not more largely engaged in, seeing that Queensland is so rich in agricultural land. The area under crop, however, advanced by 36,262 acres over the preceding year—(hear, hear!)—and with the influx of farmers from the South with experience and a leaning towards cereal cultivation, the margin between supply and demand will, it is anticipated, decrease year by year.

The position held for years by the sugar industry as the leading agricultural industry of the State is rapidly being approached by the dairying industry, the output of which for last year exceeded £1,500,000 sterling in value, a sum that for the present year will be much increased. The butter produced in 1909 was 24,592,711 lb., but in addition to this the cheese industry is becoming an important factor, and the initiation of an export trade has met with a fair measure of success, which promises to increase. New factories are being established in various districts, and there is every indication of a greater vitality in this industry than in other branches of agriculture. The capital employed in butter factories amounts to £135,901, and there are 11,529 males and 11,419 females occupied in the different branches of dairying, as against 33,459 persons engaged in general agriculture.

The fruit trade with the Southern States, imports and exports, still continues to expand, and the peculiar advantages accruing to this State from its earlier seasons and the consequent opportunity of placing fruit on the markets before prices fall, is bringing to Queensland a reputation that is an inducement to adding to our fruitgrowing areas. The difficulties with regard to the banana trade existing last year have been temporarily overcome, though not by the means sought by those who desired relief. The recent hurricane in Fiji, which is our great competitor, has prevented the growth of the trade between the Southern States and that country, but the protection desired by the growers here, of whom the Europeans exceed the Asiatics, is necessary to bring the industry to the values obtaining before federation.

The prospects for the coming season are at present particularly bright. The climatic conditions are all that could be desired, and it is anticipated that with the additions to the rural population that are now entering Queensland, the agricultural and pastoral statistics will, at the end of this year, show a considerable increase to our wealth.

TRADE AND COMMERCE.

Apart from mining it may be said that all our primary industries and every branch of trade and commerce are in a most flourishing position, and I think I am justified in saying that never before have the prospects of the State seemed so good. (Hear, hear!) The vast resources of Queensland still continue to attract attention, and a large amount of capital from other States and elsewhere is being invested here. As evidence of the soundness of the present position I may mention that the banking returns show that banks' clients are in a much easier position now than for many years past.

Mr. BOWMAN: And yet there's a Labour Government in power.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Not in Queensland.

The TREASURER: The following summary is most eloquent in this respect:—

Quinquennium Ended.	Average Deposits.	Average Loans, &c.	Deposits per Capita.	Loans, &c. per Capita.
	£	£	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
31-12-1889...	8,890,323	14,227,835	24 6 10	38 19 2
31-12-1899...	11,740,636	13,925,500	24 3 5	28 13 5
31-12-1909...	15,135,455	14,200,539	27 11 1	25 17 1

Mr. MURPHY: What was the expenditure from loan per capita last year?

The TREASURER: From these figures it will be seen that whereas for the five-year period ending 1889 the public owed the banks on an average over £5,000,000 sterling, the position is so improved that the reverse now obtains, and deposits exceed loans by nearly £1,000,000 sterling—an advantage in favour of the public of about £6,000,000, which is a further criterion of the great progress made by the State during the intervening years.

Statistics relating chiefly to our productive powers during recent years are as follows:—

	1905.	1906.	1907.	1908.	1909.
Railway earnings	£ 1,483,535	1,663,336	1,940,240	1,985,048	2,218,194
Tonnage of shipping inwards	tons 1,067,741	1,309,934	1,446,635	1,601,107	1,640,344
Tonnage of shipping outwards	tons 1,062,566	1,313,001	1,402,331	1,563,911	1,628,413
Quantity of sugar produced	tons * 152,722	* 184,377	* 188,307	* 151,098	* 134,584
Value of raw sugar produced	£ 1,660,048	1,988,278	2,075,539	1,510,472	1,461,033
Quantity of butter produced	lb. 2,319,976	22,746,593	22,789,158	23,838,357	24,592,711
Value of butter produced ...	£ 788,744	909,864	949,548	1,067,760	994,060
Quantity of wool produced	lb. † 53,072,727	† 66,938,101	99,461,711	110,545,577	129,668,298
Value of wool exported ...	£ 2,640,751	3,388,929	4,133,130	4,139,758	4,811,297
Value of minerals	£ 3,728,275	4,198,647	4,132,163	3,844,487	3,656,564
Exports	£ 11,939,594	12,754,259	14,694,019	14,194,977	14,844,140
Imports	£ 6,699,345	8,311,466	9,429,691	9,471,166	10,187,720
Number of cattle	2,963,695	3,413,919	3,892,232	4,321,600	4,711,782
Number of sheep	12,535,231	14,886,438	16,738,047	18,348,851	19,593,791
Savings Bank deposits ...	£ 1,743,877	1,974,755	2,379,091	2,459,839	2,776,677
Savings Bank withdrawals	£ 1,615,106	1,774,631	1,987,968	2,394,353	2,580,663
Area of land selected under the Land Act, 1897 ...	acres 2,273,004	3,190,257	4,711,812	4,902,314	6,079,608
Excess of departures over arrivals (recorded) ...	white
Excess of arrivals over departures (recorded) ...	white 1,222	2,610	7,659	‡3,276	‡ 10,099

* 94 per cent. net titre.

† Wool exported.

‡ Total excess of arrivals. Figures relating to arrivals and departures of coloured aliens not now supplied by Commonwealth authorities.

HARBOUR IMPROVEMENTS.

The Harbours and Rivers Department have been busily employed during the year, and in connection with improvements, maintenance, and other expenses a sum of about £103,000 has been expended.

BRISBANE RIVER.

Good progress has been made with the dredging of the new bar cutting, 400 feet wide to 24 feet below low water, although the work was hampered somewhat by the necessity of withdrawing one of the ladder dredges for some eight months to carry out urgent work in the Bulimba and South Brisbane Reaches.

Necessary work was also done on the inner bar cutting, near Luggage Point, and a small amount of maintenance dredging in the present outer bar.

The drilling and blasting of the additional 100-foot section of the Lytton rocks has been completed, and the material will be lifted as soon after as a dredge is available, when this

cutting will also have a depth of 24 feet for a width of 400 feet, and further general work has been carried out in the river.

The small clam dredge was employed for some four months in the Boat Channel.

The work of protecting the river banks was suspended in October, 1909, by which time some 3,320 lineal feet had been added to previous amount, making a gross total of 29,000 lineal feet of river bank protected with stone.

During the year, eighty-one vessels, excluding launches, were docked.

NORTHERN PORTS.

At Bowen the "Platypus" has been employed in deepening the entrance channel and basin from 16 feet to 18 feet at low water.

Mourilyan Harbour.—The combined drilling and grab dredge "Mourilyan," specially designed for work at the entrance channel, will be despatched North during this week, to

Hon. A. G. C. Hawthorn.]

proceed with the necessary work to obtain a depth of 18 feet at low water for a width of 180 feet.

Thursday Island.—A considerable amount of work has been done here recently in connection with the restoration of the eastern end of the jetty head, in which several iron piles had been broken and the superstructure damaged.

HARBOUR BOARDS.

The harbour boards at Bundaberg, Rockhampton, Mackay, Townsville, and Cairns have all carried out considerable improvements in their respective harbours.

SHIPPING.

That the efforts made by the Government to improve the waterways to our various ports, to give vessels greater facilities for arriving thereat without loss of time, are greatly appreciated, is evidenced by the fact that every year the class of oversea vessels visiting the State is increasing in size, and, instancing this port alone, the oversea tonnage which arrived here for the twelve months ended 30th June was 1,898,676 tons, showing an increase of 141,531 tons over the previous twelve months. In fact, the largest passenger and cargo vessels visiting Australia now make Brisbane a port of call, as an instance of which the White Star liner "Georgic," said to be the longest ship that has yet crossed the line, ascended the river, berthed at Bulimba, and afterwards departed to sea without any inconvenience. (Hear, hear!)

Several new shipping companies have recently ventured as far as Brisbane in search of cargoes, and it is quite possible that within twelve months more lines will extend their vessels to this State.

The Railway Wharf at Pinkenba has been extended an additional 400 feet, and several more wharves have been erected or are in course of erection; but it will still be necessary to augment the wharfage accommodation to keep pace with the improvements of the port and the rapid development of shipping. (Hear, hear!)

ESTIMATES, 1910-11.

I now present my estimate of revenue for the year 1910-11—

Amount from Commonwealth £685,057

OPPOSITION laughter and Hear, hears!

The TREASURER: I am very sorry to hear that "Hear, hear!"

Mr. LENNON: You knew it.

The TREASURER:

Taxation—

	£
Income tax ...	320,000
Stamp duty ...	211,500
Licenses ...	62,000
Totalisator tax ...	14,000
	<hr/>
	607,500
Land revenue ...	765,000
Mining receipts ...	34,400
Railways ...	2,550,000
Other receipts ...	404,250
	<hr/>
Total ...	£5,046,207

This estimate represents a decrease of £73,046 on the revenue received last year. The amount to be received from the Com-

[Hon. A. G. C. Hawthorn.

monwealth shows a decrease of £386,204 from last year's actual receipts, being on the basis of £1 5s. per capita on the whole year, as hon. members will recollect that the Federal Government have decided to pay on this basis, which is six months before the expiration of the Braddon clause. This sum also includes an amount of £25,385, balance of income which was short paid on 30th June last.

The items of railways, lands, and taxation between them show an increase of about £297,000—which has practically saved the position—due largely to the increased mileage of railway opened up, and to the rapid development of closer settlement in accordance with the policy of the Government. Railways show an increase of £231,400, land revenue an increase of £42,900, and taxation an increase of £22,500, all of which are believed to be safe estimates.

The following is an estimate of expenditure for the year 1910-11:—

	£
Schedules ...	112,044
Executive and Legislative...	16,583
Chief Secretary ...	141,046
Home Secretary ...	563,804
Department of Works ...	124,451
Department of Justice ...	78,170
The Treasurer ...	168,145
Department of Public Lands	209,691
Department of Agriculture and Stock ...	58,250
Department of Public Instruction ...	399,187
Department of Mines ...	51,785
Department of Railways ...	1,479,872
	<hr/>
	3,408,028
Interest on public debt ...	1,635,495
	<hr/>
Total ...	£5,038,523

Compared with the Estimates of the previous year, the Chief Secretary's Department shows a decrease of £7,000. The principal factor in such reduction is the expiration of the subsidy to the Orient Pacific line of steamers, which is no longer a direct charge on the State. The Home Secretary's Department shows an increase of £40,000, for the greater portion of which the police increases are responsible. (Hear, hear!) Smaller increases are also made in the Insanity, Relief of Aborigines, and Orphanages Departments. The Works Department shows a decrease of £74,000, which is more than accounted for in buildings. The policy of the Government for the last few years in respect to buildings has enabled the more pressing needs in that direction to be carried out, and in view of this and of the very high rates now demanded for material and labour it will be well to moderate the expenditure for the present. No further provision is being made or is necessary this year in respect of the University and technical college buildings.

The Department of Justice shows an increase of about £4,000, the greater portion being in connection with courts of petty sessions, in which direction it has been shown that there are increasing demands.

The Treasurer's Department shows an increase of over £4,000, of which the larger portion is necessitated by the increased activity in connection with the Water Supply Department, consequent on the intended action of the Government in that direction.

The Department of Public Lands shows an increase of £11,000. Decreases in several of

the branches will be noticed, but these are more than counterbalanced by the still further increased provision necessary for fees to licensed surveyors, whose employment still continues to be in urgent demand.

The Department of Agriculture and Stock shows an increase of £7,000, of which the Agricultural College is responsible for £2,000, represented mainly by the cost of installing suction gas and refrigerating plants at that institution. State farms, gardens, and nurseries are also receiving increased provision, and amongst the items is one for the establishment of a State farm to the north of Townsville.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear! At last.

The TREASURER: The Department of Public Instruction shows an increase of nearly £23,000 in State schools and technical education.

The Mines Department shows an increase of £2,400, made up of several small additions in different directions, and particularly for a breathing apparatus for rescue station at Ipswich, at a cost of £500.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The TREASURER: Railways show the large estimated increase of £183,000, but the large amount provided is absolutely necessary in order to cope with the rapidly increasing traffic. It must also be remembered that the length of our railways is being largely augmented, and consequently extra provision is required for working and other expenses. On the Estimates this year provision is made for working a total length of 3,922 miles compared with 3,631 miles last year.

As shown above, the total expenditure this year is anticipated to be less than that of last year by £75,000, which, in conjunction with the large prepayments previously referred to, and the increased revenue from purely State sources, will enable us to meet the large fall in Commonwealth revenue without resort to further taxation. (Hear, hear!) Hon. members will see that the members of the public service, school teachers, railway employees, and the members of the Police Force have shared in the prosperity—(hear, hear!)—and the amounts set out in the next table will show that all branches of the public service have during the last seven years participated to a very considerable extent in the general prosperity of the State—

		£
Branches of the public service under the Public Service Board		76,500
School teachers		81,500
Police Force		29,300
Railway employees		135,200
		£322,500

(Hear, hear!)

The adoption of an eight-hour working day in the railway service in August, 1907—that is, three years ago—is responsible for an additional charge of £30,000 per annum to the State.

A summary of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the current year gives the following results:—

		£
Estimated revenue for 1910-11		5,046,207
Estimated expenditure for 1910-11		5,098,523
Estimated surplus		£7,684

I consider that these Estimates have been framed on lines which will enable them to be realised, and hon. members will recognise that if all that could have been desired has not been provided for, it will at least be admitted that we are fortunate in being able to make such liberal provision for increases in the payments to all sections of the public service, and to so amply meet the growing needs of the State in a year when we have to face so enormous a decrease in our revenue from the Commonwealth.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The TREASURER: I move that there be granted to His Majesty for the services of the year 1910-11 the sum of £300, to defray the salary of the aide-de-camp to His Excellency the Governor.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Question stated.

The TREASURER: Mr. Chairman,—I move, according to arrangement, that you do now leave the chair, report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported progress, and the Committee obtained leave to sit again on Tuesday next.

STATE EDUCATION ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. W. H. Barnes, *Bulimba*): In moving the second reading of this Bill, it is not my intention to speak at any length, but I think it is desirable that I should briefly review the circumstances which have led to the introduction of the measure. As hon. members may remember, during the month of March, 1908, a Referendum Bill was brought before this House, and its second reading was carried by 49 to 15. Subsequently the Bill went through Committee. There were various divisions on its several clauses, but, as members will recollect, the provisions of the Bill were carried, and the Bill became law. This year the question of introducing Bible reading into State schools was, in accordance with that measure, submitted to the people of Queensland. The question submitted in the referendum was—

Are you in favour of introducing the following system into State schools, namely:—

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.

The result of the referendum on that question was that 74,228 electors voted "Yes," 56,681 voted "No," and there were 7,651 informal votes. The percentage of electors who recorded their votes was 53.29. The percentage of recorded votes varied considerably in different electorates. For instance, in the electorate of Bulloo the percentage recorded was 41.9.

Mr. ALLEN: What was the reason for that?

Hon. W. H. Barnes.]

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The hon. member will have an opportunity of explaining later on what the reason was. I am giving the official figures as supplied to me by the department. The electorate that polled the largest percentage of votes was Gympie, where 67.16 electors recorded their votes. It may be argued—and indeed it has been argued—that the percentage of votes recorded does not warrant the Government in bringing forward this Bill.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I am very glad to hear hon. members say "Hear, hear!" to that statement, because I think I shall be able to show some of those who have interjected that if they suggest that this Bill should not be gone on with because the percentage of votes recorded is so small, it would be necessary in quite a number of elections which have taken place in this State to start afresh.

Mr. LENNON: There is no analogy.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: There is an analogy. Hon. members on the other side surprise me. There is always an analogy if it suits their purpose, but there is no analogy if it does not suit their purpose. I wish to draw the attention of hon. members to the percentage of votes recorded in Queensland in connection with the Commonwealth elections in 1903, 1906, and 1910. The percentage in 1903 was 54.83, and the percentage in 1906 was 45.94.

Mr. LENNON: But the rolls had not been revised then.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The hon. member wants at this stage to draw a red herring across the track. The figures I am quoting are from statistics provided by Commonwealth officers, and I presume no one will doubt their correctness. I say, if the argument is correct that the percentage of votes cast in connection with the Bible in State schools referendum does not warrant the introduction of this Bill, then that argument applies equally to the elections I have referred to. Now, I want to be quite fair. I will admit that in the year 1910 the percentage was 61.15.

Mr. ALLEN: Ah!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I heard the hon. member for Bulloo make a remark which apparently was not in the direction of appreciating the figures which I have given. Might I remind hon. members that there are very many of them representing constituencies which have never polled anything like the percentage of votes that was cast for this particular referendum.

Mr. ALLEN: I got more votes myself.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The hon. member for Bulloo is a champion at interjecting, and I will tell him exactly the percentage of votes cast in his electorate.

Mr. MAUGHAN: And you are a champion replier.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I am very much obliged to the hon. member for the compliment. The number of votes cast in the Bulloo electorate was only 41 per cent., and one might readily believe that that is a statement the hon. member may not appreciate. The hon. member for Herbert—

Mr. LENNON: What about him?

[*Hon. W. H. Barnes.*]

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The number of votes cast in that constituency in his favour was 32 per cent.

Mr. LENNON: When I was elected, do you mean?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: When the hon. member was elected.

Mr. LENNON: Nothing of the sort; it was 60 odd per cent.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The hon. member will have an opportunity of upsetting my figures if they are not correct. I say the number of votes in the hon. member's electorate cast for him was 32 per cent. In Port Curtis it was 31 per cent., and I might give other instances.

The PREMIER: That is for the particular member, not the total number of votes which were polled.

Mr. COYNE: Give the percentage cast for the referendum.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The percentages cast for the referendum were as follows:—"Yes," 53.57; "No," 40.90; and the percentage of voters who recorded their votes was 53.29.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: Is that a fair comparison?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: That is what I have been leading up to. I am going to show that hon. members have not been prepared to accept this as a fair decision—that is the point I want to make—that they have said this referendum was not binding, as a sufficient number of people did not vote. I have clearly shown that a fair percentage of the people of Queensland voted in connection with this matter, as compared with the number of votes polled at a general election.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: You are dealing with isolated electorates—not the aggregate.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The hon. member does not like them, but I am giving facts that cannot be gainsaid. Now, might I remind the House of the position of parties in the House. When I refer to the position of parties in this House, I am not including those four members who do not belong to any party—I am omitting them—I want that to be clearly understood. The votes recorded for members sitting on this side was 33 per cent., and for members sitting opposite it was only 24 per cent., so I think it will be seen at once that instead of this referendum breaking down by reason of there not being a sufficient number of votes cast, the opposite is the case, and it will be seen that a very large number of people have recorded their votes.

Mr. LENNON: How do you account for the large number of informal votes?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The hon. member might as well ask me how I account for the large number of informal votes in connection with the election of the Water and Sewerage Board that was held in Brisbane.

Mr. BOWMAN interjected.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I would not like to be rude—I might have wished someone else was returned for the Herbert. This is the point I

want to emphasise: The object of the present Bill is to emphasise the will of the people as expressed at the referendum.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: That is the object of the Bill.

Mr. BOWMAN: That is the way to get out of it.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: No; it is not the way to get out of it. I am exceedingly surprised at hon. members on the other side, who used to have the referendum right in the front plank of their platform.

Mr. MULLAN: It is there yet.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: And the very first time it is tested, somehow or other it breaks down as far as they are concerned. If they read it that way, I think it would be a fair thing to remove that plank from the platform altogether.

Mr. MANN: If you agree with the referendum, why not give us some more?

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I am told that somehow or other that plank has been shifted down a bit. I do not know who shifted it—

Interjections by OPPOSITION MEMBERS.

Mr. BARBER: Perhaps Garland did it.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: There is no doubt about this: This question was submitted to the people—whether the people decided rightly or wrongly it does not seem to me that this is our business—we submitted it to the people, and the people said, by a majority, that they wish to have it.

Mr. LENNON: Why not alter the conditions of the Elections Act?

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The hon. member is a champion in bringing forward something to find a reason for not having it carried out.

Mr. LESINA: That is two champions you have discovered.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I think hon. members will do me the credit that right through I have been consistent on this particular subject, but I have no doubt that if the majority of this House were consulted, as far as the feelings of individual members are concerned, they might say they would rather not have this thing.

Mr. COYNE: What about the good of the State?

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: But there can be no doubt that it has been taken away from this House by the people, and I claim that every man who voted for this question to be sent to the people is in honour bound, when the people have decided in a certain way, to carry out the wishes of the people.

Mr. BOWMAN: That is no reason at all.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: That is the logical conclusion. There is one other point I wish to make plain. Going back to the statement I made with regard to the percentages of votes cast, I find in looking up the votes in Switzerland—the very home of the referendum—that during 1879 to 1891 there were about twenty occasions on which matters were sent to the people for their decision, and in that close and compact country the average number that voted during the number of times I have mentioned

was only 58 per cent., and so I think it will be admitted by this House—going back to the point that the country, scattered as it is in many places, spoke out well in connection with this particular subject—

Mr. FERRICKS: Some places spoke against it very emphatically.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: If hon. members will allow those in favour of it to decide the question, we might pass the Bill in an hour, because the majority of the constituencies voted in favour of it.

Mr. FERRICKS: Your contention was that it was for the scattered districts, and they spoke against it.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I think it is my duty, for the information of hon. members, to very briefly review the measure. Clause 1 has to do with the title and construction of the Act. Clause 2 repeals section 5 of the principal Act.

Mr. LENNON: You have no right to do it.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Subclause (2) deals with the word "secular." Hon. members will notice that by repealing the word "secular" that it opens the door for the admission of religious instruction in State schools.

Mr. LENNON: More's the pity!

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Subclause (2) deals with the man, in a question of this kind, is entitled entirely to his own opinion, but I think that hon. gentleman in dealing with this subject should deal with it carefully, because he has no right to assume that any other hon. gentleman does not look on it from just as conscientious a point of view as he does himself. Clause 22A is to follow section 22 of the principal Act, and it reads—

In addition to the subjects of instruction enumerated in the last preceding section, instruction shall, in accordance with regulations in that behalf, be given in the primary schools during school hours in selected Bible lessons from a reading book to be provided for the purpose; but such instruction shall not include any teaching in the distinctive tenets or doctrine of any religious society or denomination.

The junior member for Fortitude Valley,

Mr. McLachlan, yesterday asked [5 p.m.] a question about the number of one-roomed schools there are in Queensland. I would point out here that the practice in the other States has been something like this with reference to the religious instruction: When instruction of a religious nature is given, it is always given in the first half-hour or the first hour during the day. Or if that has not been found to be convenient, the last hour or last half-hour of the day has been selected in which to give the lesson.

Mr. LESINA: And they rarely avail themselves of it.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Well, if they rarely avail themselves of it, I ask why all this trouble about passing it? Hon. gentlemen may ask: "Suppose the weather is wet, what are you going to do in the case of the one-room schools; are the children going to be put outside?" I say that the practice which has been carried out in the other States, no doubt, will be the practice carried out here, and the practice there is that when the weather is

Hon. W. H. Barnes.]

increment the children are not allowed to remain outside at all, but rather these religious lessons do not take place at all.

The PREMIER: The children will settle that point.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: As the Premier says, the children will settle that question themselves.

Mr. McLACHLAN: By whom will the Bible lessons mentioned in this clause be selected?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The Bible lessons will be selected—

Mr. COYNE: By the Bible in State Schools League?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: No, no!

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Yes, yes!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: In answer to the interjection of the hon. member for Warrego, I may say that surely the head of the Education Department will display that common sense which I think he displays in other matters.

Mr. COYNE: He has been driven a good deal lately.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Well, all I can say is that I do not think that the head of the Education Department is totally regardless of the interests of the people, in spite of what hon. members opposite might think. Common sense must prevail in all these matters, and I take it that the head of the Education Department, seeing the large and important interests at stake, will take care to guard matters carefully, and he has a right to do so, so far as the convictions of everyone in this community is concerned.

Mr. LENNON interjected.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: There is no doubt that the hon. member for Herbert is fond of the clergy. I do not know where his fondness and his love come from, but I am sure that they will appreciate it greatly. I am not here advocating anything for the clergy.

Mr. BOWMAN: Yes, you are.

Mr. FERRICKS: The whole Government is dominated by them.

Mr. LAND: And by Garland.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The question has been taken out of the hands of the clergy altogether, and it has largely been taken out of the hands of this House, and is now in the hands of the people. The people have practically asked us to confirm their action outside, and that is the position which I am taking up this afternoon. Now, I want to further point out, in answer to the junior member for Fortitude Valley, Mr. McLachlan, that, in connection with the clergy, they are permitted to come in—or they will be permitted to come in—to the schools at special hours as the Bill states.

Mr. HAMILTON: They have always had that privilege.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The school committee will see that the time of the children is not entrenched upon at all. It has been stated by some hon. gentlemen that the allowing

[Hon. W. H. Barnes.

of these lessons in the State schools is going to create no end of trouble from a sectarian point of view.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I ask if that has been the position of things outside of Queensland?

LABOUR MEMBERS: Yes, yes!

Mr. LESINA: Of course it has.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I have here a quotation from a letter which came to the Education Department in reply to inquiries made in the South, and this is what the writer says—

Mr. COYNE: Who is the writer?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It comes from the Education Office of New South Wales, and this is what it says—

I may add that the non-sectarian system in force in this State, providing as it does for general Scripture teaching by the ordinary teaching staff of the schools as well as special religious teaching by clergymen to pupils of their own persuasion, meets with general approval.

Mr. COYNE: Was that from Mr. Lobban?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It is from an officer of the Education Department of New South Wales. Do hon. members think that the officers of the Education Department of New South Wales would make a statement that was not correct? Would any hon. member here say that the officers of the Queensland Education Department were likely to make any statements that were not correct?

Mr. MULLAN: Is the writer of that letter a present officer of the New South Wales Education Department?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Well, if hon. members think that our officers in the Education Department would not say what was incorrect, then I claim for the officers of the New South Wales department the same consideration that we show to our own.

Mr. LENNON: Tell us if the writer is a present or past officer of the New South Wales Education Department.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I told you that it came from the New South Wales Education Department, so it cannot be a past officer, but a present one. I do not wish to say anything further with regard to this question.

Mr. BOWMAN: Before you sit down, will you give us an idea of what are the subjects in the present school curriculum that are likely to be dropped for the substitution of this religious teaching?

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MULLAN: That is a good question.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The hon. gentleman wants me to tell him something which the Education Department has not taken in hand, but I can say that the Education Department will make no alteration in the curriculum until this House says that that alteration is to be made.

Mr. MULLAN: Then how are you going to include the religious lessons?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The same as is being done in other schools. Some start from 9 a.m. to 9.15 a.m., and others from 9.15 a.m. to 9.30

a.m., and perhaps up to 10 o'clock, or perhaps they will get an hour or half an hour in the evening.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: Your curriculum is stuffed now.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: This Bill is not before the House to adopt because it may be desired by any member to vote for it or against it because of this particular provision. I want to emphasise the point that this Bill is put before the House by the Government to carry out the wishes of the people as expressed on the 13th of April last in connection with the particular matters submitted to them. I have much pleasure in moving the second reading of the Bill.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BOWMAN (*Fortitude Valley*), who was received with Opposition "Hear, hears!" said: When the hon. gentleman was moving the second reading of this Bill, I was hoping that he would give us some information regarding the working of that particular Bill in New South Wales.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: When I gave it to you, you would not accept it as being correct.

Mr. BOWMAN: I think we might have had something more extensive than the mere slip which the hon. gentleman read, and which he had received from an official in New South Wales. Now, I would just like to repeat a statement I made in speaking on the Address in Reply when criticising the policy Speech of the Government. The hon. gentleman stated in his address this afternoon that every hon. member who voted for the referendum should vote for this Bill. I was one who voted for the referendum, and I made a statement here that it was one of the votes that I cast during my political existence in this House that I most bitterly regret—a vote I believe that enabled this present Bill to be brought before this House by the referendum that has been taken. Now, there was a sneer, when the hon. member for Woollongabba was speaking on the Address in Reply, about the conscientiousness of hon. members. I do not take much notice of the sneer of that hon. gentleman, or of anything else that he says.

Mr. D. HUNTER: Then why are you referring to it?

Mr. BOWMAN: But I just want to remind him, and also other hon. members, that it is quite possible for any man to change his opinions, and also to get credit for that change.

Mr. MURPHY: Look how the Premier has changed his opinions!

The PREMIER: I have not changed my opinions on this subject, anyhow.

Mr. BOWMAN: It has been frequently stated that there was a certain power behind the Labour party that forced them to do this or that—which forced them to oppose this particular Bill. Now, the education plank of our platform is one that has been in that platform ever since the party was formed.

Mr. D. HUNTER: So has the referendum.

Mr. BOWMAN: The hon. gentleman leading the Government was once a member of that party that believed in it. There is also another plank that has been referred to by the Minister for Public Instruction this afternoon—namely, the referendum; and he states that we as a party, if he is correctly informed,

have shifted that plank only to make it the most important and foremost that is on our platform to-day. But I would like to remind the hon. gentleman that I explained in my previous speech that I was a firm believer in the principle of the referendum apart from one question, and that was a conscientious question known as the religious question.

Mr. D. HUNTER: But you did not say that two years ago.

Mr. BOWMAN: I have admitted my mistake, and I cannot go beyond what is recorded in *Hansard* as to what I did say; but I, for one, am not going to perpetuate a mistake.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BOWMAN: I may tell hon. members that while there were 600 votes during that referendum cast against my colleague and myself in favour of Bible teaching in State schools, I might say that in the four elections I have contested in Fortitude Valley I have on each occasion strongly opposed any alteration in our present educational system.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BOWMAN: I was returned on one occasion by a majority of between 800 and 900. The hon. gentleman who introduced this Bill claims that those of us who voted for that referendum have a right to cast our vote for this Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: That is if you want to be logical.

Mr. BOWMAN: Well, whether I am logical or not, I am going to offer the strongest opposition I can to the passage of this Bill, both on the second reading and in its Committee stage, and if I can do anything to mutilate the Bill in Committee I will be delighted to do it, so as to make it inoperative as against the present educational system.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BOWMAN: I am certain that if every hon. member in this House, with one or two exceptions, were to speak and act as they think, then the Bill would be overwhelmingly defeated, because there are not half a dozen men in this Chamber to-day who believe that there should be a change in the present educational system.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BOWMAN: Now, in introducing this Bill we are interfering with a system of education that has been in operation for thirty-five years.

Mr. MURPHY: Hear, hear! And a good system, too.

Mr. BOWMAN: A system which it is claimed is as perfect as almost any other system in any part of the world to-day—a system that has been commended by other parts of the world because of its being of a secular nature. (Hear, hear!) Now, to support this Bill would be to support a system of denominational teaching.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BOWMAN: Whatever members may think, by the very fact of allowing a clergyman to go into a school you are simply paying the people's money for a portion of the time in which denominational instruction can be given to the children of Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: We do not pay the clergy.

Mr. LENNON: That will come later on.

Mr. BOWMAN: But you are paying for a portion of the time that the clergymen go

Mr. Bowman.]

there to give instruction, and that is denominational aid pure and simple. How many hon. members are there in this House who, if the question of denominational aid was brought up for another sect in this community, would cast their votes for it? For the last thirty-five years we have been opposed to any system of denominational aid, and I will always be against any form of denominational aid being given to any sect in the community.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. HAMILTON: How can you refuse aid after this is passed?

Mr. BOWMAN: Simply because I can refuse it on these grounds: We know that the Roman Catholics and that a fairly large section of the Anglicans have their private schools to-day.

Mr. KEOGH: The Roman Catholics do not ask for it.

Mr. BOWMAN: But they pay for their education because they have, I suppose, conscientious scruples about their children being taught in the State schools, or think that they can better teach them in their own. Now, they have paid, and I think, as that has been carried on, we might well leave the present system alone. The hon. gentleman has alluded to the question of percentages this afternoon, in connection with the referendum that has taken place. I want to say that it is not so much a question with me as to what the percentage was. I do not think the referendum should have taken place the day it did. I was one who contributed to it, and I have got to take my share of the blame. I expressed my opinion, as *Hansard* will show, that it should neither have taken place at a State election nor at a Federal election; if it was going to be taken at all, it should have been taken on a separate day, apart from any other political question, so that the people would have been able to vote on one clear issue.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Why didn't you try to alter it?

Mr. BOWMAN: I was not here, and those were the remarks I made in 1908 when I spoke on it; but the leader of the Government was not game to attach it to his own State election, because he knew—

The PREMIER: The leader of the Opposition was not game either. (Government laughter.)

Mr. BOWMAN: The hon. gentleman knew that if it were introduced at a State election it might go up against his personal interests.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Did you want it at a State election?

Mr. BOWMAN: I did not. I expressed myself to that effect, and voted against it. I think it was the hon. member for Clermont who interjected that the experience of New South Wales proved that the system is a failure there, and I am going to read the report of the Government Statistician of that State, as recorded in "The Official Year Book," to show exactly what they think of it in New South Wales.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: What year?

Mr. BOWMAN: It is the latest—1908-9. On page 88 he says—

The advantage of the provision permitting religious instruction to be given to scholars in State schools has not been used to a very great extent by the various denominations.

[Mr. Bowman.

The total number of visits paid by clergymen and religious teachers during the year 1908 was as follows:—

Denomination.	No. of Visits,
Church of England	24,701
Roman Catholic	1,032
Presbyterian	7,143
Methodist	7,604
Other denominations	4,441
Total	44,921

Nearly 45,000 visits were paid to public schools by religious teachers during 1908—that is to say, 1,000 visits were paid each week that the schools were open. Stated thus, the result may appear satisfactory; but, if the visits be compared with the number of opportunities for religious teaching available under the Act, a less favourable light is thrown upon the subject. Taking into consideration the number of schools in existence, and the time during which they were open, it is found that the visits by all the denominations taken together represented only a little more than 10 per cent. of the opportunities afforded.

There are many schools in remote country districts, among scattered populations, where it is impossible for the religious teachers to attend, and consequently the figures just quoted represent an extreme case; but, assuming that one-half of the schools are practically inaccessible for purposes of religious teaching, thereby doubling the quoted ratio of visits, it does not appear that the visitations approach in a material degree the opportunities afforded by law.

I shall now quote a few facts from the report of the Department of Public Instruction in New South Wales for the year 1908—

Schools that might be visited, 3,002.

Total number of visits paid, 45,000.

Average visits for the year, 15.

This has been, about the average for several years.

Church of England visits a fraction more than 8 per year. The number used to be greater.

Presbyterians, 2½ visits in a year.

Methodists, 2½ visits in a year.

Other denominations, 1½ visits in a year.

Roman Catholics, 1,000 visits.

All of these visits are not made by ministers of religion. The Anglican Church has an organisation for employing catechists to do this work, and the schools visited, for the most part, are in the great centres of population. The results in New South Wales, therefore, according to the Government Statistician, are not at all satisfactory. Then we may ask ourselves this question: How much have the children benefited by this meagre teaching? Many of the advocates of religious instruction in the State schools claim that it will have a regenerative influence on the young mind.

Mr. HARDACRE: A degenerating influence, more likely.

Mr. BOWMAN: I do not know what the result will be, but many people believe that it will do good, though, personally, I do not believe that good will result from it. I read a letter which was written to the Melbourne *Age* of 30th July last by a school teacher, and which was reprinted in the Brisbane *Telegraph* of Saturday last. There are some interesting figures given dealing with three States of the Commonwealth, and it is as well that I should read those figures to show how far people who argue that the introduction of religious teaching in the State schools will have the effect of reducing crime are supported by actual facts. The letter reads—

A strong reason against disturbing the purely secular character of the education given in the

State schools is the fact that no proof has yet been brought forward that our secular system gives inferior results to those obtained where religious instruction is imparted daily as part of the ordinary school course. New South Wales has kept up the practice of Scripture reading in schools during the whole period for which the Victorian secular system has been in operation. Last year some advocates of the Bible in schools made the remarkable discovery that New South Wales is reducing its criminality more rapidly than Victoria. Further inquiry brought out the fact that though the schools of New South Wales had enjoyed religious instruction uninterruptedly, while those of Victoria had been purely secular, for nearly forty years, criminality in New South Wales is seemingly much higher than in Victoria. The real fact of the case is that New South Wales is beginning now to remove some of this reproach against it. If the Scripture lessons in the schools in New South Wales had anything to do with the matter, they ought to have produced conspicuous results long ago. New South Wales is a State where the Government has supplied religious instruction without a break. Victoria and South Australia are States where purely secular education has been on trial in the State schools for a considerable time. The table given hereunder is derived from the last Victorian "Year Book," and shows the number of persons per 1,000 of population in each State charged with offences against the person at different dates.

	1890.	1895.	1900.	1905.
Victoria	3.66	2.12	1.88	1.59
New South Wales ...	7.92	3.53	3.28	2.50
South Australia ...	1.64	1.18	0.85	0.66

The HOME SECRETARY: Why not give the figures for Queensland?

Mr. BOWMAN: I am giving this as I have it. I think Queensland is equal [5.30 p.m.] to any State in the Commonwealth. I am giving this as it appears in the "Year Book," and I do not know why Queensland is not included.

Between the two secularly educated States of Victoria and South Australia, the religiously educated New South Wales appears much the more addicted to violent crime. It shows a much greater absolute improvement in the fifteen years between 1890 and 1905 than either Victoria or South Australia, because it had so much more bad ground to recover. In 1890 New South Wales was more than twice as bad as Victoria, and nearly five times as bad as South Australia, whereas by 1905 it was only half as bad again as Victoria, and only about four times as bad as South Australia. The position in New South Wales is still so much worse than that in Victoria and South Australia that there is no warrant for our introducing the Scripture lessons of New South Wales into our schools. On the other hand, the marked superiority of South Australia to Victoria shows the many other factors besides education that enter into the matter. The apparent success in New South Wales was attributable to a much larger total of criminality in 1890 to be wiped off the slate by subsequent improvement. The tale of crimes against property is very similar.

I think this goes to show that, with the many years' experience New South Wales has had of this system, it has not brought about the satisfactory results that many of the advocates of the alteration of our system believe. Under the Bill the Minister told us that the teacher would be asked to give Scripture lessons without comment—that is, regarding dogma, or the dogma which the teacher might hold. He claims that the teachers will have the right to give religious or Bible teaching from a selection that may be made, I take it, by his own department; and they are not to comment. I will read what it says in the Bill—

In addition to the subjects of instruction enumerated in the last preceding section, instruction shall, in accordance with regulations in that behalf, be given in the primary schools during school hours in selected Bible lessons from a reading book to be provided for the purpose; but such instruc-

tion shall not include any teaching in the distinctive tenets or doctrine of any religious society or denomination.

Now, I would like to ask the hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill what will be the effect of the teaching if the teacher merely reads the lesson without explanation?

Mr. HAMILTON: They might as well have a phonograph.

Mr. BOWMAN: The art of teaching does not consist in merely getting the child to read something, but in the teacher applying his knowledge and skill to the explanation of what is read. I think it will be futile to provide something for the child to read without any explanation being given. And yet in the very next part of the clause it is provided that clergymen of various denominations may go in and give religious instruction "during one hour of such school day or school days as the committee or other governing body of such school are able to appoint." The hon. gentleman told us—I was very glad to get the information—that the custom in New South Wales has been for the clergyman to enter the school either the first hour in the morning or the last hour in the afternoon. Is that so?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: That is the usual custom.

Mr. BOWMAN: I have been in New South Wales, and I have seen a clergyman go into a school, not at the first lesson in the morning, but just before lunch-time. And a clergyman who has to travel, like some of those clergymen with large circuits, could not confine themselves to the first hour in the morning.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I said that was the usual plan.

Mr. BOWMAN: If it is the usual plan, it is an argument that there is no necessity for this Bill, because either before school hours or after school hours clergymen are permitted to go into the schools without interference. They do not disturb the curriculum, and no objection is taken. That has been in operation for many years, but has never been availed of to any great extent. It has been argued by the Minister in charge of the Bill that a majority has spoken. He gave a list of the number who cast their votes—74,228 in favour, 56,681 against, and 7,651 informal; but he omitted to mention the very important fact that 121,000 people abstained from voting.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I gave it by inference when I stated the percentage.

Mr. BOWMAN: The hon. gentleman did not remind us of the number who abstained from voting; and he claims that is a fair percentage to alter the existing system. If some of the framers of the Act could rise from their graves to-day they would look with a great deal of scorn upon the hon. gentleman for introducing this provision to alter an Act that has done such splendid work.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I gave the percentage.

Mr. BOWMAN: I am referring now to the number of votes that were cast. The hon. member for Carpentaria asked a question some time ago about the number of polling-booths there were during the State election, and the number of polling-booths there were at the recent Federal election. I do not know whether that information has been supplied, but it has been stated by many of the Western and Northern members that the number of

Mr. Bowman.]

polling-booths that gave facilities to a number of electors during the State election was very much reduced when the poll was taken in connection with this referendum.

The HOME SECRETARY: There was a polling-booth wherever there was a Commonwealth polling-booth.

Mr. BOWMAN: I think hon. gentlemen will admit that if a full vote was wanted on this question, the fullest facilities should have been given for people to record their votes. It was not a Commonwealth matter, but a State matter; and wherever there were State rolls there should have been the same facilities in regard to polling-booths as there would be at a State election. (Hear, hear!) That was not done.

The HOME SECRETARY: The same thing applies to polling-booths for a Commonwealth referendum. As a matter of fact, we endeavoured to get a number of additional polling-booths; but the Commonwealth would not give additional polling-booths for their referendum.

Mr. BOWMAN: When the Premier was speaking on the Address in Reply he stated that he considered this question was now no longer in the hands of members of Parliament; that the people of the State having spoken on the question, it was our simple duty to obey their mandate and give effect to the expressed wish of the majority. We heard a great deal this afternoon about majority rule from the Secretary for Public Instruction.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Do you differ from that?

Mr. BOWMAN: Yes; I do in certain particulars. Majority rule is not a principle for universal and unlimited application.

The PREMIER: Hear, hear!

Mr. BOWMAN: The hon gentleman says "Hear, hear!" and I am glad to know that he assents to that proposition. There must be a limit to the right of majority rule. I am dealing with the situation as we have it on this question, and I shall be candid in stating my position. Perhaps there are many who have done wrong who would not be as candid as I am in the matter, but I stand here and admit that I have done wrong. I have recanted. Majorities may have unlimited power, but they do not possess unlimited rights. (Hear, hear!) The State, being a civil and not a religious institution, has no right to legislate on religious subjects, and has no right to rule in religious affairs. The proper object of government is to protect all persons in the enjoyment of their rights, both civil and religious, and not to determine for any what their religious faith and practice shall be.

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

Mr. BOWMAN: I am quoting from a book that it is well worth the hon. gentleman's while to read, and I am going to give him something further from the same book for his edification. It is a book by W. A. Colcord, entitled "The Rights of Man, or Religion and the State." That volume and Picton's "Bible in State Schools" have done more than anything I have read to convince me of the mistake which I made in this matter, and I hope that, even if this Bill is passed, hon. gentlemen will read those two books, as I feel satisfied that there is sufficient argument in them to alter their

[Mr. Bowman.

belief on this subject. I shall quote a few extracts from page 87 of Colcord's "Rights of Man." The first is as follows:—

Lord Macaulay, in his review of Mr. Gladstone's work on "Church and State," enunciated a great truth when he asked, "Have not almost all the Governments in the world always been in the wrong on religious subjects?" "Where one has used its power for the propagation of truth," he adds, "a thousand have used their power for the propagation of falsehood."

Again—

Alexander Campbell has well said, "The man who seeks the truth by the test of sincerity, majority, and antiquity will never find it on earth. This is amply true of the present and all past ages. There are sincere Turks, Jews, pagans, infidels. There are many ancient errors, heresies, and sects. And as for majorities, from Enoch till now, they have generally, if not always, been wrong in religion. Where was the majority when Noah was building the ark? When Abraham forsook Ur of the Chaldees? When Lot abandoned Sodom? When Moses forsook Egypt? When Elijah witnessed against Ahab? When Daniel and his companions were captives in Babylon? When Malachi wrote? When the Baptist preached? When Christ was crucified? When the Apostles and many of the first Christians were persecuted? Let those ponder this who are always insisting that the majority should rule in religious things."

The author goes on to say—

John Locke, the great Christian philosopher, says, "An error is not better for being common, nor the truth for having lain neglected; and if it were put to vote anywhere in the world, I doubt, as things are managed, whether truth would have a majority, at least, while the authority of men, and not the examination of things, must be its measure."—"Essay on Human Understanding," Bk. IV., ch. 3, sec. 6.

Majority rule in religious things is the cry of either a bigot or a persecutor.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BOWMAN: That is my honest opinion. I know that certain members of this party have given a pledge to vote for this Bill, but I also know that on the principle of retaining our secular form of education the whole of the party are at one with the opinions I have uttered this afternoon. There is not a member of this party who would like to see our present system of education altered, though I have no doubt that those members who gave a promise or pledge to support the Bill will keep that promise. One energetic ambassador on this particular question, Archdeacon Garland, went out of his way, in my opinion, to do an unfair thing to those who gave a promise to vote for the Bill.

Mr. KEOGH: He is doing so still.

Mr. BOWMAN: That gentleman stated that those members were going to break their promise, and he made that statement before they had spoken, or had an opportunity of speaking, on the question. He insinuated that certain members of the party were under the dominance of some other power. I should like to tell that reverend gentleman that this party, as I know it, is as free from any interference from any religious body as any political party in Australia. We, as a party, not only here, not only in the Commonwealth, but I think throughout the world, have done more to break down prejudice and religious bigotry than any other political party that has ever existed.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BOWMAN: We have another gentleman coming from the State of New South

Wales, who is held up as a paragon which we should copy—that is the Rev. Dill Macky. I do not know whether the hon. gentleman in-charge of the Bill had anything to do with his coming here, but he is a man who is sowing the seed of sectarian discord, a man who has wilfully lied against this party, a man who has declared publicly that we are under a certain domination. I say that it is a lie from beginning to end, and he is a disturber who has no right to come into a community such as we have in Queensland—which has lived for years without this sectarian bitterness—and stir up discord as he has during the last few weeks.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. KEOGH: Would you expect anything else from a man like that?

Mr. BOWMAN: I do not know who are the parties responsible for bringing that gentleman here, but I say it is unfair for a man like the Rev. Dill Macky to come here and make the wilful mis-statements he has made at Ipswich, Brisbane, and in other parts of Queensland. Thank God, so far we have been free from religious strife in Queensland! But I do believe—I would be sorry if it does come about—that by the introduction of this matter we are likely to get sectarian differences.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: You are evidently trying to make it so.

Mr. BOWMAN: Do you think I am going to stand here and keep my mouth closed against a man coming here from New South Wales and lying against the party I have the honour to lead? What does the hon. gentleman take me for? I say he has made a wilful mis-statement of facts. I would like to use a stronger term, but I would probably be called to order by you, Sir, if I made use of it. I do not know whether the reverend gentleman is in league with the hon. gentleman who is at the head of the Department of Public Instruction or not.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: That is very unfair. I know nothing about him.

Mr. BOWMAN: Just as fair as your cry about me creating sectarian strife. I have all my days always endeavoured to act, not the part of a bigot, but to be tolerant of all creeds and all nationalities. I have been taken to task more than once for actions I have done, but what I have done I have done in that tolerant spirit, with the view of not hurting any section of the community, irrespective of their creed or nationality. Now, I know that the object, not only of the Rev. Garland but also of the other gentleman I have referred to, is to use an influence at the present time, and I know that the Rev. Garland has personally used his influence with some members of this party, and threatened them that if they did not vote for this measure, with what might happen.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Why not deal with the Bill?

Mr. BOWMAN: I have dealt as fully with the Bill as the hon. gentleman did. I am dealing with the effects of this Bill, which I think will not be to the advantage of Queensland. These clergymen are to have an hour a day, or five hours a week; if the school committee agrees, it is there. If you can get a committee that is favourable to a clergyman going to the school for an hour every day in the week, he can go. The hon. gentleman re-

ferred to the one-room schools, and it was very interesting to listen to the evasive way in which he treated the matter.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BOWMAN: The bulk of our schools are one-room schools—

Mr. MCLACHLAN: And one-teacher schools.

Mr. BOWMAN: Yes; and if a clergyman goes there, and half belongs to one denomination and half to another denomination, the one-half has to go outside while the other half is being taught this religious lesson. Now, is that fair? Is it fair that a teacher who may have conscientious scruples against teaching certain doctrines or certain lessons should be asked to do it? Is it right? I hope we will be able to get an amendment; at any rate we shall test the Government on this point—that there shall be a clause in our Education Act—a conscience clause for the school teacher—if they conscientiously believe that they cannot teach the lessons as supplied to them, that they will have the right to refuse.

The PREMIER: They will not have to teach them.

Mr. BOWMAN: What does the hon. gentleman expect the teachers to do?

The PREMIER: If he is a sceptic, I expect him to make the children under him sceptics.

Mr. BOWMAN: The hon. gentleman knows something about scepticism, I admit; but there are men, not merely those who are infidels or agnostics, but conscientious men and women who believe in the Christian religion, be they Protestant or Catholic, and they are conscientiously opposed to Bible teaching in State schools.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BOWMAN: Half the Presbyterian Church of Queensland is against it, and the bulk of the Congregationalists are opposed to it. I know a conference was held some two years ago, and I think the clergymen, with one or two dissentients, carried a resolution against Bible teaching in State schools.

The PREMIER: All the Presbyterians are not against it.

Mr. BOWMAN: I know the hon. gentleman claims to be a Presbyterian, and I cannot understand him carrying this into effect. I know the clergyman he sits under, the Rev. Mr. Gibson, who is perhaps one of the most learned men we have in the Presbyterian Church—

Hon. R. PHILP: What nonsense you talk—the most learned man!

Mr. BOWMAN: I say one of the most learned.

Mr. MURPHY: Are you going to have a row over this? (Laughter.)

Mr. BOWMAN: In spite of what the hon. member for Townsville says, I know the opinion of the clergymen in Brisbane in regard to the Rev. Mr. Gibson. Of course you have the whole of the Roman Catholics against this, and the reason that has been given this afternoon is that they have their own schools; and the majority of the people of Queensland, or a large number of them, at all events, are opposed to it. I think myself that the mere reading of a lesson in the school without any explanation would be next to useless.

[7 p.m.] less to the average child who was there. In the last clause of the Bill I think you will find there a provision

Mr. Bowman.]

that any parent who may have a conscientious objection to his child being taught religious subjects, or attending the service when such religious instruction is given, can arrange for that child to leave the school while the lesson is being given. I would suggest to the Minister that it would be a wise thing to add a proviso to the Bill giving the teacher the same privilege—that is, if any teachers in the State schools are conscientiously opposed to teaching religion in the schools, they should not be asked to teach such religious lessons. I think it would be simply fallacious to have here reading taught in the schools without some explanation of what the children have read being given also. I trust to get an amendment inserted in the Bill giving that privilege to teachers—that they may be exempted from taking part in this religious instruction if they so desire. I also referred this afternoon to the difference of opinion that existed to-day amongst clergymen regarding the alteration of our system of education, and I touched on the fact that certain schools paid for their own education—that is, they have not only paid for establishing their own schools and maintaining them, but also contributed to the building and maintenance of our present secular system of education. Now, I have never yet heard any serious objection to that. While these denominations might think that they can better educate their children under their own system, yet they have to contribute their quota towards the maintenance of the State schools. The only objection I have to raise is that these schools should not be asked to pay for denominational aid to our State schools, or to it being included in our State school system. While they pay for their own schools and conduct their own schools, it is a hardship on that section of the community that they should be compelled to pay for denominational aid to the State schools as well. It does not matter how we view this matter, we know that that is so. You can have your various denominations, and have your missionaries or catechists, as they have them now in New South Wales, as I saw in the report of the New South Wales Public Instruction Department which I read to-day. I do not purpose keeping the House very much longer on this question. This question has been proclaimed by the Government as a non-party question. The Hon. the Premier said he would not attempt to dictate to any man to vote against his conscience on this question. I hope when the next vote is given that hon. members will throw aside all party considerations and vote against any alteration of the system that to-day, I believe, is giving general satisfaction. I feel certain if that system is altered, then there will be a desire, and that at no distant date, to bring us back again to the system as we know it to-day, and that is the system of purely secular education. During my remarks to-day I have spoken warmly at times on this question because I felt that some injury was being done not only to myself, not only to the party which I am leading, but to a large section in this community, that we were simply doing a certain work to benefit a certain denomination. I believe that if this Bill is carried you will find a great deal of dissatisfaction existing in consequence. But I trust that the secular system which, as I have stated, has already existed in this State now for thirty-five years, and has given general satisfaction, will be left as it is, because the name of the author of the Bill providing that education is a name that is revered to-day for the Act he placed on the statute-book. And yet to-day we are asked

[*Mr. Bowman.*]

to repeal a portion of that Act. It may be said that the system which we are going to introduce will be for the benefit of the children who are taught in our State schools. I think I have given an answer to that already this afternoon when I gave an example of two States of the Commonwealth that have worked under a system similar to ours as against one State which it is sought to emulate here—namely, New South Wales. In that book, written by Colcord, "The Rights of Man," he gives one example where a State school teacher may come into conflict with the Sabbath school teacher. I think it is worth quoting, just to show what has happened in New South Wales, and just to show exactly what is taking place in that State. That is what he says—

The logical results of the State attempting to teach religion are well illustrated in the following incident, which occurred not many years ago in one of the public schools of New South Wales, near Sydney. The teacher, a Methodist, selected as a Bible study for her class the record concerning Nebuchadnezzar's dream. The gold, silver, brass, and iron of the great image were explained by the teacher to represent the succeeding kings of the Babylonian Empire. One little girl in the class dissented from the application, and when asked the reason replied "that she had been taught by her Sabbath school teacher that the different parts of the image represented the four kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Grecia, and Rome." The teacher, not feeling inclined to admit of superior knowledge in the child, demanded that she should say it as she said it, on pain of punishment. This the little girl refused to do, and the cane was applied accordingly.

I do not know whether we will have similar experience here in Queensland.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION:
Do you know the girls are not canded here?

MR. BOWMAN: It does not matter whether it is a girl or a boy, I think I am justified in simply applying that as the difference of opinion that exists, or that did exist, between the State school teacher and the Sunday school teacher. While I have spoken somewhat strongly this afternoon, I do not wish any hon. member in this Chamber or anyone outside of it to think for a moment that my antagonism to this Bill is from a religious standpoint. It is not. I have my own belief in religion, and I give credit to every other man for having his, but I am convinced that to teach religion in our State schools will tend to create a sectarian spirit which happily we have been free from in Queensland up to the present time. I do not think there is an hon. member in this Chamber who has watched the sectarian spirit in New South Wales but will admit that perhaps for sectarian spite it is the greatest example we have in Australia to-day.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BOWMAN: Now, let us hope that the future of Queensland will be as free in that respect as its past, and I believe that by the rejection of this measure we shall go a long way to keep our State free from that strife. One has only to read the correspondence in our daily Press to understand what this sectarian spite will mean if this Bill takes effect, and I think that after such a happy experience as we have had, even in despite of the vote that has been given, we should not depart from our present system. Some electors in my electorate who have conversed with me on this subject say they did not vote merely for the interests of the children in the metropolitan area, but it was in the interests of those in the far Western districts of Queensland, and

that was a cry that was raised by many of the clergymen who have advocated this policy of religious instruction in State schools.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: What did the clergymen do who were not favourable to it? A great many of them were not favourable to it.

MR. BOWMAN: What did they do? I am sorry to say that they, like many others who were opposed to it—both members of this House and members of other denominations—they lay very dormant during the agitation which took place and brought about this result. I am confident that had there been as much activity in the organisation of the opponents of the measure as there was by those in favour of that referendum, it would have been defeated overwhelmingly throughout Queensland.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BOWMAN: I feel sure of that, but I explained, I think, on the Address in Reply that there were hon. gentlemen who abstained from criticising, or even advocating it, because they believed it would have the effect of injuring the chances of the Federal fight we were engaged in. No better example can be furnished than the leader of this House, who made it his boast, as well as other members in this House—and I think I was one of them—that I would do my best to defeat the Bill. But the hon. gentleman never raised his voice. And why? Because, as he told us when delivering his speech on the Address in Reply, he had "other fish to fry." He had something which was more important for the time being than this. Now, this is of very great importance at the present time in the minds of those people who do not want to see an alteration of our system. I know that while there has been a majority of 600 in Fortitude Valley who have voted in favour of this, I stated on the Address in Reply—and I state here to-night—that I am prepared to see the consequences of that vote, and simply cast my vote against any alteration of our present educational system, because I believe it has worked well. I believe that the men who cast their vote against the Bill, while they may think they would be discredited by a number of electors throughout Queensland, when it comes to be realised that their action is one that will preserve peace and contentment amongst the people, which it has been our lot to enjoy for many years, I feel certain that rather than any discredit being attached to them, they will get credit if they vote against the Bill. I am prepared to vote against the Bill, and to offer all the opposition I can to defeat it in all stages, because I believe we are doing well at the present time. I have tried by interjection, I have tried even in my speech, to draw the Minister for Public Instruction as to what is going to be dropped out of the present curriculum, but I cannot get the information. The hon. gentleman does not know; he does not know what will be done, and it is a strange thing. We have officials at the head of our Education Department who are a credit to the Commonwealth—(hear, hear!)—men who understand what is necessary for our youth. They will have to drop some subject out of the curriculum. Now, what is it to be? It may be a subject of great importance to these children. And simply to satisfy the cry of men who have taken a very keen interest in the agitation to see this brought about, who have threatened members of Parliament that if they do not do certain things they can look out, this Bill is

introduced. So far as I am concerned, they can do their best to defeat me on any opportunity I have of standing in the future, but that is not going to deter me from doing what I conceive is a right thing—that is, to preserve a system of education that has been enjoyed for thirty-five years. If there was any possible chance of taking the opinion of the whole of the 260,000 people who are on the rolls to-day, I am certain that the present educational system would not be altered, and there would be no danger of any sectarian strife—we should go along on peaceful lines as we have been doing. Anything I can do during the different stages of the Bill to defeat it, or even to modify it in some way, I will do, realising that I am doing my duty in the interests of those who voted against it. Religion can be taught in three avenues of life—in the church, the proper place for it; in the Sunday school; and in the home. Some hon. members may think that the home is not the place, but if any father or mother can instil religious principles into the minds of their children when they are young, it will have a splendid moral effect upon their life. I have to thank my father and mother for the training I got; I have to thank the church and the Sunday school. I say that if you depart from these three avenues, you are departing from something that is held in respect not only by myself and members of this party, but by the majority of members sitting in this Chamber. But that referendum was taken just because there is a force to-day, and at the head of that force is Archdeacon Garland, who is determined that this shall be done—not so much that the Bible may be taught in the schools—not so much that there may be religious lessons in our reading books—but that they may get an entrance into the schools. They have enough to do in their churches; and I venture to say that there are many clergymen who, if they do their duty, have little time for going into the State schools.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BOWMAN: We have a system at the present time that we are proud of, and I appeal to hon. members opposite, seeing that this is a non-party question, to vote against the second reading of the Bill, and let us, for once and all, take the responsibility, realising that the past has been a very creditable one. We know not what the future may have in store, and I trust that we shall let alone a record that we are proud of, and even continue it rather than interfere with it by introducing religious teaching in the State schools—a thing that, in my opinion, should be kept altogether apart from our secular system of education. If we do that, then we shall go on in the same happy and contented spirit that it has been our lot to enjoy for the last thirty-five years.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

THE PREMIER, who was received with cheers, said: The hon. member who has just sat down was good enough to quote the Premier as having said that he would not try to force any man's conscience in this matter. I want to repeat that statement to-night. I do not force, or attempt to force, nor have I at any time attempted, nor do I intend to use any personal influence whatever to induce any hon. member to vote for this Bill.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

THE PREMIER: I told the House that no man was responsible to me in this matter. His responsibility is to a very much higher

Hon. W. Kidston.]

authority—the people of Queensland. Each man for himself must face that responsibility, whether he votes for the Bill or whether he votes against it. I have listened with a good deal of pleasure—almost amusement—to the very earnest speech of the hon. member, and I regret exceedingly that he allowed the strength of his beliefs to permit him to be guilty of what I think two blemishes in his speech. In one place he said—possibly it was just on the spur of the moment—“The Premier is not game to act upon his real opinions on this matter.” Now, there are no matters, perhaps, on which decent, intelligent men, who have given any thought to it, feel more strongly than the question of religion, and questions involved in religion—

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: And I would suggest that we should, as far as possible, avoid this kind of thing. I do not think it will conduce to reasonable action on our part, or to a wise settlement of the difficulty, to have such statements made as that “the Premier is not game.”

Mr. COYNE: That is mild to what will come after.

The PREMIER: I am not troubled in a personal sense about it. I am quite prepared to take the Premier's part whenever any man chooses to attack him.

Mr. COYNE: Nobody is talking about the Premier. We are talking about the people of Queensland.

The PREMIER: I would point out that that kind of temper is not the kind of temper that is likely to conduce to a wise and reasonable settlement of the question.

Mr. NEVITT: No matter what you do, it will not be settled.

The PREMIER: A very courageous man may not be at all ashamed to admit that he is not game to do a thing which he thinks is wrong. Now, it is wrong for any member of this House to attempt to come between the people of Queensland and the expression of their will, and no democrat—

Mr. FERRICKS: Oh, bosh! It's a wonder the word doesn't choke you.

The PREMIER: Not people who profess to be democrats because they happen to be members of a particular party; but no man who really is a radical in politics—no man who really understands what democracy means—should be game to set himself against the expressed wish of the people of Queensland. He may try—and he is quite justified in trying—to persuade them to his way of thinking, and the more earnestly and the more strongly he tries to persuade them to his way of thinking, the less he is justified—having failed to persuade them to his way of thinking—just because he happens to be in this position, in using his power to force his personal opinions down their throats.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: His religious opinions.

The PREMIER: That is a thing that any decent man may admit he is not game to do.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: What about the old Covenanters?

The PREMIER: The hon. member who has just sat down made a long speech—I am not complaining of its length, but merely state the fact that it was a long speech and a very earnest speech; but I submit that it was a speech which from beginning to end had almost no connection whatever with the question before the House.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

[Hon. W. Kidston.

The PREMIER: What is the question before the House?

Mr. FERRICKS: Sectarianism.

The PREMIER: No; that may be the question in the mind of the hon. member.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. FERRICKS: In the mind of the House.

The PREMIER: But that is not the question before the House; that is not the question that should be discussed. This is the question before the House: Two years ago the Parliament of Queensland, by 49 votes to 15—

Mr. ALLEN: That was not this Parliament, though.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: There are sixteen new members since then.

The PREMIER: Decided to refer a particular question to the decision of the people of Queensland.

Mr. PAYNE: It was wrong.

The PREMIER: I presume the then Parliament of Queensland was quite competent to decide on such a matter.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: Don't you think that they could do wrong?

The PREMIER: I presume the Parliament of Queensland was quite entitled to exercise its powers and its judgments, and say whether the question should be remitted to the people or not.

Mr. HARDACRE: No; it had the power, but not the right.

The PREMIER: The Parliament of Queensland, acting in its representative capacity, decided to submit for the judgment of the people a most important question—as important a public question, I think, as it could have submitted.

Mr. HARDACRE: A religious question—not a public question. It was a private question.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HARDACRE: How can you call a religious question a public question?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, order! I would point out to hon. members that the Premier is making an important speech, and hon. members will have an opportunity of replying to his arguments afterwards.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: The representative branch of the Parliament of Queensland, in the exercise of its undoubted right and judgment, and by the very large majority of 49 to 15 on the second reading—a three to one majority—declared that the wise way to settle this question was to remit it to the people. When Parliament did that, it took away from itself its representative character in regard to this question. The people discussed the matter, or should have discussed the matter; and the people

who objected to the thing being [7.30 p.m.] carried in the affirmative, just in the same way as the people who wanted it carried, had an absolute right to take every lawful means to persuade the people to vote “Yea” or “Nay.” The hon. member has reminded me that I said I would do my best to persuade the people that they should vote “No,” and he has reminded me that I found, when the actual time came, I had “other fish to fry,” which I considered of more importance even than this question. Hon. members opposite are just in the same boat with me in regard to that matter. But where did they go and make a propaganda? Where did they go and try to persuade the people of Queensland to vote “No”? They

thought there was a better way; they thought the people might vote any way they liked, and when the question came back to Parliament they would force their own way down the people's throats.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

The PREMIER: I do not imagine that was really their notion—that was looking too far forward. The fact of the matter is that, just like myself, they were so concerned about the Federal election that they let every other question stand for the time being and left the people of Queensland to take their own way in regard to this matter. But what right have I now to complain that the people of Queensland voted "Yes," or that they voted "No"? If I had used my best powers, and if every other man had used his best powers, during the time of the referendum, what right have we to complain afterwards? It is an impertinence for any member of this House to call in question the right of the people of Queensland to vote in any way they liked on this matter. (Hear, hear!) The men who put the referendum in the forefront of their platform and then question the right of the people to vote "Yes," on some particular referendum—I wonder if they see the logical attitude.

Mr. LESINA: We settled our attitude on the question of secular education.

The PREMIER: In fact, as the Minister for Education said in moving the second reading of the Bill, every member of this House who voted for the second reading of the Referendum Bill, and agreed to remit the question to the people of Queensland, is bound by the decision of the people of Queensland. I go much further. I do not care whether a man voted for the Referendum Bill or against it, every member of this House is under an obligation to abide by the decision of the people of Queensland—

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: No matter what his personal opinions are.

Mr. HARDACRE: Not in matters of religion.

The PREMIER: I will deal with that later. That is my attitude. I do not think, after the matter has been lawfully decided by the vote of the people, that any citizen of Queensland, whatever his opinions might be beforehand, has a right to set himself against the officially expressed wish of the people of Queensland. He can seek to give the people another opportunity of expressing their opinion on the matter, and can do his best to persuade them that their former decision was unwise; but, while that decision lasts, every citizen of Queensland, whether he is a member of this House or not, ought to pay respect to it. And the man who comes into this Chamber and presumes upon his position to interfere in a matter which the people of Queensland have not left to him to interfere with or to settle, but which they have already settled for themselves, is guilty of a most undemocratic impertinence.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear! and Opposition laughter.

Mr. RYLAND: Will you give them another opportunity?

The PREMIER: What is the use of asking me if I will give them another opportunity? What will the people of Queensland say if we refuse to give effect to their wish as expressed at the last referendum? Will they not say: "If we do not vote as you wish

us to vote, will you ask us to vote a third time?" There is only one honest way for a democrat to deal with this matter—(Opposition laughter)—and that is to provide the proper machinery for giving effect to the wishes of the people, and then take as strong action as you please to try and persuade them to reverse their decision. The Minister, in moving the second reading, had a great deal to say by way of showing how, whatever might be said about the majority cast in this particular case, there was a large number of members in the House who would not be in the House at all if the same rule was applied to their election which they were wanting to apply to the voting on this referendum. The leader of the Opposition, very wisely I think, admitted practically the whole of the claim made by the Minister as to the majority and the percentages. But it is no use wasting time in discussing what the majorities were. Hon. members on both sides who are going to oppose the passing of the Bill know that, whatever the majorities were, it would not alter their opinion. I have shown that the majority was a far larger majority—two and a-half times the majority—that carried Queensland into federation. The declared will of the majority of the people is there, and my opinion is that the clear duty of members of this House is to provide the machinery for giving effect to their wishes. As I said before, when speaking on this subject, I believe very largely with many members opposite, and some members on this side, in regard to the abstract question of religious instruction. I have never made any disguise about that. I believe that the education in our State schools should be free, secular, and compulsory. (Hear, hear!) And, indeed, I am inclined to go even further. I not only question the right of the State to indoctrinate into the minds of the children particular views on religious questions, I am very much inclined to challenge the right of the parent to indoctrinate the soft and plastic mind of the child with cut-and-dried opinions on the most difficult question in philosophy that the mind of man has ever yet grappled with. You take the little child, whose mind is so soft that you can put any impression on it that you like, and because he is your child you forget that he has an individuality of his own, and stamp upon his mind for all time your own opinions and philosophy.

Several HONOURABLE MEMBERS interjecting,

The PREMIER said: If hon. members are not capable of listening quietly, I wish they would go outside; I am discussing a serious and important question.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have already asked hon. members to refrain from these numerous interjections. Interjections are disorderly, and as it would be unfair to blame all hon. members for making them, I shall in future adopt the practice of mentioning the name of the member who makes interjections, and ask him to discontinue.

The PREMIER: I admit that it is the privilege of the parent to educate his child in morals, and I go further, and say it is not only the privilege but it is the duty of the parent to see that his child is educated in morals, not only by precept, but by the most effective way in which morals can be taught—that is, by example. But that is not necessarily teaching religion, that is not teaching the philosophy which underlies all systems of religion, and I seriously question the right

Hon. W. Kidston.]

even of the parent to stamp upon the young plastic mind of the child his own particular philosophy of religion.

Mr. FOLEY: Even the parsons themselves cannot agree about it.

The PREMIER: The very ablest men and the very highest intelligences the world has ever known have been unable to agree on the matter. Many things they do agree about, but as to the philosophy underlying religion the ablest men the world has known, after long years of earnest and patient study, are not, I am afraid, very much wiser than the most of us. And I do not think the parent has any right to stamp fixed opinions in regard to this important question on the mind of the young child—opinions that will colour all his opinions as long as he lives; but if it is the right of the parent to do that, I say it is a right which should be very carefully exercised. If there is any doubt about the parent's right in this matter, I have no hesitation in saying that there is no doubt about the State not having a right, which it can only get from the parent. (Hear, hear!) The leader of the Opposition was perfectly right, in my judgment, when he said that if many hon. members of this House voted as they really felt in this matter they would vote against this Bill. I have never made any disguise about my personal views on the matter. I never made any disguise about the fact that I would vote against this Bill if I considered I had the liberty to do so. I voted against the introduction of religious instruction in State schools when the referendum was taken, and, as I said before, I would vote against it again if the question were submitted again to-morrow. But the attitude I take up is that because I happen to be in a position of power I have no right to misuse that power, and thrust down the throats of the people of Queensland my personal opinions upon a matter of this kind. I have every right to try to persuade them that this is a wrong step to take, but I have no right to flout their expressed wish. What is the good of telling me that the majority has no right to do that?

Mr. HARDACRE: You said so yourself.

The PREMIER: I did not say the majority had the right to do everything. You may argue in an abstract way, and quote from John Stuart Mill and others of that school of philosophers to show that majority rule is limited here, there, and everywhere, but if you cannot persuade the majority to do right, what is the use of such an argument?

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: Don't confuse right with might.

The PREMIER: I do not confuse them at all. If the majority make this rule that is their right, and I advise the minority, if they strongly dissent from that, to clear out and go elsewhere. It simply comes to this: That the wishes of the majority, backed by the might of the majority, is the only safe rule for any democratic community.

Mr. HARDACRE: That was the doctrine in the old days of persecution 400 years ago, when if you did not believe with the majority you were burned at the stake.

The PREMIER: The leader of the Opposition dealt with a large number of matters, which I shall hastily glance at. In many of them I agree with him. I only want to point out that eight-tenths of the arguments that he used were vitiated by this one circumstance—that they had nothing whatever to do with the question before the House.

[Hon. W. Kidston.

Mr. BOWMAN: The whole thing is the question of secular *versus* religious education in State schools.

The PREMIER: What is the good of trying to confuse the issue? What is the good of trying to disguise the fact that you are in an untenable position by misstating the question we have to deal with? We have not to settle in this Bill whether there is to be religious education in State schools or not. That has been settled already by the people of Queensland.

Mr. BOWMAN: Why repeal the principal Act if there is no change?

The PREMIER: I do not say there is no change proposed. I say we are not making the change, we are only providing the machinery to enable the people of Queensland to make the change. The people of Queensland have decided that the change has to be made, and what right have we to come between them and their decision? We are no longer the representatives of the people of Queensland in this matter.

Mr. BOWMAN: Why are you here then?

The PREMIER: That is the crux of the position. Who is authorised to speak for the people of Queensland on this matter? What member of this House is authorised by the people of Queensland to speak for them on this matter? Not one member of the House. Yet members arrogate to themselves a power that does not belong to them, that the people of Queensland do not give to them, and that, if they did give it to them, they took from them when they voted at this referendum. It amuses me to hear the remarks of hon. members opposite, who always speak about the arrogance of the Premier. Why, the Premier is quite a humble person compared to the arrogant gentlemen who wish to force their masters in this matter.

Mr. FERRICKS: Very humble at the present time.

Mr. MURPHY: There is a lot of Uriah Heep about him.

The PREMIER: I am just going to deal with a number of the arguments of the hon. member, because it is proper that I should show that they have no bearing on the matter. He commenced his speech by claiming that we should have had the experience of New South Wales to guide us. The Secretary for Public Instruction, in the course of his speech, gave us the experience of New South Wales.

Mr. BOWMAN: A very brief experience.

The PREMIER: I admit that it was very brief, but so far as it went it was satisfactory to this extent: That the system has not caused any particular trouble.

Mr. BOWMAN: It has been a failure.

The PREMIER: I am not defending the system there—I would not have it whether it has caused trouble or not.

Mr. KROGH: It has caused 40,000 people to secede from them.

The PREMIER: How many thousands in Queensland have seceded without it? The leader of the Opposition gave us authorities from New South Wales and Victoria, and really—if he will excuse me—he was something like Balaam, he came to curse and he remained to bless. (Laughter.) What was the result of the figures we had from the statistician? That very little advantage had been taken of the system in New South Wales. I am not sure but what the same will be true

in Queensland, and that very little advantage will be taken of it. I am only quoting what the hon. member gave as an argument for not passing the Bill, and I say that it was not an argument for not passing the Bill; it was rather an argument making us indifferent to whether we passed the Bill or not. Then he gave us comparative figures as to the moral effects of religious instruction in the several States, and I entirely agree with the hon. member. I do not think that religious instruction in State schools, as this Bill is going to provide, is going to make the children of Queensland better children than they are at present. I have never been of the opinion that we have bad children in Queensland. I honestly confess that, so far as I can remember my own days at school, we were much worse boys than the boys we see at school here. (Hear, hear!) I know there has been a great deal of talk on the subject about the godless education which the youths of Queensland were getting; the dreadful moral consequences on these young lives, and all the rest of it. That never affected my opinion at all, because I do not think it is true. I remember going home with a ship's doctor one time, and he was very indignant about some Australian youths: he had been one voyage to Australia, and he seemed to think he knew all about it, and he talked about Australians being a godless, dirty lot.

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: Was he a Scotchman? (Laughter.)

THE PREMIER: Unfortunately, no—he was an Englishman—(laughter)—and I told him it was quite possible that the Australians were a godless lot, but as compared with England, they were certainly not a dirty lot. I do not think, and have never thought, there was anything in that argument. In that matter I quite agree with my friends opposite, but it has nothing whatever to do with the second reading of this Bill.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

THE PREMIER: The hon. member drew attention to the provisions of the Bill in which teachers have to give Bible lessons without comment, and he asked what would be the result? And when I said it would be to make sceptics of children who were taught by sceptics, a number of hon. members opposite seemed to think that that was a grave admission. Surely any man who knows anything about it, knows quite well that if you take a number of young children and give them religious instruction, whether you make any verbal comment or not, the almost inevitable consequences are, that the opinion of the teacher will be stamped on the minds of the children.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

THE PREMIER: Everybody surely knows that will be the effect, and that is one of the reasons why I very strongly object to Bible teaching in State schools.

MR. McLACHLAN: Will that not have the effect of introducing the sectarian element into the schools?

THE PREMIER: We have been very free in Queensland from sectarian strife, and I heartily join the leader of the Opposition in hoping that we shall continue to remain immune. (Hear, hear!) I am somewhat afraid that religious instruction in State schools, particularly in country districts, may raise sectarian differences that otherwise would not exist.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

THE PREMIER: But I recognise that this is a matter that rests with the people of those districts. This is a country where the people have the right of self-government, and even the member for Bulloo has no right to manage the affairs of Queensland different to what the people of Queensland want. Self-government does not necessarily mean good government, although it will often end in that, but it means that the people have a right to manage their own affairs, and even the right to manage them badly. The hon. member again quoted me as saying that this question was no longer in the hands of hon. members. I have tried to show that again. It is my whole contention on this matter—that this question has been removed from the hands of members of this House—that their personal opinions in regard to the effects of religious instruction in State schools does not affect their duty to give effect to the expressed wish of the people. The hon. member told us when he was speaking that he had read two books that had evidently illumed his mind on this matter, and he had changed his opinion. He was honest enough to admit that, and I do not blame him for it—I commend him for it. I find that, speaking generally, the only men who never change their opinions are men who have no opinions to change—the men who take their opinions from other people as they take their porridge—ready made. I do not think that it is any discredit to any man to admit he has changed his opinions. You can only judge by the circumstances as to whether the change of opinion was justifiable or not. So that I have no quarrel with the hon. gentleman because he changed his opinion, and I will give him this consolation: Some people told him that because he voted for the Referendum Bill, he ought also to vote for this Bill. I give him this consolation: that in my opinion what he did in the Referendum Bill has nothing whatever to do with his duty on this occasion.

MR. BOWMAN: I have got my duty to do, and I am going to perform it.

THE PREMIER: His duty on this occasion is to give effect to the wishes of the people of Queensland, and his own opinions, and the new philosophy which he has got from the books he has read, have nothing whatever to do with the question. What right has he, because he has read some book—and he read a number of extracts which I venture to say every member in this House agrees with. He gave us the funny story about Noah and his Ark; but what has that got to do with the business we have to settle? Nothing at all. The fact that the hon. gentleman has changed his opinion in this matter does not constitute him the governor of the people—

MR. BOWMAN: There is no chance of me being governor while you are there. You will be the king all the time. (Laughter.)

THE PREMIER: The hon. gentleman has no right whatever to go against the will of the people. I am not questioning whether his opinions are right or wrong at all. It is not a question whether his opinions are right or wrong, but it is a question whether he has the right to thrust his personal opinions down the throats of the people of Queensland and make them do what he wants, and not what they themselves desire. That is the position. I am quite outside the hon. gentleman's quarrel with Archdeacon Garland and Dr. Dill Macky. I am not concerned with that. It has nothing

Hon. W. Kidston.]

at all to do with the matter. The hon. gentleman dealt at some length with the details of the provisions in the Bill. The only one question that can be legitimately raised in connection with this Bill is: Does it embody the resolutions which the people carried?

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: No, no!

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Yes, yes!

The PREMIER: Does this Bill embody the resolutions which the people carried at the referendum?

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Yes.

The PREMIER: If it does not do that, then we should make it do that. We should alter it and make it embody the resolutions which were carried by the people at the referendum. But if it does that, then I submit that no member of this House has any right to oppose it. I have no desire to speak at any length, because I spoke on this matter on the Address in Reply, but I am anxious—no matter how members vote—that this question may be fairly stated. What is it we have got to vote about? The real question is this: Does this Bill here fairly carry out the resolutions arrived at by the people when they voted on the matter—when they took this matter into their own hands direct and decided it—when they substituted direct self-government for representative government. All the arguments that have been used as to whether it is permissible to give religious instruction in State schools, as to whether our system is a good system, as to whether the majority have the right to settle such questions as this—all these questions were legitimate and proper when we were discussing the Referendum Bill. They were legitimate and proper before the people voted on the question. Any man—the leader of the Opposition or any other citizen—had a perfect right to try to persuade the people of Queensland that they were going to take away a good system and substitute a bad system—

Mr. BOWMAN: And so it will prove to be.

The PREMIER: Every citizen had a right to try to persuade the people that they had no right to interfere in this matter, that they had no right to vote on this matter, and that they had no right to settle this matter; but having failed to do that, I submit that for any democrat there is only one question left, and that is that the declared and expressed will of the people of Queensland should be respected. (Hear, hear!) Do we recognise that our right as representatives, our right to speak in the name of the people of Queensland, was abolished—was abrogated on this one question when the matter was submitted to the referendum? And I point out again that any man who seeks to discredit that—any man who seeks to deny that—is discrediting the whole principle of the referendum. There will be no more questions submitted to the referendum if this House does not accept the expressed will of the people.

Mr. BOWMAN: How do you know?

The PREMIER: I mean that there will be enormous difficulties in the way of getting this Parliament or any Parliament to submit a question to the people, and the people will be justified in laughing at Parliament if they submit a question to the people and then, when the people decide it, refuse to give effect to the people's wishes.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

[Hon. W. Kidston.]

The PREMIER: The question before us is not our ideas upon religious teaching. Many of us—myself, for one—hold some extreme opinions on religious matters, and many members in the House are very earnest, and hold very conscientious opinions on religious matters. For that reason I do not seek to force any man's vote, neither by party influence nor by private influence, one way or the other. As a matter of fact, when this subject was first introduced into the House two years ago, I never tried to persuade any man to vote in any way, either for or against.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: The members of my own party know that quite well. The one thing we ought to consider in this matter is this: It is not what we think about religious teaching, but what we consider our duty as democrats. Do we consider it our duty as democrats to try to give effect to the officially expressed wishes of the people of Queensland? Is there a member of this House who will get up on the platform outside and dare to say that he will not permit the people of Queensland to do this thing or that? Will the hon. gentleman get up in Fortitude Valley, or will any other hon. gentleman get up in his constituency and say, "If you disagree with me in this matter I will prevent you from carrying out your wishes. I will have my own wishes carried out, no matter what you may think about it?"

Mr. BOWMAN: I was returned to oppose it.

The PREMIER: And even if you had the impertinent courage to say such a thing it does not make it any the more right. None of us have any right here at all except that the people of Queensland sent us here. Now, the question involved in this Bill is a thing which the people have settled themselves; they have not left it to us to settle at all. It is really an impertinence for any man—either a member of this House or a non-member—to try to come between the clearly expressed wishes of the people of Queensland. Good government in the end depends, after all, upon the good sense of the people; it does not depend upon our keeping the people right; it does not depend upon our forcing our wishes and our opinions on the people and driving them between two rails. That never created good government anywhere.

Mr. HARDACRE: That does not deal with this at all—you are generalising.

The PREMIER: Everyone has a perfect right to endeavour to persuade the people to come his way; they have every right to do what they usually call "educating the people." But, after the people have expressed their wish, they are not entitled to force another way on the people, no matter how strongly they may be persuaded the people have gone wrong.

Mr. LESINA: They have a right to tax unbelievers to teach religion in State schools?

The PREMIER: I have made it quite clear what my personal opinions are on the question of religious education in State schools.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: But I say that the man who submits a question to the people, and when the people have decided that question tries to prevent the will of the people from

being carried out, may belong to a very holy organisation, may be a political Pharisee of the purest order, but he is not a democrat.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: This is my last word on the matter: A democrat in this case, whatever his personal opinions may be, will endeavour to allow the will of the people to prevail.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LENNON (*Herbert*): The Premier, who has just told the House that he has made his opinions perfectly clear in this matter, has made a statement that will not receive endorsement in the House, for such a jumble of sophisms, euphemisms, and "puzzlements" I never heard from any public man in this House before. He started by complimenting, in a somewhat sneering manner, the speech of the leader of this party, talked about several blots in his statement, and wound up by stating that the senior member for Fortitude Valley had not spoken about the question at issue at all. And here we have had a long speech from the hon. gentleman who has just resumed his seat, and he has absolutely said much less about the subject, and what he has said must have confused not only his hearers, but I verily believe it has confused the hon. gentleman himself, and he will possibly never be able to extricate himself from the knot in which he has tied himself on this vexed question. Amongst other things, he twits me because I dared to laugh at some of his remarks; but I think I have as much right to laugh in this House as you, Sir, have to allow those very peculiar and very often those assumed chuckles of the hon. gentleman's when he thinks he makes a good point. He also asks, amongst other things, where did members on this side travel—what did they do to oppose the referendum in the country—saying that members on this side did nothing. Members on this side did not make rash promises like the hon. gentleman made. He promised that he would go into the country and do his best to induce people to vote against the referendum. He has had to admit that he did nothing—he had "other fish to fry"—and so on. He asked us what we did. I think I have already stated that on every opportunity afforded me throughout the greater part of North Queensland I opposed this referendum as warmly as I could—in Cairns, Townsville, Mareeba, and other places in the Woothakata electorate, and also in the Bowen electorate. Therefore, I consider that, as far as my own duty in that matter is concerned, I discharged it as well as the opportunity permitted. I have already explained that it was thought that the matter would be injurious to the candidates for the Federal election, and, therefore, as that was the opinion here—not having much experience of the political feeling about Brisbane—I refrained from going further in my propaganda, but anyone who charges me with neglect of duty is doing me a great wrong. I did what I conceived to be my duty in that matter, as I would do again if it cropped up. The question which we have to consider is bound up in the second clause of this precious Bill, which says that the word "secular" is to be repealed in the principal Act. Now, every utterance of the hon. member who leads this party—all his quotations and the whole trend of his

speech was directed to show the danger we are incurring in removing that particular word from the Act. On that one word the whole question depends, and notwithstanding what the Hon. the Premier says about the duty of hon. members in this House, and that he says he must do as he is bid by the people—I do not know whether he means the whole of the people, or only a small section of the people—whether he believes it is Archdeacon Gariand or the Bible in State Schools League, or the somewhat insignificant majority that voted against the measure—a small proportion only of the whole of the voters—I am quite at a loss to conceive. But if this House has nothing to do with it, why are we wasting time to discuss it at all? If the people cannot settle it without reference to this House, why does he not manufacture some means whereby they could do so? But the fact that we are discussing the Bill, which is brought up in this House and has to pass the other Chamber, carries with it the conviction that we have some right after all, and we are perfectly within our rights in rejecting this measure if we think fit. The hon. gentleman spoke about the plastic mind of a child—that not even a parent, in his opinion, had any right to instil into that plastic, tender mind of the child his ideas on the philosophy of religion. A parent, he said, has no such right, and yet he is prepared to give it to the teachers in the State schools, some of whom are atheists. This hon. gentleman is so tender about the plastic conscience of the child that he would absolutely prohibit the parents from dealing with them, and yet he is prepared to hand them over wholesale to a body of teachers who profess any religion or no religion. Where is the consistency in an argument of that kind? Under this Bill the State schools of Queensland are to be made seed plots of sectarianism—that is the intention of it, and that is the intention of the Bible in State Schools League that has been at work for many years past. It is most regrettable that such a thing should be allowed to pass, and I venture to say that, if all the people had taken a proper interest in the matter, as they should have done—and but for the fact that its very great importance was overshadowed by the great questions at issue at the Federal election—we would have had a very different vote. That is my firm conviction. The hon. gentleman lays down the theory that might is right; but it is the first time I have heard that argument used, particularly in regard to religion. I do not admit that might is right under all circumstances, particularly in matters of religion. I will quote from the same work on "The Rights of Man" by Colcord, page 84. This is the work which the Premier rolls over his tongue with such unctiousness. He claims to be a democrat, but he reminds me of the man who is always protesting his democracy, and he keeps on protesting so much that it very often suggests to the minds of his hearers that there is no true ring in it. Now, on the question of majority rule, Colcord says—

Majority rule in religious things is the cry of the bigot and the persecutor. No one ever asks that the majority shall rule in religion when he thinks the majority are not in harmony with his way of religious thinking. It is only when he stands with the masses, or with those in power, that he talks thus. But strip him of his power, place him with the few, prescribe a faith to him which his conscience rejects, threaten him in turn with fine and imprisonment if he does not comply, and see

Mr. Lennon.]

how quickly he will repudiate the principle, and demand the right of freedom to worship according to the dictates of his own conscience.

There it is laid down in very simple language that we can all understand and appreciate that in matters of religion particularly—and indeed in a great many other matters as well—a majority has no right to rule over a minority. I repeat what I have stated before in this Chamber that, if ninety-nine men were to tell me that I must do this or that in regard to a matter of conscience, I would assert my right, and retain it as long as I could against the ninety-nine.

Mr. WHITE: But you must submit to a referendum.

Mr. LENNON: We have heard that story before—it has been given some prominence to by Archdeacon Garland and others—that the Labour party is about to break the principal plank of its platform—the initiative and referendum. Why do they not look at the facts? Why do they not admit that we have another plank in our platform—secular education—a plank that is equally important with the referendum? We are being blamed because we refuse to use one plank of our platform to break another. Of course, if we would do that sort of thing, in a few months we might—greatly to the satisfaction of hon. members opposite—smash up all the planks in our platform. What a joke that would be! But we have no intention of doing anything of the sort. I have explained my attitude in regard to the referendum. Until the principle of the initiative and referendum is affirmed by this House, and becomes embodied in our Statutes, I will not vote for any subject being referred to the people. That is a perfectly logical position to take up. That is the position I took up three years ago, and it is the one I maintain now, and the one that I shall continue to maintain. The Premier says that it is the duty of every member of the House to vote as the people have decided. I do not agree with him at all. I take the same ground that I have taken all through, and say that a majority of the people have no right to give any member of this House directions as to how he is to vote. We know that it took a very great deal of trouble to get our splendid Education Act placed on the statute-book. There was a long fight before it was done. The people were so wedded to the denominational system because it was an imported article—because it came from the old country, like many of our observances in this House, and many things connected with our daily life. They were imported from the old country, and reverence is paid to them on that account. We imported the system of denominational education from the old country, and considered that it was the proper system; and it was continued for the first twenty years or so of the life of this State, until by and by a more democratic spirit arose and the people determined to make a change, and, after a long struggle, secured a secular system of education. That has gone on for thirty-five years, and has given as much satisfaction as any system of public instruction could give. Now, why not let well alone? You are introducing a system that will bring about trouble—a system whereby, as the Premier himself admitted, a teacher shall be permitted to do a thing that the hon. gentleman would not allow a parent to do. It is a matter of common experience that a man imparting any kind of instruction—instilling it into the plastic minds of youth—to quote the very apt phrase of the hon. gentleman—unconsciously—

[Mr. Lennon.]

I do not say he will do it deliberately—but unconsciously he will stamp his views upon the minds of the pupils. There is what the lawyers call unconscious bias, and that unconscious bias will exist in the minds of teachers, and I am satisfied that we are at the beginning of the time when we shall have proselytising teachers in our State schools. I do not say they will proselytise of malice aforethought, but they will do it unconsciously. I may possibly be charged with holding an exaggerated view; but under the system which some Government inaugurated a few years ago, whereby clergymen could go into the schools and give religious teaching before or after school hours—a privilege of which they do not seem to have largely availed themselves—in some cases teachers have gone the length of distributing Church of England catechisms to Roman Catholic children.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Shocking!

Mr. LENNON: It is shocking. I have a book here dealing with the system of education in Ireland. That system has been referred to by the advocates of this new-fangled system they are bringing into Queensland. They calmly tell you—the Secretary for Public Instruction will probably tell you—the gentlemen outside have repeatedly stated that that system—which was inaugurated in Ireland about fifty years ago by Archbishop Whately and Bishop Murray, of Dublin, acting in collaboration—has given general satisfaction in Ireland.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: When did I ever tell you that?

Mr. LENNON: I said that the hon. gentleman would probably tell us that. I am very careful when speaking about the hon. gentleman. But it has been stated by the leaguers outside. I am aware that, so far from the system giving satisfaction in Ireland, it never did give satisfaction. It has also been stated by the leaguers outside that the system has given general satisfaction in New South Wales.

Mr. COYNE: The Minister said that.

Mr. LENNON: They have all said that. But what do they mean by "general satisfaction"? "General satisfaction" means that it is giving general satisfaction to the whole of the people. The hon. gentleman did not use the words "the whole of the people," but he evidently meant to convey that meaning. The hon. gentleman is not qualified to judge. He is absolutely ignorant of the subject. I can tell him that a very large section of the people of New South Wales have never been satisfied with that system.

Mr. COYNE: He only meant the bigots were satisfied with it.

Mr. LENNON: Probably that is what he meant.

THE PREMIER: A large number of people are dissatisfied with our present system.

Mr. LENNON: That is so, and they are dissatisfied with it for very sound reasons, one of which I will mention. Suppose there are two men with six children living in the country, and they decide to give their children a fair education. I will suppose that I am one of those men, and that the other professes a different religion to the one in which I believe. He gets his children educated free, and I pay as much to educate those children as he does. I educate my children at my own cost, and he pays nothing for the

[8.30 p.m.] education of my children. But now he has the audacity to come and ask me to pay for the teaching of religion

to his children. Is that decent or fair or just? I say it cannot be justified on any ground. And even if it could be justified on any ground, it would lead to deplorable results. The Minister practically admits that it would lead to sectarian teaching. He knows it is impossible for an earnest teacher to teach a religious subject without putting into his teaching some of his own particular leanings. The defenders of the scheme say there is to be no comment—that the lesson is simply to be read; but that is a farcical idea. What would be thought if up to the present time there had been no provision in our curriculum for the teaching of geography, and if it was decided to commence the teaching of geography next week, that it was simply to be read by the children—that there was to be no comment? The thing is too ridiculous for words; and I am astonished that sensible men should give expression to such ideas. It has been said that the application of the system in Ireland gave general satisfaction; but I deny that, and I will quote from an authority which I think will be accepted as a very good one—Mr. Barry O'Brien's "Fifty Years of Concessions to Ireland." Speaking of the national education system, he said that the first board, appointed in 1831, was composed of Anglicans, Presbyterians, and Catholics; and I may say that the Presbyterians fought resolutely for their views at every point. The tendency in Ireland and in other parts of the British Dominions of the party called "the Church of England party," is to control the situation if possible; and, if this change is made in connection with our education system, it will be nothing more or less than the beginning of a State church in Queensland. I think any person who is not strongly biased will admit that we have a great number of religions already.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION:
Is there a State church in New South Wales?

MR. LENNON: I believe there is a tendency to have a State church; but I would like to keep State and church as separate as possible. In my opinion, if a religion cannot be maintained by voluntary subscription it might very well be allowed to pass away. It is not the business of the State to subsidise a denominational system in our schools, and it is admitted by the Premier that we shall have sectarian teaching if we allow 20 per cent. of the school time to be given to Bible lessons. To that extent it will be subsidising religion; and if that is not getting in the thin end of the wedge of a State church I would like to know what is. We are entirely in the dark as to who is to prepare the lessons to be taught—whether there are to be three commissioners, as will be appointed under the Redistribution of Seats Bill, or Archdeacon Garland and others; and we may have the same experience as the unfortunate people of Ireland had with Archbishop Whately, who was so much admired as a highly gifted churchman by the members of the Church of England. They think Archbishop Whately carried out his duties in the best manner possible, but it is remarked here that before his arrival in Ireland he had published a book called the "Errors of Romanism," in which he spoke of the Catholic Church as "a mystery of iniquity," and the — of Babylon. I will not pollute my mouth by filling in the blank. Yet we are told that the people of Ireland were satisfied with the system provided by that gentleman. The committee in Ireland struck out of the "Lessons" all reference to the native land of the children who were to

use the books. They were not even allowed to have that splendid poem of Scott's beginning with the line—

Breathes there a man with soul so dead.

They tried to kill all patriotism in the breasts of the Irish children; and very likely, if we allow them to get control of the schools here, they will try to stamp out all patriotic feeling in the children of Queensland. Instead of being allowed to read that beautiful poem "Poor Dog Tray," which would appeal to the sympathetic Irish heart, they were taught this little hymn—

I thank the goodness and the grace
That on my birth have smiled,
And made me in these Christian days
A happy English child.

That is what they were taught to sing in Ireland. Yet we are told that they were delighted with the system of education!

MR. KEOGH: They are not "a happy English child" yet.

MR. LENNON: That went on for many years. In 1843 Archbishop Whately wrote another book called "Christian Evidences," in which he inserted some of the matter which had been expunged from the "Lessons." In 1850 an effort was made to force both the "Lessons" and "Christian Evidences" into use among the Catholics. Mr. O'Brien goes on to say—

The public mind was soon agitated upon the subject. The alarming cry of "Proselytism in the National Schools" was raised. The books were soon brought under the notice of the Commissioners, and a resolution was ultimately passed (1853) prohibiting their use for the future. Upon the cessation of the passing of this resolution, Archbishop Whately retired from the board.

That goes to show that the people who say that Archbishop Whately's system was so much admired do not know anything about the subject on which they are so eloquent. I have shown that the system failed in Ireland; and my friend, the leader of the Opposition, has shown that it failed in New South Wales. I think failure was stamped on its face from the start, and it is doomed to failure in Queensland. There is no use in blinking the fact that a large number of people in Queensland have made a valiant attempt to provide for the education of their children in their own schools. They choose to say that they must have their own religious teaching in their schools, and they are perfectly right in maintaining that position, so long as they pay for that religious teaching themselves, and nobody has any right to say them nay. When you interfere with the secular character of the instruction imparted in State schools, you compel people who do not believe in the religious instruction that is to be given to pay their share of the cost of that instruction. In the outside districts—I do not know whether it is the same in Brisbane—one-fifth of the money required for the erection of a school has to be subscribed locally. For instance, at Macknade £300 had to be subscribed by the local residents before the department would provide the balance required to erect a school at that place, and the whole, or a great part of that money, was no doubt subscribed by people who desired to maintain the present system of education. The Roman Catholics have shown their willingness to pay for their own schools where religion is taught, but, in addition to maintaining those schools at their own expense, they have to contribute through the consolidated revenue towards the cost of maintaining schools to which they do not send their children; and, if this measure is passed, they will be compelled to pay their share of

Mr. Lennon.]

the cost of giving religious instruction of which they disapprove. I have already told the Secretary for Public Instruction, and I repeat the warning, that so surely as this measure is put into operation, so surely will there be a larger percentage of the Roman Catholic children withdrawn from our State schools. Education in this State is now costing about £4 5s. per head, and with this proposed change it will immediately rise to £5 or more per head, and education will become a very costly thing for Queensland. According to the Financial Statement it now costs £399,000, or in round figures £400,000, per annum. Of course that includes the university, technical colleges, and orphanages, but the expenditure is growing so rapidly that I am satisfied that it will eventually break down with its own weight. What is more natural than to expect that those clergymen of different denominations who will have to enter schools during school hours in order to give religious instruction to the children will, after the lapse of a few years, find that the work makes such inroads on their time that they will be impelled to apply to become salaried officers of the Education Department? And I dare say the Secretary for Public Instruction will consider that a perfectly legitimate thing to ask for, on the principle that "the labourer is worthy of his hire," and will be able to speak most eloquently on the point when the time arrives. I have referred chiefly to the fact that Roman Catholics object to this proposed change in our educational system. The Presbyterians also object to it, the Congregationalists, the Baptists, and many others object to the change. There is another body, which is not numerically strong, that objects to this proposal no less emphatically, and I feel convinced that the reasons they give for their objection will appeal to all fair-minded members of this House. I have here a copy of a paper called "The Signs of the Times," published on the 25th of July last, at a place named Warburton, in Victoria.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: What body are you referring to?

Mr. LENNON: The Seventh Day Adventists, who are not a very strong body, but I am sure their case will appeal to the fair-mindedness of members of this House. I do not question their sincerity, nor do I question the sincerity of the religious belief of any man. Writing on this question of the Bible in State schools, for the purpose of warning their readers against the danger of committing the irreparable folly of introducing religious instruction into State schools, they say—

If this movement is successful, it will devolve upon the representatives of the church to direct in the preparation of the required books and the necessary instruction for the use of the teachers in the schools. The State will then, at the demand of the church, and under the guidance of the church, teach such principles of such a religion as the majority of the church may agree upon. This can be nothing else than a union both of religion and the State and of the church and the State. The very fact that it is thought necessary to introduce into this recommendation for religious instruction in the public schools a conscience clause, permitting the withdrawal of a certain class of children while the paid servants of the State are giving religious instruction to another class of pupils, demonstrates most clearly that the proposed plan both enters the realm of conscience and violates the true principles of religious liberty. Christian liberty recognises the right not to believe, as well as the right to believe, and in a public school the children of unbelievers ought not to be exposed to contempt by any exercise which separates them into a distinct class. Furthermore, the right on the part of the

State to introduce religious instruction with a conscience clause, involves the right to do it *without* a conscience clause.

Once we allow the principle that people have the right to tell us what brand of religion and to what extent religion shall be taught in our schools, we shall find that they will by and by endeavour to compel us to practise a certain form of religion, or fine or imprison us for refusing to do so.

Mr. HARDACRE: Or burn us at the stake.

Mr. LENNON: Or burn us at the stake, as the hon. member interjects, though one can hardly imagine the Secretary for Public Instruction going so far. On the question of "Tolerance and Intolerance," the same paper, at page 353, says—

It is also recommended that "from such special moral and religious training in the school, any parent who may conscientiously wish to do so shall have the right to have his child excused." This statement shows clearly that in attempting to give such instruction the State would be dealing with matters of conscience—a field entirely outside its proper sphere. In the words of Justice Orton, of the Wisconsin Supreme Court: "The suggestion itself concedes the whole argument." When analysed, this conscience clause is simply the language of toleration. The right to permit a child to be absent from religious instruction implies the right to compel his attendance. Toleration is not the opposite of intolerance, but the counterfeit of it. Both are despotisms: the one assumes the right of withholding liberty of conscience, the other of granting it. The principle of toleration in religion is neither a Christian nor an American principle.

And I sincerely hope it is not an Australian principle. We want liberty, not toleration; and by this measure you are interfering with the liberty of the subject—a thing that we have no right to do in matters of this kind. It is often said that "fools rush in where angels fear to tread," and I very much fear that if we are not careful that adage will be strongly exemplified in this matter of religious instruction in State schools. The same paper further says—

Religion, to be effective, must be positive and explicit. A religion so broad as to be acceptable to all shades and to no shades of belief would be worthless. If taught at all, enough should be taught to save men. Manifestly, this is not within the province of civil government.

Moreover, to teach religion successfully, the teacher must himself be religious. But for the State to require its teachers to be religious is to make a religious test a qualification for a position of trust under it, which is unconstitutional.

Manifestly it is not within the province of civil government to impose religious tests on its citizens, but if our State school teachers have to teach religion, we must have religious tests in order to satisfy ourselves that the teachers are qualified to teach that religion. Then we shall have the sad spectacle of a man qualified to teach in a school being required to undergo a conscience test. Is that a desirable thing to introduce into our education system? Our education system has given satisfaction, so far as it is humanly possible to give satisfaction, for thirty-five years, and I beseech hon. members to hesitate before perpetrating a wrong they will never be able to undo.

Mr. COLLINS (*Burke*): I wish to make a few remarks in connection with the Bill now before the House, and I may say that I approach it from the working-class standpoint, and as a representative of the working classes. I am opposed very strongly to the introduction of the Bible in our State schools, and especially am I opposed to allowing the clergy into our schools. I may state that, unfortunately

[Mr. Lennon.]

for myself, I had experience of this religious instruction in connection with my short school life, and it was of no advantage to me when I got out into the world to fight the battle of life, and I do not think we should allow the time of our children to be wasted in our State schools in teaching that which is not useful to the mass of the workers, because, after all, this is going to apply very severely to the class which we are supposed to represent in this House. The history of mankind goes to show that where we have had a domination of the clerics in connection with the education of the masses they have not been in sympathy in extending education to the masses of the workers in any country in the world.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They conserve education.

Mr. COLLINS: They conserve education to some extent, and the Secretary for Lands knows full well that less than fifty years ago the bulk of the people throughout the British Empire, and the bulk of the English-speaking people, were unable to read and write, notwithstanding that we had the clerics at work for centuries; and although he may argue that they conserve education, they conserve it for the benefit of the few, and not in the interests of the bulk of the people. Not only that, but the same arguments that are being used here, I may point out to hon. members, were used in the year 1870 when the English Education Act was going through the House of Commons, and at that particular period of time the nonconformist bodies of the United Kingdom were strongly opposed to the Bible being introduced in connection with the educational system. Then, again, we must take into consideration that the system we have in the State of Queensland has existed for a period of thirty-five years, and the leader of the Opposition has pointed out that our people, so far as morality is concerned, are equal to those of other States in the Commonwealth.

Mr. ALLEN: It beats them all.

Mr. COLLINS: As the hon. member for Bulloo interjects, it beats them all, and that is something to be said in favour of our educational system. I will now quote from a work by Herbert Spencer on education, entitled, "Education—Intellectual, Moral, and Physical." On page 7, he says—

"But we that have but span-long lives" must ever bear in mind our limited time for acquisition. And remembering how narrowly this time is limited, not only by the shortness of life but also still more by the business of life, we ought to be especially solicitous to employ what time we have to the greatest advantage. Before devoting years to some subject which fashion or fancy suggests, it is surely wise to weigh with great care the worth of the results, as compared with the worth of various alternative results which the same years might bring if otherwise applied.

And to my mind, in this twentieth century, we ought not to be asked to allow the time to be occupied in teaching religion in our schools. To quote Spencer further, on page 53, he says—

Thus to the question we set out with—What knowledge is of most worth?—the uniform reply is: Science. This is the verdict on all the counts. For direct self-preservation, or the maintenance of life and health, the all-important knowledge is—Science. For that indirect self-preservation which we call gaining a livelihood, the knowledge of greatest value is—Science. For the due discharge of parental functions, the proper guidance is to be found only in—Science.

For that interpretation of national life, past and present, without which the citizen cannot rightly regulate his conduct, the indispensable key is—Science.

Alike for the most perfect production and highest enjoyment of art in all its forms, the needful preparation is still—Science. And for purposes of discipline—intellectual, moral, religious—the most efficient study is, once more—Science.

I would like to point out that while you are asking a child in the State schools to learn a science—say, the science of geology—you are also, to my mind, going to try to teach him theology. I do not think the two will agree. It is admitted, as the hon. the junior member for Townsville interjected this afternoon, that the clergy cannot agree among themselves. We all know that in connection with the Church of England we have what is known as the "higher criticism," whereby they deny certain things in connection with the teachings of the Bible; and if such is the case, how does the Minister really know, when these lessons are placed in the hands of the teachers, what interpretation the teachers are going to put on these questions? And if they are not going to explain to the young mind what the passages really mean, then what is the use of placing those passages in our school books? Of course the Minister is laughing—to my mind this is not a laughing matter. I think it is a matter of great interest, especially to the working classes, because in the past the working class has had to suffer through a lack of education, which I have had to suffer myself, and I do not deny it. I have suffered

considerably for lack of education, [9 p.m.] and I say that conservatism always allies itself with the church. For what? To my mind it is done to retard the progress of humanity. And I am considering this question from the standpoint of human progress. I know that there has been a lot said to-night about the will of the people prevailing in connection with the referendum, and I want to point this out to the Minister. The Minister still laughs.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: On quite another matter altogether.

Mr. COLLINS: I have no objection to the hon. gentleman having a laugh if he considers that it is a laughing matter. But I do not consider that it is a laughing matter to interfere with the system of education that has been in operation for thirty-five years with beneficial results. We all know the fight that the men who founded this system had to put up thirty-five years ago. I am going to quote further from Spencer in his book on education. On page 54 he says—

And yet this study, immensely transcending all other in importance, is that which, in an age of boasted education, receives the least attention. While what we call civilisation could never have arisen had it not been for science, science forms scarcely an appreciable element in our so-called civilisation training.

The Minister, to my mind, wants to displace science. He wants to allow religious matters to occupy the young minds for one hour each day. He wants to displace science for religious teaching. Spencer on the same page says—

But for science we should be still worshipping fetiches; or, with hetacombs of victims, propitiating diabolical deities. And yet this science has given us some insight into the grandeurs of creation, is written against in our theologies, and frowned upon from our pulpits. Paraphrasing an Eastern fable, we may say in the family of knowledges, science is the household drudge, who, in obscurity, hides unrecognised perfections. To her has been committed all the work; by her skill, intelligence, and devotion, have all conveniences and gratifications been obtained; and while ceaselessly ministering to the rest, she has been kept in

Mr. Collins.]

the background, that her haughty sisters might flaunt their fripperies in the eyes of the world. The parallel holds yet further. For we are fast coming to the *dénouement* when the positions will be changed; and while these haughty sisters sink into merited neglect, science, proclaimed as highest alike in worth and beauty, will reign supreme.

At any rate, that is my belief, that in the future science will reign supreme, and therefore that is the reason why I am so strongly in favour of a system of secular education. If the people want any other system of education, let them provide that system themselves. We have heard a lot about the different denominations, but there are a large number of people at the present time—a fairly large number, at any rate—who do not profess any religion at all, and they have got rights just the same as those who do profess religion. Some of our most advanced thinkers throughout the civilised world to-day do not proclaim that they are religious or connected with any religion. I referred a few minutes ago to the fact that the nonconformists in England in 1870 protested very strongly against any religious education, and I am surprised to think that in this State the nonconformists have not taken up a similar attitude. I am now going to quote from the "History of Our Own Times," by Justin McCarthy. The Education Bill was introduced into the House of Commons on the 17th of February, 1870, and that was the first opportunity when my class had an opportunity of getting a little education. In referring to Mr. Foster, who introduced the Bill, Mr. McCarthy wrote as follows in his book, on page 292—

He therefore proposed to meet the difficulty by adopting regulations compelling every school of this kind which obtained Government aid or recognition to accept a conscience clause by means of which the religious convictions of parents and children should be scrupulously regarded in the instruction given during the regular school hours.

On this point the nonconformists as a body broke away from the Government.

I am not aware that the nonconformists of the United Kingdom have changed their opinions even to this day on secular education—

They laid down the broad principle that no State aid whatever should be given to any schools but those which were conducted on strictly secular and undenominational principles. It ought to be superfluous to say that the nonconformists did not object to the religious instruction of children. It ought not to be supposed for a moment that they attached less importance to religious instruction than any other body of persons.

Their principle was that public money, the contribution of citizens of all shades of belief, ought only to be given for such teaching as the common opinion of the country was agreed upon. The contribution of the Jew, they argued, ought not to be exacted in order to teach Christianity; the Protestant ratepayer ought not to be compelled to pay for the instruction of Roman Catholic children in the tenets of their faith; the Irish Catholic in London or Birmingham ought not to be called upon to pay in any way for the teaching of distinctively Protestant doctrine.

Therefore, they said, let us at any cost establish a strictly national and secular system in our public elementary schools; let us teach there what we are all agreed upon; and let us leave the duty of teaching religion to the ministers of religion and to the parents of the children.

About the truths of arithmetic and geography, about spelling and writing, we are all agreed; let our common contributions be given to common instruction, and let each denomination provide in its own way for the religious training of its young children.

To my mind, the nonconformists of that day took up a sound attitude. They did not believe

[Mr. Collins.

that it was the duty of the State to in any way tax other people for the teaching of other people's children, and that is what we are seeking to do here in the State of Queensland. As I said before, let us stick to our system of secular education. It has been said by some speakers on the opposite side that a certain referendum having been taken, we had no voice in the matter whatever.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: That is the point.

Mr. COLLINS: I stand to-night as the representative of progress in the North, and sooner than I would give a vote to inflict—to my mind it may be for generations—upon humanity, a curse which they will not escape from for a long time, I would sooner go out of Parliament.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. COLLINS: I would sooner go out of Parliament rather than see a system of religious education taught in connection with the State.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. COLLINS: What is it for? As I said in the debate on the Address in Reply, this is an insidious attempt to establish State religion. How many centuries did it take us to escape from the State church? In the oldest countries of the world the fight is still going on to separate the church from the State. So far as I am concerned, it is not worrying me in the least whether I sit in the Queensland Parliament or not, but having been sent to do a duty, I am going to perform that duty to the best of my ability. I was one of those who did not hesitate, even though the Federal election was on, to advise the people to vote against bringing about a system of religious education in connection with our State schools. I did not hesitate in my own electorate, and I am pleased to say that that electorate gave the biggest poll in the State against the introduction of the Bible into the State schools. Another reason why I am against allowing the clergy in the schools is because I object to the domination of the clericals. What have they done in the past?

Mr. ALLEN: What are they doing to-day?

Mr. COLLINS: As the hon. member interjects, what are they doing to-day? What have they done in the past? In England there are twenty-six representatives of the Anglican Church sitting in the House of Lords, and what have they done towards assisting human progress? I will now quote from Mr. J. Morrison Davidson's work, "The Book of Lords." He gives a quotation from Sidney Smith, which I will read to the House. Sidney Smith says—

It is a melancholy thing to see men clothed in soft raiment, lodged in a public palace, endowed with a rich portion of other men's industry, using their influence to deepen the ignorance and inflame the fury of their fellow-creatures.

And to my mind it is true to-day. We have some of the clergy at the present time trying to inflame the fury of their fellow-creatures. Archdeacon Garland is going round the country, as it were, trying to intimidate members of Parliament. But he did not approach me, and I take that as a compliment to myself. (Laughter.)

Mr. KEOGH: A particular friend of mine. (Laughter.)

Mr. COLLINS: When any proposal was brought before the House of Lords for the

betterment of the masses, the clericals always voted against any tendency to improve the lot of the masses.

Mr. MANN: That is, the majority.

Mr. COLLINS: Mr. Davidson says—

In 1821 it was proposed to enable Roman Catholics to sit in Parliament. Twenty-five bishops voted against the Bill, which was thrown out by a vote of 150 to 120.

In 1822 a Bill was brought in to enable Roman Catholic peers to take their seats in the Upper House. Twenty-three bishops voted against it, and it was rejected.

The next quotation, to my mind, is very applicable in regard to the Bill before the House. It shows how Archdeacon Garland—or the church to which he belongs—the bishops of that church were not altogether in favour of extending to others the same rights as they possess themselves. Mr. Davidson further says—

In 1834 twenty-two bishops voted to exclude the dissenters from the Universities. The Bill was lost, 187 to 85 noble lords voting against it.

Mr. KEOGH: What University?

Mr. COLLINS: The Universities of the United Kingdom. Those bishops did not want to allow the dissenters to sit in their Universities.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: What has that to do with the Bill?

Mr. ALLEN: This is an Anglican Bill.

Mr. COLLINS: I have not been sent to this House to think as the Minister thinks, but to express my own opinion, and as long as I do not come into conflict with the Standing Orders I am going to express my opinions until the Deputy Speaker tells me that I am out of order. (Hear, hear!) I think that I have spoken at sufficient length to justify the position I intend to take up when a division is taken upon this measure. I intend to vote against the second reading, and I also intend to oppose it at every stage to the best of my ability. I do not think that it is in the interests of the rising generation to have religious instruction in the State schools. I think the present system has been a huge success; in fact, other countries of the world have been pointing to Queensland as leading the way so far as education is concerned. They have been copying our Queensland system, and most of the advanced thinkers of the world to-day recognise that the Queensland system is as good a system as exists in any part of the civilised world to-day, and no vote of mine will be given to change the system. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. MANN (*Cairns*): I do not intend at this late hour to go into this Bill at any length, or to go over the various matters traversed by the previous speakers, for the issue before us is quite a simple one, and one which hon. members must decide according to the dictates of their own consciences. (Hear, hear!) The Premier got up this afternoon in his usual way, and made the remark that the leader of the Opposition, like Balaam, came to curse but remained to bless. I may say the same thing about the Premier, inasmuch as the first portion of his speech was the strongest condemnation of the Bill delivered in the House this afternoon.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MANN: He claimed that it was wrong for any man to set himself against the wishes of the people and to arrogate to himself a standard against which the people had declared—that is, the people having given their ver-

dict, hon. members of this House should loyally abide by it. Now, on the morning after the election of 1908, when it was clearly shown by wires from all over the country that the Kidston and Labour parties were in a majority over the Philp party, the hon. gentleman made this pronouncement, as will be found in the *Rockhampton Bulletin*—

We have been returned to turn the Philp party out of power, and to keep them out.

He got back into this House, and he was not here more than six or seven weeks before he was scheming and contriving and wirepulling to upset the verdict of the people. And he had the effrontery to get up this afternoon and say that no representative of the people should declare himself against the will of the people. On another occasion the people gave a verdict. In 1902, the Philp party were returned with a majority by the electors, despite all their sins, despite all their taxes, their large deficits, their mismanagement, and misappropriation of public funds, which the Premier blamed them for.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. MANN: I am only quoting the Premier's words. He claimed that they had misappropriated certain funds. I am not saying they did it.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I did not understand the hon. member to quote what the Premier said.

Mr. MANN: Yes; he said that they had committed all these sins. Yet the people returned them with a majority, and the Premier, who was then sitting on this side of the House, schemed and contrived with other hon. members who are now sitting with him—the hon. member for Oxley, the hon. member for Enoggera—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Utterly untrue.

Mr. MANN: Those members schemed with the Premier.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Utterly untrue. I had nothing to do with him until after Mr. Philp resigned.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must accept the disclaimer of the Secretary for Lands.

Mr. MANN: I must accept the hon. gentleman's statement. I leave him out; but he joined the Premier, and the hon. member for Enoggera and others I could mention, afterwards in flouting the will of the people as expressed at the general election of 1902. Here are two occasions on which the Premier deliberately flouted the expressed will of the people; and yet he had the effrontery—I might say the cheek—to get up this afternoon and say that, because a certain number of people—not a majority of the people, but only a majority of those who voted—voted in a certain way—no matter what may be our own convictions, we should accept the people's will and pass this Bill. It is a curious thing that the Premier himself did not say that when the Referendum Bill was before the House. On page 472 of *Hansard* for 1908, the hon. gentleman said—

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.

He did not say, "If the referendum is carried by the Bible in State Schools League, this House will have to accept the decision." He said, "Let the representatives

Mr. Mann.]

of the people in that House afterwards settle what was the right thing to do." We are here to-day "to settle what is the right thing to do," and, after hearing the Premier's speech, I can only come to the one conclusion—that the right thing to do is to vote against the second reading of the Bill, for the Premier himself declared that even a parent has no right to enforce his own cast-iron doctrines upon the plastic mind of his child. That being so, what right has he to speak for the people of Queensland and say that they desire the clerics to go into the schools and force their cast-iron dogmas upon our children? I feel a little warm upon this subject, and I may be pardoned if I use language that is rather strong. I have hardly any words in my vocabulary strong enough to condemn the men who claim that this is going to do an injury to the growing youths of Queensland and still persist in voting for it. I may be pardoned for a moment while I quote what was said in 1908 by the Secretary for Lands. On page 477 of *Hansard* he said—

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.

There is not a word in this Bill about a conscience clause for teachers. To continue the quotation—

The PREMIER: A very excellent reason.

HON. D. F. DENHAM: An excellent reason. If a teacher held certain views, 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.

Here is the hon. gentleman declaiming against allowing ministers of religion to enter the schools because they will raise the devil of sectarianism.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I voted against the Referendum Bill. I occupy the same position exactly to-day.

Mr. MANN: The hon. gentleman went on—

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 SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is quite correct.

Mr. LESINA: Are you going to vote that way to-night?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am going to give expression to the will of the people. (Laughter.)

[Mr. Mann.

Mr. MANN: In order to get an expression of the will of the people, the hon. gentleman's leader said he would submit this question to the people in the most objectionable form he could in order that they would not carry it. Is that the way to get an expression of the will of the people?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That was not done. The question was put in the most explicit form.

Mr. MURPHY: Because Garland prepared the question.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The House prepared the question.

Mr. MANN: Further on the hon. gentleman said—

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, and 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; and 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.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I do not withdraw a word.

Mr. MANN: If the hon. gentleman still believes every word he said on that occasion, why does he allow the introduction [9.30 p.m.] of a Bill like this, which must have been considered by the Cabinet?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is introduced in consequence of the decision of the 13th April.

Mr. MANN: Then I would ask if the Government are going to accept with equanimity the decision of the people in connection with the financial agreement, and not say another bad word against the Fisher Government?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We have to accept the decision of the people in regard to the agreement.

Mr. NEVITT: You would have upset it if you could.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Of course.

Mr. MANN: We are told that this Bill has been introduced because of the vote of the 13th April; and according to what the Premier said, the Government are not going to allow the people of Queensland to have another say in the matter. Are they going to accept for all time the verdict of the people in favour of the Federal Labour party? Will they not try to oust them at the next election? And why should not this question be submitted to the people again? The people did not quite clearly understand what was meant to be done in this matter, inasmuch as every person had his own interpretation of what was going to take place. I met some advocates of the Bible in State schools who told me they intended to have the whole of the Bible taught. Others, with more information and perhaps less faith, when I asked them if they thought such passages as that relating to Judah and his daughter-in-law and others of a similar nature should be taught, regarded the suggestion with horror. There is another passage where it says that even the Lord of Hosts could not prevail against the Jebusites. And as soon as you bring the Bible into State schools you will find that some particular dogma is dragged in. I remember a mission held in Wharf street some time ago by a man from Yankee-land. He was reading about Paul and Silas being put into prison and the conversion of the gaoler. He claimed that as nothing was said about water being used inside the gaol, he must have been taken outside and pitched into the nearest pool, and consequently Paul and Silas were Baptists. We are told that the teachers are not to give instruction in any tenet or doctrine of any religious denomination; but care should be taken to provide a conscience clause for the teacher. And what is the teacher to do if the pupils ask him certain questions? I may be having children at school some day. (Laughter.) I may be teaching them certain doctrines, and the schoolmaster, who may be great on science, may tell them about the planets moving with fearful velocity round the sun, which is a fixed star; and they may afterwards read that miraculous account of Joshua commanding the sun to stand still to allow him to commit wholesale massacre. Then they may naturally ask if the sun has been standing still ever since it was commanded to do so by Joshua. In that case, is the teacher to tell the children that the Bible is a fable?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I have allowed the hon. member extreme latitude, and I think he is rather abusing that latitude. I must now ask him to confine himself to the Bill.

Mr. MANN: I am obliged for any latitude which you may have allowed me, Mr. Speaker; but I was not aware that I was going beyond the bounds reached by other members. I was simply giving examples. Other members have gone as far as Ireland and other parts of the world, but I only got as far as the Holy Land. However, I do not wish to trespass on your patience or on the patience of the House. I will simply ask the Minister if he is prepared to accept any reasonable amendments on the Bill? Will he accept a provision allowing the committee of a school to refuse the clergy entrance to that school? On the other hand, if a number of parents having, say, eighteen children attending a school, decide to have a school of their own with no sectarianism, and withdraw their children from the State school, is he prepared to find for them four-fifths of

the cost of the new building? You see the wide avenue this Bill opens up. I might vote for the measure if it were made so innocuous as not to shock the feelings of parents who object to clergy going to the school to give religious instruction, or to religious instruction being given by the teachers. Some people believe that religious instruction should be given only by the minister, but it is impossible for the minister to give religious instruction in all the schools. In my district there are fourteen schools and only three clergy. Those clergymen are all resident in Cairns, where they can get to the Sunday schools if they choose; but no one would expect them to go out and teach in all the schools except in the bush. The Premier admitted that nobody ever heard a complaint from the clergy that the youth of Queensland were not as well behaved and as religious and moral as the children of any other country. It has not been shown during the whole of this debate that there is any urgent need, or indeed any need at all, for a Bill of this description.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There is no need to discuss that matter. The question is: Shall we give effect to the wishes of the people?

Mr. MANN: I think there is need to discuss it, because it may be possible that some people believed the extreme statement made by clergymen that 100,000 children in Queensland are being raised in heathenism and paganism. Nobody who is acquainted with the facts believed that. I do not think the clergy themselves believed the statement, but they wanted to get it into the Press of Queensland and the Press of the world in order to induce people in the old country to pour money into their pockets for their missions in Queensland. Whether they will succeed in that I do not know. I believe the Salvation Army once invaded the electorate of the hon. member for Burke, and that all they got was about 3d. per month.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What has that got to do with the Bill?

Mr. MANN: It has much to do with it. I am showing the arguments which were adduced in favour of introducing Bible teaching into our State schools. If you allow people to keep their children away from religious teaching under a conscience clause, there will be no systematic religious instruction; and if you have no conscience clause you may have teachers who are agnostics or atheists teaching these religious lessons to children, and when the children read an account of some miracle, such as that in which it is recorded that a person tumbled on the dead bones of a man and brought him to life again, such teachers, without expressing any disbelief in the miracle, may by a shrug of the shoulder convey their opinion to the children in a manner that will be unmistakable. If we are going to pass this Bill, then I say we should submit the religious lessons to be taught to the people by way of a referendum for their confirmation. I am quite satisfied that if as many persons had advocated the negative view of the question as advocated Bible reading in State schools, a very different verdict would have been given by the electors; and I think they should have an opportunity of saying whether they approve of the lessons proposed to be taught. When the referendum was taken I went all round Brisbane to see how it was conducted, and I saw only one woman battling against the introduction of the Bible into State schools. That

was in Fortitude Valley. At every other place that I visited there were nice young girls, who knew nothing about the question, coming forward and asking you in the nicest manner possible to vote for the Bible in State schools.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Was that an inducement to you?

Mr. MANN: It was no inducement to me, because I voted against the introduction of the Bible into State schools, but it may have been an inducement to impressionable young chaps who had no decided convictions on the matter. I want to refer to just one other matter before I conclude, and that is the fact that there were no scrutineers at this referendum. No Government would think of holding an election without having scrutineers, but there were no scrutineers at the voting on this question, nor were there any placards posted at the polling-booths showing the people how to vote against Bible teaching in the State schools. There were plenty of placards showing electors how to vote in the affirmative, one of which bore the words, "Vote for God and the Bible," which I consider rank blasphemy. I never got a single vote from church people in my electorate, because I made it as clear as it was possible for language to make it that while I voted for the referendum yet I did not believe in the Bible in the State schools, and if the people in my electorate insisted upon it, they would have to find someone else to represent them, as no weight of numbers would convince me that it is a good thing to introduce Bible teaching in our State schools.

Mr. LESINA (*Clermont*): I wish to make a few comments upon the proposed legislation embodied in this Bill. I am sure that when the history of our times comes to be written, as it will sooner or later when the man and opportunity arise, great prominence will be given to the enormous spread of popular education that has taken place within the past half-century. It will be generally conceded that the latter half of the Victorian age and the beginning of the present century stand in remarkable contrast to preceding times in regard to the tremendous amount of public energy that has been devoted to the spread of instruction among the masses of the people. There has been noticed in connection with this popularising of instruction an increasing desire to make that instruction as largely as possible secular and compulsory instruction. Until thirty-five years ago we had denominational education in Queensland, and we then had distinguished public men advocating publicly that children of all denominations should come together in one common school. Men like Sir Charles Lilley were strong advocates of undenominational and secular instruction, and worked hard to establish the system in this State. But a new generation has followed them which is not comparable to them in any one respect, and men of this new generation assume to initiate an entirely new departure in connection with our system of State education. In Victoria denominational education prevailed for a number of years. A commission was appointed to inquire into the subject, and they took a large amount of evidence, from which it was discovered that even the children taught in denominational schools had practically no knowledge of religious subjects. The children received hardly any religious teaching in schools which were under the control of religious bodies. I remember reading the report of that commission, in which the facts I have alluded to were made public by clergymen who had visited the schools and made special inquiries on the matter. Later

[*Mr. Mann.*

on the Government of Victoria introduced legislation for the establishment of a national system of education, and that system has been attended with excellent results. I have here the Victorian *Hansard* for 1867, in which there is a fine speech delivered by the late Justice Higginbotham on the subject. I only wish we had a man of his mental calibre and high character to deliver a similar address in denunciation of this mischievous measure. I regret that we have not a man of his commanding ability, his great mental capacity, and broad views, to publicly condemn, in a manner that would commend itself to the community, the mischievous features of a measure of this description. I am not a bit concerned about the fact that a majority of those who voted in the referendum declared in favour of the present proposal. That does not influence me in a matter of this kind. In approaching a measure of this description we should recognise the fact that we are asked to take a very serious step in regard to our national system of education, and should consider the matter apart from any personal prejudice. This Bill proposes a very serious departure from our existing system—a departure which does not concern us as much as it concerns the generation now springing up, and from which we shall derive our future legislators, merchant princes, and captains of industry. How is this proposition going to affect them? I think we ought to ask ourselves certain questions before we go so far as to pass the second reading of this Bill. It is a small Bill, but its importance is not to be gauged by its smallness. There are only two sections in it, and it is just as well to know what they propose to do. In reading clause 2 I find—this is the new section to be included in our Education Act—that—

Nothing in this Act contained shall prevent State school buildings from being used for any purpose permitted by the regulations at such times (other than those set apart for giving instruction therein), and subject to such conditions as may be prescribed by the regulations.

It tacks on this, that during certain hours provision shall be made for religious instruction—

In addition to the subjects of instruction enumerated in the last preceding section, instruction shall, in accordance with regulations in that behalf, be given in the primary schools during school hours in selected Bible lessons from a reading book to be provided for the purpose; but such instruction shall not include any teaching in the distinctive tenets or doctrine of any religious society or denomination.

That is—apparently a distinction is made—that no ordinary sectarian teaching shall be given. I shall attempt to demonstrate before I close that no religious teaching can be given at all which is not necessarily sectarian. There is no unsectarian religious teaching. I will demonstrate by just an ordinary quotation from the Old Testament that this cannot be attempted even in a simple matter. Take the Ten Commandments. There is a distinct difference in the enumeration of the Commandments in the documents which distinguish the Catholic and Protestant Church. Therefore, you cannot touch on these matters without giving sectarian teaching. The first question we have to answer is: What are our State schools constituted for? And who owns our State schools, and what is the object of their existence? Well, the spread of education, and owing to the fact that we have made it compulsory, and that we punish people who have children and who do not attempt to educate them, we must provide facilities,

and as there may be some people who are unable to pay for the education of their children, we have made it free. We recognise that education makes better citizens—an educated citizen is less criminally inclined, less inclined to disobey the laws of his country—and consequently we have made the education of the children of the State a compulsory matter, and hitherto we have made it a secular matter. Schools have been established by the people for this particular purpose, and hitherto they have served that purpose very well. Who are the people who own and maintain these schools out of the taxes which they pay? The people are a polyglot combination—it is a cosmopolitan collection of persons—it contains people of all nationalities. We have all sorts of creeds, and every creed differs just as much as the nationalities. We have Jews and Christians, and Christians subdivided into many sects, and we have agnostics, we have pagans, we have Mahomedans, we have Hindoos, and we have followers of Confucius. They are all members of this community, and all living happily together, and under the system of secular education the children of Protestants, Catholics, Pagans, and Assyrian Catholics all may come to our schools, and do come to our schools to-day and sit together in one class, or in many classes, and receive secular education from the public servants paid by the State and working for the State. So far so good. That system has been in operation for over thirty years, and has worked well. There has been no complaint against it except from certain interested quarters. Certain of the clergy have been agitating in the State for some time—they have been declaring on the public platform—and I regret to say our leading public men have not had the courage to refute the statements—that our State schools are seedplots of immorality, and because of this lack of religious instruction we were turning out citizens who were more criminally inclined than the citizens of the other States where they received religious instruction, which is not the case. Statistics fail to prove that it is so, and police reports laid upon the table of this House prove it to be a direct lie. All the facts are against them, nevertheless this lie has been retailed on the platform, and it has been circulated in their little Press. And even in Great Britain it has been quoted, for these things are quoted by interested people in all places. It is all fuel for the bonfire, and I maintain this is one of the reasons so far advanced, or perhaps the only reason so far advanced, by these interested persons for turning our State schools, which have worked so well in the past, into institutions wherein religious instruction will be given of a certain class—certain selected Bible lessons from a reading-book to be provided—but I do not know by whom. Whether the department will select them or not is not stated, but in some way Bible lessons are to be selected and supplied in book form, and from these selected Bible lessons, at stated times during the day on certain days during the week, the teacher or some clergyman will give to the children certain religious instruction. I said a moment ago that we had all manner of creeds in the community. The Catholics recognise the Douay version for the acceptance of their faith, and the Protestants, on the other hand, accept King James's version. King James's version is not acceptable to Roman Catholics, and similarly the Protestants will not accept the Douay version. They are the same in some respects, but in

some respects they differ fundamentally, and that is the reason why both of these creeds stick religiously to the different works. Then we also have the Jews—a most law-abiding sect—who reject both the Douay and the Protestant version, and who accept only the Old Testament, who could not possibly accept the New Testament because it practically holds them up as the murderers of the Saviour of the race. Now, from which particular book are you to select these lessons? From which particular revelation accepted by the rival creeds are you to select the proposed Bible lessons to be taught in the schools?

Mr. KEOGH: Who will select them?

Mr. LESINA: That is a matter that will be answered later on by some Minister. If we pass the Bill, it will be left entirely in the hands of the Government. On the Education Estimates we might offer objections to these particular lessons being given, if we find in some points of view they are not justifiable. I maintain that all this kind of thing is an unnecessary departure, and if it is pointed out that a large number of people voted for the alteration of the law on the subject, that does not necessarily make it right. I was elected to this House to support and maintain the present system of free, compulsory, and secular education, and I intend to defend that principle on all possible occasions against any attempt to subvert or remove or injure it in any way. Any attempt [10 p.m.] made by any public man or private citizen to bring that system into disrepute by allegations that it has not been effective concerning its operations and moral results I feel bound to condemn. In fact, I believe that any public man who attempts to overturn our system of secular compulsory education and introduce religious teaching into our State schools is, mayhap unwittingly, an enemy of Queensland.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LESINA: Up to the present time the various races inhabiting Queensland have lived in happy harmony. Protestants and Catholics, Jews and Christians, pagans and infidels and agnostics have all lived in happy and harmonious relationship together. They had had no sectarian differences and no quarrels whatever, either at the ballot-box or at any other time, in connection with their differences of creed, and because of this happy harmony which has hitherto prevailed in Queensland—which I consider is largely due to the unsectarian character of our secular system of compulsory education—I am against any interference with it whatever. Now they propose to alter this state of affairs. They propose to introduce religious lessons, and the moment they do that they will have to establish a religious test. If the Anglican Bible-reader engaged in Sunday school work has to pass an examination on the Bible to fit him for this work, would it not be equally necessary that a teacher engaged in our public schools should pass an examination in Scripture knowledge in order to fit him for the work of explaining Bible lessons to the immature minds of the children under his care? Would it not become necessary to train our State school teachers in Scriptural matters? Say that a teacher had conscientious objections to doing such work and to studying Scripture, or suppose he, in the course of his reading, developed some doubts with respect to Scripture; or supposing he joined that increasingly large throng of high church, and even low church, clergy, who, under the operation of the new light of the higher criticism to-day, are rejecting principles which at one time were

Mr. Lesina.]

accepted as being entirely fundamental to the Christian scheme of salvation—suppose the teachers in the course of their training acquired these doubts, they, acting conscientiously, might not wish to give these Bible lessons. Suppose a teacher is a sceptic or a confessed agnostic, like I am myself, would you expect me, as a teacher, to give Bible lessons in a school of children when I doubt myself the whole scheme of Christianity from the first chapter of Genesis to the last verse in Revelations? I ask you, Mr. Speaker, could it be possibly expected that I, an agnostic, could give such lessons? The chances are that I would have to throw up my position, or otherwise things would be made so hot for me by a religious committee who believed in Bible lessons being given in the State schools, that I should be removed from the service. If there is one thing that we should avoid in this State it is the establishing of a religious test for appointment to any position in the public service. Then, again, 25 per cent. of our teachers are Roman Catholics. Now, no Roman Catholic can give religious instruction at all.

Mr. KEOGH: He will get sacked, that's all.

Mr. LESINA: No Roman Catholic can take a text from the Bible and explain its meaning to the children under his charge. He could not even take a parable and explain it. He could not take any Scripture lesson and explain it to his young charges. Then those 25 per cent. of Roman Catholic teachers in our State to some extent might render themselves liable to victimisation. Have we the right to suggest the possibility of such a thing on our statute-book? I say that all these things are bound up in passing a measure of this description. I may say that the argument used by the Premier that a majority of the people decided this who voted in favour of this measure is not at all conclusive to my mind. A majority is not always right. Majorities are just as often wrong as minorities. In matters of this kind they are more apt to be wrong than on any other matter that may be submitted for their consideration. I think myself that a mistake was made by this House in ever submitting this thing to a referendum.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LESINA: I took up that attitude from the very first time it was introduced into this House. Having been elected to this House pledged to a platform which provided for free, secular, and compulsory education, the matter was settled so far as I was concerned. It was settled repeatedly at conferences of delegates appointed to Labour Conventions for a period of years in Queensland. As long as the Labour party in Queensland have had their platform they recognised that as representing the right opinion of the people of Queensland. That is the radical people of Queensland, the democratic people of Queensland to whom reference was made by the Premier in his remarks. Why should I go further, then, and submit that matter to the people? The thing was settled for me. Then, again, I do not believe that the referendum in the Labour platform should be used in the settlement of sectarian squabbles.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LESINA: It should not be used for any other purpose than for the settlement of political questions, as these questions come properly within the province of a self-governing people. Matters of taxation, legislation dealing with old-age pensions, the alteration of the Constitution of Parliament, the payment of members, the increasing or decreasing of the number of members of Parliament—these are all questions on which the people may properly be consulted;

[Mr. Lesina.

but to refer to them the question as to the religious instruction of children in our schools is, to my mind, a prostitution of the principle of the referendum, and for that reason I opposed it, not only by my vote but I opposed it all the way through in every way I could. I felt at that time that those members sitting on this side of the House who voted for the referendum were making a mistake in doing so.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LESINA: They took it that as the referendum was a plank in the Labour platform they felt that the people had a right to be consulted on this as on other matters. I thought that they were making a mistake at the time, but it was their business, and not mine. They now see that they made a mistake on that occasion. The leader of the Opposition, Mr. Bowman, has boldly and honestly confessed that his attitude on that occasion was a mistaken one. I trust that on any future occasion whenever religious questions, or questions involving religious tests, come up for consideration in this House, hon. members will have the moral courage to settle it here at once and not remit it to the people at all. Before I close I might say that there was one thing in connection with the referendum which I objected to. I not only objected to the form in which the question was put, because I believe it prevented an honest straight-out vote being given on the matter; but I think that we would have got a clearer verdict if the question had been altered. An attempt was made by Labour members to alter the question when it was before the House, but it was not successful. In South Australia some years ago when they took a similar referendum, they put three questions to the people. The first was: Are you in favour of altering the present system of secular education? The second was: Do you believe in the introduction of Scripture lessons into the State schools? And the third question was: Are you in favour of State aid to denominational schools? The votes on these three questions showed a big majority for the first and against the second questions, and an equally large majority against the third question to give assistance to denominational schools. I think that many people outside voted for this question because they believed that once the clergy were admitted to the State schools they would help them to get State aid to certain denominational schools. I believe that they are resting on a rotten stick if they think that the people who are now to be admitted to our State schools—if they expect them to give their assistance to procuring State aid to denominational schools. They make a big mistake if they expect it, because the very people who vote in favour of teaching the proposed Bible lessons in our State schools will vote down any effort to procure assistance for denominational schools which are at present outside the scheme of State assistance. That is a point it is well to keep in mind. I object to clerical domination in political affairs at all. I do not care what denomination the clerical belongs to—I am just as strongly opposed to Roman Catholic interference or domination in political affairs as I am to "wowsers" interference at all. In fact, I can see no difference between the one and the other. I believe the church and State should be kept at arm's length—

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LESINA: And that every attempt made by interested parties, inside or outside the House, to bring church and State into closer relationship should be resented, and I think the man who does not do that is an enemy of the State and is ignorant of history. That is put-

ting the most charitable construction on it. He may not be wittingly an enemy of the State, but he is certainly ignorant of history, if he thinks he can manage to join church and State together without hatching trouble for future generations. As far as I am personally concerned, whilst I have a vote in the House, my voice and my vote will go every time against any closer union between the church in this community and the State itself. Both should be kept at arm's length, for in that there is safety, there is toleration, there is charity. But once you bring them together the old question comes up as to which particular denomination shall get on top, and then incessant and bitter conflicts take place between these rival sections. In bringing my remarks to a close, I will quote the remarks of Mr. Justice Higginbotham on this matter. This is an extract from the Victorian *Hansard*, Tuesday, 7th May, 1867, and as it is a quotation which meets the situation very well, I give it for that reason. He says—

It is not merely in the matter of education but in other respects that we see the mischievous effects of this deadly rivalry that exists among religious sects in this country. I own that I do not think a more melancholy spectacle can be presented than that which is presented by these religious bodies, when viewed merely as competing companies or corporations. Whether you look to the spirit in which they work or the objects which they desire to attain, their operation appears to me to be one of the darkest blot on our civilisation. These sects are animated by a spirit of intense bitterness and hostility to one another—a bitterness and hostility which is usually in inverse proportion to the extent of the differences by which they are separated. And when you look to the objects which they seek to accomplish, the spectacle is equally melancholy. They seem to measure their prosperity by the amount which they can show on their annual balance-sheets as compared with rival sects. They call themselves churches, and, no doubt, they believe that the pestilent energy which they display in collecting property is a proof of vitality. They do not know, and they will not learn, that they have not, and cannot have, as sects, anything of the organic life of the Christian community of which they are the self-dismembered fragments. Their proceedings are not only injurious to the cause of education, but a disgrace to our social and political system; and the matter of education, which does concern the State, these sects must not be permitted to regard as their exclusive property. The State has admitted all sects in this country to a position of perfect equality. It has admitted them to its table, and distributed in equal amounts, and with a most liberal hand, the bounty of the State. And the real problem which the State now, after ten or twelve years, has to address itself to is, how to get rid of these turbulent intruders upon the peace and welfare of the State household? This conclusion was arrived at by the Commissioner of Education. It was a conclusion arrived at not merely by laymen, but also by gentlemen who occupy the position of clergymen in some of the largest sects in this country. The commission were unanimously of opinion that, until the connection which now exists between the religious sects in this country and the State is absolutely, finally, and for ever put an end to, you cannot establish in this country a sound or successful system of public education. This, Sir, is the primary principle of the report of the commissioners, and of the Bill which I have to ask leave to introduce.

That was an extract from a speech delivered by the late Judge Higginbotham when introducing, after a commission sitting in Victoria had brought in its report, the Bill upon which the present excellent educational system in Victoria has been established, and which has been maintained in the face of bigoted sectarian agitation for many, many years past. I say that the words of that dead man are worthy of more than passing consideration in this Chamber. I do not know whether the Minister in charge of the Bill has any particular desire to see this measure succeed or not; but if I may judge by the nature of the

speech delivered by the Premier to-night, a great deal of what he said might be regarded as more destructive of the prospects of passing this measure than anything that has been said so far from this side of the House.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LENNON: Against the Bill.

Mr. LESINA: Without appearing to be against the Bill, the hon. gentleman has made a speech which is a strong condemnation of the measure. And so far as the Minister who introduced the Bill is concerned, I have heard him to greater advantage on a dozen different occasions than in introducing this measure to-night. I do not know whether he is heart and soul for this measure, and wishes to see it on the statute-book; but as a man who has lived all his life here and will probably end his days here—as a man whose interests are bound up in this State, and who understands what a valuable thing a secular education is to the children of this State—I cannot conceive that he is really and sincerely desirous of introducing sectarianism into our State schools, and he cannot introduce religion into the State schools without the possibility of introducing sectarian teaching. Before I bring my remarks to a close at half-past 10 o'clock, and give hon. members an opportunity of adjourning the debate—

Mr. LENNON: There is no hurry. The new "gag" is not yet passed.

Mr. LESINA: I just desire to put briefly six points which I have against this measure. (Opposition laughter.) I do not desire to develop them, as I have no desire to exceed the time available. The first is that it is a violation of the gospel principle of the separation of the church and State, and I think I have developed that argument to some extent in the course of my remarks. "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's" is the quotation which I would give.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Finish it.

Mr. LESINA: The second is that it would necessarily infringe upon the rights of certain classes of citizens, and I instanced Jews, Roman Catholics, and of course pagans, infidels, and unbelievers generally, who will be taxed to keep up schools in which certain religious teaching is being given to which they conscientiously object. We have no right to tax any citizen for the propagation of a belief which he conscientiously objects to.

Mr. LENNON: A large number of nonconformists should be included in your category as opposed to the Bill.

Mr. LESINA: Then, thirdly, I maintain that it would be a menace to religious freedom, and a departure from that generous policy which has been a bulwark of our government; and, fourthly, that it would require the use of money, raised by compulsory taxation of all classes of citizens, which is contrary to the just principles of civil government. I would like to point out that that object is very forcefully demonstrated in Great Britain just now, where there still remains a vestige of the union of church and State. Within the past few years the Government of Great Britain has summonsed 75,942 of her citizens, taken goods for the payment of fines from 2,468, and imprisoned other 300, whose only crime was that they could not conscientiously support or permit their children to be taught a religion in which they did not believe.

Mr. LENNON: Is that in Wales?

Mr. LESINA: No, in Great Britain. The fifth objection I have is that it would necessarily establish a kind of State theology, and

Mr. Lesina.]

ultimately make a religious test necessary for the holding of the office of public trust as a teacher, which is a violation of one of the privileges of civil government—a privilege we are so jealous of that in the framing of our Federal Constitution, in which the brightest intellects of the present generation of Australia took part, it was specifically stated that there should be no religious test for appointment to any public office in the Commonwealth. It may also lead ultimately to the establishment of a religious test in connection with the appointment of teachers. The sixth objection is that the teaching of religion does not come within the purview of the State, but belongs to the home, to the church, and to the private schools supported entirely by private contributions. I think I am on fairly safe and solid ground in stating those six objections to the measure, and I venture to say that if any member on the other side speaks in defence of the Bill, he should take up those six objections, or some of them, and attempt to demonstrate wherein they are fallacious. To my mind, this is one of the most dangerous principles to attempt to engraft on our system of education. For the reasons I have given—which might be backed up by many quotations if I cared to take up more time—I propose to vote against the second reading of the Bill, and to oppose it at every stage. In doing so I shall feel that I am doing my duty as an upholder of the system of free, secular, and compulsory education, which I was sent here in 1899 to support, which I have supported from that day to this, which I intend to support whilst I am here, and which I shall continue to support even when I leave this House. If it be thrown in my face that I am flouting the will of the thousands of people who voted to bring about this alteration, and if it be said that I have no right to fly in the face of their verdict, that it is undemocratic, that it is going back upon my programme to do so, then I want to say that, if it is to be my lot to be thrown out of public life for any one thing, I prefer that it should be for giving a vote which would assist to prevent the engrafting on our splendid system of national education of any kind of religious training.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. KEOGH (*Rosewood*): I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION, the resumption of the debate was made an Order of the Day for tomorrow.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I beg to move that this House do now adjourn. I understand that a large number of members wish to go with His Excellency to the opening of the Boyne Valley Railway to-morrow night, and it has been agreed, I understand, that private members' business will be withdrawn, that Government business will stand first on the business-paper, and that the House adjourn at 6 o'clock for the convenience of those hon. members who wish to go to Many Peaks. I have no objection to the arrangement being carried out.

Mr. BOWMAN: I have no objection to the arrangement being made. I believe there are quite a number of hon members who are going to Many Peaks, although I am not going myself, and there is no opposition to the proposal that the House should adjourn at 6 o'clock.

The PREMIER: I may be permitted to say—I think it will be of interest to hon. members

[*Mr. Lesina.*

—that, by arrangement with his medical adviser, I was able to call on the Speaker, Mr. Bell, this morning, and found him very ill. He has been very near the border, but I think he is distinctly past the worst of it.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: He is still very weak and ill, and unable to see people; still I think he is distinctly on the mend.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: I informed him that hon. members particularly regretted his enforced absence, and I am sure hon. members will join with me in sympathising with him and Mrs. Bell in his long absence, and we shall all be glad to see him back in his place again.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at twenty-five minutes past 10 o'clock.